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This episode is brought to you by Thorne and I have some incredible news for any of you

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00:00:03,820 --> 00:00:07,960

that are in the military, first responder or medical professions.

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In an effort to give back, Thorne is now offering you an ongoing 35% off each and every one

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of your purchases of their incredible nutritional solutions.

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Project and multiple special operations organizations.

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I myself have used them for several years and that is why I brought them on as a sponsor.

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Some of my favorite products they have are their Multivitamin Elite, their Whey Protein,

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the Super EPA and then most recently, Cynaquil.

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00:00:45,840 --> 00:00:50,120

As a firefighter, a stuntman and a martial artist, I've had my share of brain trauma

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00:00:50,120 --> 00:00:55,520

and sleep deprivation and Cynaquil is their latest brain health supplement.

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Now to qualify for the 35% off, go to thorn.com, T-H-O-R-N-E dot com.

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Click on sign in and then create a new account.

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You will see the opportunity to register as a first responder or member of military.

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When you click on that, it will take you through verification with GovX.

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You'll simply choose a profession, provide one piece of documentation and then you are

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00:01:18,980 --> 00:01:20,920

verified for life.

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From that point onwards, you will continue to receive 35% off through Thorn.

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For those of you who don't qualify, there is still the 10% off using the code BTS10,

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00:01:33,120 --> 00:01:36,240

Behind the Shield 10 for a one time purchase.

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00:01:36,240 --> 00:01:42,040

To learn more about Thorn, go to episode 323 of the Behind the Shield podcast with Joel

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00:01:42,040 --> 00:01:45,360

Titro and Wes Barnett.

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00:01:45,360 --> 00:01:49,820

This episode is sponsored by Newcom and as many of you know, I only bring sponsors onto

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00:01:49,820 --> 00:01:53,840

this show whose products I truly swear by.

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00:01:53,840 --> 00:01:59,280

We are an overworked and under slept population, especially those of us that wear uniform for

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00:01:59,280 --> 00:02:00,480

a living.

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00:02:00,480 --> 00:02:05,480

And trying to reclaim some of the lost rest and recovery is imperative.

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00:02:05,480 --> 00:02:10,540

The application of this product is as simple as putting on headphones and a sleep mask.

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00:02:10,540 --> 00:02:16,160

As you listen to music on each of the programs, there is neuroacoustic software beneath that

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00:02:16,160 --> 00:02:21,940

is tapping into the actual frequencies of your brain, whether to up regulate your nervous

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00:02:21,940 --> 00:02:24,640

system or down regulate.

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00:02:24,640 --> 00:02:29,200

Now for most of us that come off shift, we are A, exhausted and B, do not want to bring

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00:02:29,200 --> 00:02:33,480

what we've had to see and do back home to our loved ones.

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00:02:33,480 --> 00:02:39,540

So one powerful application is using the program Powernap, a 20 minute session that will not

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00:02:39,540 --> 00:02:45,440

only feel like you've had two hours of sleep, but also down regulate from a hypervigilant

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00:02:45,440 --> 00:02:50,560

state back into the role of mother or father, husband or wife.

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00:02:50,560 --> 00:02:54,760

Now there are so many other applications and benefits from the software.

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00:02:54,760 --> 00:03:03,040

So I urge you to go and listen to episode 806 with CEO Jim Poole, then download Newcom

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N-U-C-A-L-M from your app store and sign up for the seven day free trial.

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00:03:10,400 --> 00:03:14,720

Not only will you have an understanding of the origin story and the four decades this

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00:03:14,720 --> 00:03:21,120

science has spanned, but also see for yourself the incredible health impact of this life

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00:03:21,120 --> 00:03:23,120

changing software.

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00:03:23,120 --> 00:03:28,360

And you can find even more information on Newcom.com.

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Welcome to the Behind the Shield podcast.

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00:03:29,520 --> 00:03:33,200

As always, my name is James Gearing and this week it is my absolute honor to welcome on

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00:03:33,200 --> 00:03:41,040

the show 20 year veteran of Navy special operations and elite skydiver, Nick Cush.

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00:03:41,040 --> 00:03:46,280

Now in this conversation we discuss a host of topics from Nick's journey into the military,

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00:03:46,280 --> 00:03:54,200

his time at SWIC, the world of EOD, concussion, compassion on the battleground, his own powerful

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00:03:54,200 --> 00:04:01,120

mental health story, his transition, the military industrial complex, post-traumatic growth

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00:04:01,120 --> 00:04:03,180

and so much more.

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00:04:03,180 --> 00:04:07,320

Now before we get to this incredibly powerful and important conversation, as I say every

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00:04:07,320 --> 00:04:12,200

week, please just take a moment, go to whichever app you listen to this on, subscribe to the

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00:04:12,200 --> 00:04:16,080

show, leave feedback and leave a rating.

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00:04:16,080 --> 00:04:21,600

Every single five star rating truly does elevate this podcast, therefore making it easier for

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00:04:21,600 --> 00:04:23,120

others to find.

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00:04:23,120 --> 00:04:28,080

And this is a free library of almost 900 episodes now.

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So all I ask in return is that you help share these incredible men and women stories so

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00:04:33,680 --> 00:04:38,880

I can get them to every single person on planet earth who needs to hear them.

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00:04:38,880 --> 00:04:44,000

So with that being said, I introduce to you Nick Cush.

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00:04:44,000 --> 00:04:45,000

Enjoy.

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00:04:45,000 --> 00:05:08,160

Nick, I want to start by saying firstly, thank you to Travis Denman for connecting us.

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00:05:08,160 --> 00:05:11,720

We had a great, great conversation when he was on the show and second to welcome you

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00:05:11,720 --> 00:05:13,800

onto the Behind the Shield podcast today.

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00:05:13,800 --> 00:05:15,760

Well, thanks James, I appreciate it.

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00:05:15,760 --> 00:05:17,720

Yeah, definitely shout out to Travis and his brother Jericho.

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00:05:17,720 --> 00:05:23,240

Jericho is a good friend of mine and Travis is doing a lot of good stuff out west.

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00:05:23,240 --> 00:05:25,960

So I like seeing all of his updates with him flying.

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00:05:25,960 --> 00:05:26,960

It's great.

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00:05:26,960 --> 00:05:27,960

Absolutely.

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00:05:27,960 --> 00:05:31,880

So firstly, where on planet earth are we finding you today?

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00:05:31,880 --> 00:05:32,880

So I'm not too far from you.

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00:05:32,880 --> 00:05:35,640

I'm about an hour and a half or so east of you.

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00:05:35,640 --> 00:05:40,920

So I'm just outside Daytona Beach, Florida, just north of Orlando in a kind of a college

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00:05:40,920 --> 00:05:42,920

town, Deland, Florida.

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00:05:42,920 --> 00:05:45,200

There's a reason why you're there.

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00:05:45,200 --> 00:05:49,680

So for people in Florida that are in your profession, it's the kind of Mecca in our

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00:05:49,680 --> 00:05:51,180

area of the US.

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00:05:51,180 --> 00:05:54,340

So talk to me about why you're in Deland right now.

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So we chose Deland.

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I retired in 2016 and Deland has always been, at least for the past, I don't know, probably

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00:06:02,240 --> 00:06:05,880

nine or 10 years before I retired in 2016.

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00:06:05,880 --> 00:06:13,160

It was this Mecca of skydiving manufacturing, where they manufacture equipment and sort

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00:06:13,160 --> 00:06:17,480

of, you know, it's arguably kind of like some of the birthplace of the stuff in the states

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00:06:17,480 --> 00:06:21,560

and a lot of innovation took place in Florida, some of it in Miami.

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00:06:21,560 --> 00:06:26,480

And then the manufacturer sort of settled here in Deland with the weather, with obviously

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00:06:26,480 --> 00:06:30,280

all the aviation just outside Embry-Riddle, Daytona Beach.

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00:06:30,280 --> 00:06:35,120

And so they get a lot of, you know, aviation professions and aviation education from the

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00:06:35,120 --> 00:06:38,360

engineering department at Embry-Riddle and Daytona Beach.

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00:06:38,360 --> 00:06:43,680

So that's this little hub of a place, but it's also home to a lot of like really, like

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00:06:43,680 --> 00:06:46,000

a really good private university here.

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00:06:46,000 --> 00:06:48,220

So it's kind of like, it's got a college town feel to it.

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00:06:48,220 --> 00:06:53,280

So that's why we settled because when I retired, it was, I'm going to work in the skydiving

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00:06:53,280 --> 00:06:58,240

industry and may as well go right to the epicenter of it, where a lot of professional athletes

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00:06:58,240 --> 00:07:04,040

or professionals just go to say Nashville, they go to where everything is happening and

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00:07:04,040 --> 00:07:06,640

then something will ideally start to develop.

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00:07:06,640 --> 00:07:08,480

And that's what I did.

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00:07:08,480 --> 00:07:11,240

My son runs track and he actually had a race at Embry-Riddle.

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00:07:11,240 --> 00:07:15,560

I think it was April of last year and he does JROTC as well.

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00:07:15,560 --> 00:07:20,000

So when we got there, he was drooling over the O course that they have there, but you

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00:07:20,000 --> 00:07:23,080

could tell there was definitely a military element to it as well.

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00:07:23,080 --> 00:07:27,560

So what kind of groups are trying to pull candidates from that school?

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00:07:27,560 --> 00:07:33,480

Well, they're, they're really focused on people that have, they are.

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00:07:33,480 --> 00:07:38,160

The industry is focused on, I think what we like to see where I work is like the engineers

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00:07:38,160 --> 00:07:44,560

in the aviation world, any aeronautical aviation, pilots or non-pilots.

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00:07:44,560 --> 00:07:45,560

It really doesn't matter.

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00:07:45,560 --> 00:07:50,640

If anybody's got a passion for aviation and aeronautical engineering, there, there's a

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00:07:50,640 --> 00:07:52,600

place that the engineers are going to find.

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00:07:52,600 --> 00:07:55,240

Now, granted, it's still circled around skydiving.

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00:07:55,240 --> 00:07:59,600

So it's considerably a little bit different, but it still has, it still has its connections

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00:07:59,600 --> 00:08:00,600

for sure.

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00:08:00,600 --> 00:08:06,280

Now I'm jumping way ahead now, but before we start your journey and putting human beings

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00:08:06,280 --> 00:08:13,040

into combat, as we sit here now in 2023, obviously you have a pretty solid aviation background

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00:08:13,040 --> 00:08:17,840

when it comes to flinging yourself from some sort of plane or helicopter.

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00:08:17,840 --> 00:08:20,720

Where do you see warfare going?

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00:08:20,720 --> 00:08:24,560

As we're seeing more and more drones and you're, you're close to Emery Riddle.

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00:08:24,560 --> 00:08:29,460

What would you think that the, the combat landscape would look like in say 15, 20 years

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00:08:29,460 --> 00:08:30,460

from now?

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00:08:30,460 --> 00:08:31,460

Oh, wow.

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00:08:31,460 --> 00:08:32,460

Yeah.

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00:08:32,460 --> 00:08:35,120

No, that's a, that's a, that's a great, that's a great topic.

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00:08:35,120 --> 00:08:38,880

I think that anybody could probably discuss for hours is yeah, there's definitely a lot

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00:08:38,880 --> 00:08:44,480

of drone stuff and we're just, we're seeing it nowadays, even recently with the U S shooting

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00:08:44,480 --> 00:08:51,600

down drones that are flying out of Iran or anything in that region.

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00:08:51,600 --> 00:08:57,900

For combat, I foresee always, and I'm obviously biased, but I always foresee some type of special

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00:08:57,900 --> 00:09:02,560

operations or asymmetrical warfare is going to be a key thing for us.

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00:09:02,560 --> 00:09:06,520

You know, a good friend of mine who's just on the Sean Ryan podcast back in September,

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00:09:06,520 --> 00:09:11,520

Eric Prince, who was so fortunate to be able to spend some time with him last year was

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00:09:11,520 --> 00:09:16,520

talking about how the key to that stuff is really kind of going back to our special operations

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00:09:16,520 --> 00:09:22,520

roots and what we used to call while I was, when I was doing it was called foreign internal

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00:09:22,520 --> 00:09:23,520

defense.

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00:09:23,520 --> 00:09:24,520

It was called the FID missions.

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00:09:24,520 --> 00:09:28,520

So it wouldn't be just a regular two week J set where we were doing some type of exercise

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00:09:28,520 --> 00:09:29,520

with a host nation.

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00:09:29,520 --> 00:09:34,280

We would actually embed and the green berets historically were notorious.

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00:09:34,280 --> 00:09:43,520

This is their specialty, especially post Vietnam era and was to live, sleep, eat, train with

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00:09:43,520 --> 00:09:48,440

their host nation and actually build up the force in that, in that capacity.

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00:09:48,440 --> 00:09:52,320

So I believe that moving forward, where there will always be a place for the special operations

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00:09:52,320 --> 00:09:57,520

forces to do that, I believe that that will be their closest thing to boots on the ground.

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00:09:57,520 --> 00:10:03,600

Our big conventional platform is just, it's, it's morphed and it's different than it was

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00:10:03,600 --> 00:10:06,920

in 2001 Afghanistan than it is today.

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00:10:06,920 --> 00:10:12,800

And then the types of, you know, with the Chinese elements and the middle Eastern innovation

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00:10:12,800 --> 00:10:15,240

and technology that we're up against for sure.

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00:10:15,240 --> 00:10:18,800

Well, you have a very unique perspective pre and post 9 11.

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00:10:18,800 --> 00:10:23,040

I want to get to your journey into that, but before we even get there, tell me where you

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00:10:23,040 --> 00:10:26,760

were born and tell me a little about your family dynamic, what your parents did, how

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00:10:26,760 --> 00:10:27,760

many siblings?

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00:10:27,760 --> 00:10:30,160

So I was born in Southern California.

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00:10:30,160 --> 00:10:36,000

I was born in Pomona, LA County, and then grew up for the first eight or 10 years in

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00:10:36,000 --> 00:10:37,000

a little town.

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00:10:37,000 --> 00:10:41,760

What was a little town called Laverne just outside like San Dimas used to go to, you

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00:10:41,760 --> 00:10:45,200

know, raging waters as a kid, you know, it was like this very Southern California American

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00:10:45,200 --> 00:10:46,200

kid lifestyle.

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00:10:46,200 --> 00:10:53,800

My dad worked as a, as a financial controller for Toyota dealerships for big dealerships

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00:10:53,800 --> 00:10:54,800
in the area.

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00:10:54,800 --> 00:10:56,120
I always really good with numbers.

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00:10:56,120 --> 00:10:57,120
He still is.

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00:10:57,120 --> 00:10:58,120
Yeah.

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00:10:58,120 --> 00:11:00,760
But now I get to make fun of them a little bit because I've kind of adopted some of that

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00:11:00,760 --> 00:11:03,680
stuff with when it comes to math.

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00:11:03,680 --> 00:11:04,680
I have two brothers.

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00:11:04,680 --> 00:11:07,600
We're all eight years apart and I'm the middle child.

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00:11:07,600 --> 00:11:10,600
So for those of the people that know me, that makes a lot of sense.

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00:11:10,600 --> 00:11:14,880
So my older brother, he lives now up in, up in the Bay area.

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00:11:14,880 --> 00:11:19,480
My younger brother lives in Corpus Christi, Texas.

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00:11:19,480 --> 00:11:21,840
My mom, she lives in Colorado.

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00:11:21,840 --> 00:11:26,240
So my parents, you know, when we were growing up, we were, you know, we were, we were pretty

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00:11:26,240 --> 00:11:27,240
outgoing.

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00:11:27,240 --> 00:11:29,240
We did a lot of, you know, my brother played baseball.

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00:11:29,240 --> 00:11:33,200
I followed that played sports, but we were all, we were kind of far apart.

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00:11:33,200 --> 00:11:35,320
So we weren't, you know, eight years apart.

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00:11:35,320 --> 00:11:40,200
We almost sort of became babysitters for each other as opposed to really close.

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00:11:40,200 --> 00:11:44,000
As we got older, we obviously got closer.

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00:11:44,000 --> 00:11:48,720
And so it was, yeah, it was, it was a, it was kind of a rough childhood.

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00:11:48,720 --> 00:11:51,800
You know, my parents didn't get along for a whole lot of it.

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00:11:51,800 --> 00:11:53,800
They eventually got divorced.

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00:11:53,800 --> 00:12:00,520

And then I lived with my mom till I was about 15 and, you know, a 15 year old from Southern

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00:12:00,520 --> 00:12:04,960

California growing up in the school system, public school system there was, was kind of

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00:12:04,960 --> 00:12:08,680

rough, but being an eighties kid, I grew up really surfing.

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00:12:08,680 --> 00:12:12,360

I found a passion for the water and I loved surfing.

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00:12:12,360 --> 00:12:16,320

And I ended up moving in with my dad right when I turned 16.

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00:12:16,320 --> 00:12:20,520

And so I barely made it through high school because I was always going to the beach and

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00:12:20,520 --> 00:12:25,160

surfing and I just, I found a place in my heart for the water.

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00:12:25,160 --> 00:12:29,440

And it was sort of like, I think when I reflect back on it was an escape from everything that

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00:12:29,440 --> 00:12:35,040

I, I didn't have at home and you have a really good relationship with my dad and, and, and

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00:12:35,040 --> 00:12:37,920

I still do today.

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00:12:37,920 --> 00:12:43,120

But the spending time in the water was the best place for me, even when I connected with

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00:12:43,120 --> 00:12:47,760

some friends, it was really good because we had that camaraderie and started to kind of

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00:12:47,760 --> 00:12:52,120

form that bond, especially when we would try to really, you know, we'd go camping just

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00:12:52,120 --> 00:12:57,600

and make these big surf expeditions and sort of like make some kid mistakes and, you know,

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00:12:57,600 --> 00:12:59,680

kind of get, you know, getting some trouble and things like that.

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00:12:59,680 --> 00:13:06,060

But it kind of kept, it built that, that what I call now that early, early brotherhood camaraderie

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00:13:06,060 --> 00:13:12,120

that I, that I became, it became part of my, my bloodline for sure.

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00:13:12,120 --> 00:13:16,280

When it comes to the mental health conversation in the military and the first or second professions,

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00:13:16,280 --> 00:13:20,520

a lot of times we're looking at when we were wearing the uniform, you know, when you're

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00:13:20,520 --> 00:13:25,680

in, you know, Fallujah or when, you know, the grand fell fire in London or whatever it is,

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00:13:25,680 --> 00:13:30,040

and there's very little conversation about what happened before we put the uniform on.

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00:13:30,040 --> 00:13:34,460

And after almost a thousand conversations now, there's so many of us that were driven

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00:13:34,460 --> 00:13:38,840

to service that did have some things that were, you know, you could, you could categorize

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00:13:38,840 --> 00:13:40,560

traumatic when we were younger.

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00:13:40,560 --> 00:13:45,360

So you, you touched on, you know, the, the family dynamic, were there any other, excuse

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00:13:45,360 --> 00:13:51,320

me, any other elements when you look back now that contributed, do you think to any

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00:13:51,320 --> 00:13:56,760

kind of highs and lows that you had later in life or even your, your drive to serve?

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00:13:56,760 --> 00:14:03,160

Well, the high, I mean, obviously I really wish, you know, I wish that I was just telling

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00:14:03,160 --> 00:14:04,400

my wife this the other day.

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00:14:04,400 --> 00:14:11,800

I wish that the family, the, the family bond that we have, the four of us have, I wish

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00:14:11,800 --> 00:14:14,560

that I would have had that when I was a kid.

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00:14:14,560 --> 00:14:16,800

And I'm just, I, I don't live in resentment of that.

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00:14:16,800 --> 00:14:18,920

I am proud of what we have.

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00:14:18,920 --> 00:14:23,040

I'm just, I am glad that we're able to, you know, between my wife and I, we're able to

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00:14:23,040 --> 00:14:26,600

create an environment that was better than what we had when we were kids.

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00:14:26,600 --> 00:14:29,720

Cause that's what we're supposed to do is leave the world a little bit better than we

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00:14:29,720 --> 00:14:30,720

found it.

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00:14:30,720 --> 00:14:35,480

And the idea that we're able to do this has been, you know, throughout everything that

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00:14:35,480 --> 00:14:39,240

I put that poor woman through, through, you know, the, all the military time and all the

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00:14:39,240 --> 00:14:43,320

deployments and then transitioning out of the military and dealing with my going in

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00:14:43,320 --> 00:14:46,840

every which direction that I could to be able to cope with everything.

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00:14:46,840 --> 00:14:52,040

The fact that we're still here and we have this together is, is remarkable.

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00:14:52,040 --> 00:14:57,840

The putting the uniform on, you know, that was in 19, I got a phone call in March of

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00:14:57,840 --> 00:14:58,840

1996.

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00:14:58,840 --> 00:15:04,480

It was like I graduated high school in June of 95, tried junior college, didn't take because

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00:15:04,480 --> 00:15:07,600

I was, I was so busy surfing and I just, I skipped out.

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00:15:07,600 --> 00:15:09,840

I barely made it through high school because I was surfing so much.

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00:15:09,840 --> 00:15:13,400

And then I couldn't stick with junior college.

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00:15:13,400 --> 00:15:16,600

It was just working, you know, at a restaurant.

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00:15:16,600 --> 00:15:22,380

And then I got a phone call in March of 1996 from a Navy recruiter saying, Hey, you popped

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00:15:22,380 --> 00:15:23,380

up on a radar.

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00:15:23,380 --> 00:15:24,480

It looks like you need a job.

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00:15:24,480 --> 00:15:28,240

And so we started some conversations and then it looked like for me, it was a way for me

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00:15:28,240 --> 00:15:32,440

to still to have a job, start a new lifestyle, be part of something that was bigger than

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00:15:32,440 --> 00:15:35,280

myself and keep me close to the water.

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00:15:35,280 --> 00:15:36,480

And so I could keep surfing.

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00:15:36,480 --> 00:15:38,800

But the Navy sounded like that was the way to go.

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00:15:38,800 --> 00:15:42,960

And then as that progressed, getting into a lot of the programs that the Navy have for

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00:15:42,960 --> 00:15:47,600

special operations, that was that kind of had my aim all over it.

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00:15:47,600 --> 00:15:52,560

So, and was SWCC the first element that you found yourself in?

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00:15:52,560 --> 00:15:57,160

It was, it was, you know, I went to boot camp in October of 1996.

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00:15:57,160 --> 00:16:02,120

And then went to a small little trade school that everybody that you kind of pick out of

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00:16:02,120 --> 00:16:05,720

the gate for about three months at Virginia Beach.

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00:16:05,720 --> 00:16:10,680

And then I was assigned up to Washington, DC, when the Bureau of Naval Personnel was

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00:16:10,680 --> 00:16:13,960

actually based just across the street from the Pentagon.

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00:16:13,960 --> 00:16:16,760

It's now outside of Newington, Tennessee.

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00:16:16,760 --> 00:16:20,320

It's always there just as an E1, E2, kind of an admin waiting to go to a ship.

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00:16:20,320 --> 00:16:23,160

I was supposed to go to a brand new ship that was being built.

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00:16:23,160 --> 00:16:25,280

Down the hall, made some friends.

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00:16:25,280 --> 00:16:30,040

We were all, you know, athletes who were trying to be, you know, in shape and runners.

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00:16:30,040 --> 00:16:32,840

We were, you know, 20 years old, 19, 20 years old.

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00:16:32,840 --> 00:16:37,920

And those guys were all here going to BUDS, dive school, SWCC, EOD or whatever it was.

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00:16:37,920 --> 00:16:41,720

And so I wanted to drive boats because I wanted, that's, that was what I wanted to do.

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00:16:41,720 --> 00:16:45,360

And this is, you know, this is early, this is mid 1997.

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00:16:45,360 --> 00:16:47,200

And so that was where the SWCC stuff started.

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00:16:47,200 --> 00:16:51,640

And then I put a package in and then went to Sears School, January of 98, and then went

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00:16:51,640 --> 00:16:54,120

to SWCC right after that.

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00:16:54,120 --> 00:16:57,680

So for a lot of people listening, you know, we're not super familiar with these roles.

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00:16:57,680 --> 00:17:01,120

Obviously you'd have to go too in depth, but give us an overview on what the SWCC role

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00:17:01,120 --> 00:17:02,120

would be.

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00:17:02,120 --> 00:17:08,160

Well, so the SWCC was, it's not a new program, but it was a newer program that they really

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00:17:08,160 --> 00:17:09,320

stood up and focused on.

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00:17:09,320 --> 00:17:13,080

So SWCC stands for Special Warfare Combatant Crewmember or crewman.

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00:17:13,080 --> 00:17:19,240

And so the history of the SWCC guys or boat guys was, comes from the, the brown water

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00:17:19,240 --> 00:17:26,000

Navy guys driving patrol boats in the river, in the rivers of Vietnam, Cambodia, that during

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00:17:26,000 --> 00:17:27,880

that timeframe in the sixties and seventies.

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00:17:27,880 --> 00:17:31,840

And the history even goes back even further into World War II, but that was kind of where

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00:17:31,840 --> 00:17:37,440

we sort of laid our claim to was, was the brown water Navy guys.

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00:17:37,440 --> 00:17:42,640

And so SWCC in the modern time or in the late nineties really stood up as driving boats,

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00:17:42,640 --> 00:17:49,080

driving either 82 foot boats, 36 foot boats, 24 foot boats for the primary maritime insertion

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00:17:49,080 --> 00:17:52,040

platform for the SEAL teams.

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00:17:52,040 --> 00:17:55,320

So we would be paired up with a SEAL team, a respective SEAL team, and work with the

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00:17:55,320 --> 00:17:58,880

SEAL platoon and be their maritime insertion asset.

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00:17:58,880 --> 00:18:04,640

And so that to me was a way in to being on the water, training to be a combatant, training

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00:18:04,640 --> 00:18:09,160

to be, you know, a commando, at least a maritime type, because that was, that was where that

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00:18:09,160 --> 00:18:10,160

was my bread and butter.

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00:18:10,160 --> 00:18:16,080

And so at that age, I, that was perfect for me because I was able to take it all in and

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00:18:16,080 --> 00:18:21,120

work with a lot of guys that have been around and get around for a long time and really

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00:18:21,120 --> 00:18:25,280

get some really good mentorship, good and bad mentorship, because all mentorship, you

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00:18:25,280 --> 00:18:29,680

know, can go both ways for sure, but it's all good for me.

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00:18:29,680 --> 00:18:35,680

That it was a great time to be raised in my early twenties in that community for sure.

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00:18:35,680 --> 00:18:38,000

What's the relationship between SWCC and the riverines?

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00:18:38,000 --> 00:18:42,880

I had two of the guys that are the founders of the US side of BeaverFit and they were

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00:18:42,880 --> 00:18:43,880

riverines.

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00:18:43,880 --> 00:18:48,160

So it was a short time they stood that back up and then I think they disassembled it again.

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00:18:48,160 --> 00:18:49,200

Oh, okay.

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00:18:49,200 --> 00:18:55,120

So well, the, so the, there was a, you know, when I, when I first started in the late nineties,

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00:18:55,120 --> 00:18:58,280

there were the two boat units on the respective East and West coast out of Virginia Beach

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00:18:58,280 --> 00:18:59,660

and out of Coronado.

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00:18:59,660 --> 00:19:02,440

And then there was one in Panama.

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00:19:02,440 --> 00:19:06,240

So that would have been the old SBU 26 and those old riverine guys.

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00:19:06,240 --> 00:19:11,080

And so I wouldn't call it that there was like animosity or tension, but it was sort of like,

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00:19:11,080 --> 00:19:17,600

if you were a riverine guy, like it was, you were closer to your roots of the old PBR guys,

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00:19:17,600 --> 00:19:20,240

the old patrol boat, riverine guys from Vietnam.

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00:19:20,240 --> 00:19:25,320

And so it was a little bit more like, you're a little bit closer to real world action.

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00:19:25,320 --> 00:19:29,480

If you're a riverine guy, that was sort of like the, what it felt like.

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00:19:29,480 --> 00:19:33,040

But whenever I met or hung out with any of the riverine guys, there was no like, you

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00:19:33,040 --> 00:19:36,700

know, beef between, you know, coastal and riverine guys.

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00:19:36,700 --> 00:19:41,360

But the river, if you wanted to be a riverine guy, you had to live because they later moved

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00:19:41,360 --> 00:19:42,360

to Mississippi.

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00:19:42,360 --> 00:19:44,640

Nobody really wanted to live in Mississippi.

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00:19:44,640 --> 00:19:47,020

So you're like, you river and guys can have it.

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00:19:47,020 --> 00:19:54,120

But the river and guys did definitely continue that, that pioneer portion of the, of the

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00:19:54,120 --> 00:19:58,120

history of the, the brown water Navy guys for sure.

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00:19:58,120 --> 00:19:59,120

And what about deployments?

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00:19:59,120 --> 00:20:01,640

I'm assuming we're still pre 9-11 at this point.

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00:20:01,640 --> 00:20:04,600

Where did you find yourself going under that role?

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00:20:04,600 --> 00:20:10,640

So in 1999, I did my first deployment with, with one of the West coast SEAL teams with,

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00:20:10,640 --> 00:20:14,200

I believe it was SEAL team five out to Guam.

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00:20:14,200 --> 00:20:18,120

And so in Guam there was, you know, there's a, you know, little island in the, you know,

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00:20:18,120 --> 00:20:23,520

in the Marianas Island, in the Marianas, just off the Marianas trench, the Marianas Island

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00:20:23,520 --> 00:20:24,520

group.

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00:20:24,520 --> 00:20:28,880

And it was more, you know, 1999 deploying and it's deploying and training, deploying

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00:20:28,880 --> 00:20:30,960

and training, then doing a little bit with host nation.

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00:20:30,960 --> 00:20:35,560

We did some stuff with the Singaporeans, some stuff with the Solomon islands.

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00:20:35,560 --> 00:20:38,360

And we basically, we're always doing training, training, training.

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00:20:38,360 --> 00:20:42,360

There was a big exercise called Cobra gold that I think that they still really big exercise

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00:20:42,360 --> 00:20:47,840

that they work with, you know, the Koreans, South Korea, you know, and the whole, the

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00:20:47,840 --> 00:20:50,760

whole PACOM, the whole Pacific command region.

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00:20:50,760 --> 00:20:54,480

It was really, it was really cool just because we're now we're closely embedded with our

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00:20:54,480 --> 00:20:56,640

respective SEAL platoon.

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00:20:56,640 --> 00:20:58,400

We're just always doing different stuff.

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00:20:58,400 --> 00:21:03,700

We're doing, you know, visit board search and seizure training, you know, training on

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00:21:03,700 --> 00:21:08,680

Gulf oil platforms, doing over the beach inserts, live fire shooting.

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00:21:08,680 --> 00:21:13,120

And it's just, it's like being, doing a workup prior deployment, but now we're on deployment

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00:21:13,120 --> 00:21:15,560

and we're just always kind of training and doing stuff.

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00:21:15,560 --> 00:21:18,880

And that was a really, once again, a really good experience.

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00:21:18,880 --> 00:21:23,560

And, you know, I came back from that deployment, not knowing if I was going to continue on,

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00:21:23,560 --> 00:21:27,280

got positioned into a really good detachment, some really good leadership, and then went

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00:21:27,280 --> 00:21:33,680

back on deployment the following year in 2000 to the, to Bahrain.

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00:21:33,680 --> 00:21:35,680

So it was like to the central Arabian Gulf.

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00:21:35,680 --> 00:21:39,160

And then our deployments were actually doing, this was like one of the big pieces that we

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00:21:39,160 --> 00:21:41,120

were actually doing real world operations.

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00:21:41,120 --> 00:21:45,320

It was, what we were doing is we would go up to Kuwait and work out of the Northern

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00:21:45,320 --> 00:21:46,480

Arabian Gulf.

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00:21:46,480 --> 00:21:53,720

And as tankers were smuggling oil out of Iraq, out of the KAA, out of the, out of a river,

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00:21:53,720 --> 00:21:58,440

out of Iraq, we would do boardings and then seize the ship and then turn the ship over

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00:21:58,440 --> 00:22:06,000

to the central, the central fleet there to the actual, you know, big Navy.

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00:22:06,000 --> 00:22:09,160

And then they would take control of the ships and then basically seize the tankers and the

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00:22:09,160 --> 00:22:12,400

oil because they were smuggling through running ships dark at night.

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00:22:12,400 --> 00:22:16,560

And so we would go up alongside, Dill Platoon would board and then we would basically, they

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00:22:16,560 --> 00:22:19,720

would secure the ship and then we would take them off and then turn the ship over.

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00:22:19,720 --> 00:22:24,800

So that was really kind of like a pretty cool piece of history for me that where there wasn't

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00:22:24,800 --> 00:22:29,320

a whole lot of kinetic or types of boarding operations like that going on.

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00:22:29,320 --> 00:22:32,720

And so there was a small footprint of us that got to be able to, we were part of it prior

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00:22:32,720 --> 00:22:33,720
to 9-11.

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00:22:33,720 --> 00:22:34,720
Amazing.

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00:22:34,720 --> 00:22:38,800
Well, well, speaking of 9-11, you're already in the Middle East somewhat.

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00:22:38,800 --> 00:22:43,440
Talk to me about what that day looked like for you, what your 9-11 experience was, but

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00:22:43,440 --> 00:22:49,560
also I'd love to hear the kind of contrast between how training was viewed prior to that

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00:22:49,560 --> 00:22:53,720
initiating, and then what changed for you in the role that you held.

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00:22:53,720 --> 00:22:59,360
Yeah, it was, I'd come back from that deployment in December of 2000 and just a few months

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00:22:59,360 --> 00:23:03,920
later I transferred down to Puerto Rico.

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00:23:03,920 --> 00:23:07,920
So I actually was stationed in Puerto Rico for just under three years.

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00:23:07,920 --> 00:23:11,120
And so a lot of the missions that we were doing out of Puerto Rico were your foreign

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00:23:11,120 --> 00:23:12,120
internal defense.

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00:23:12,120 --> 00:23:17,740

We would deploy to, we would just take trips to say Trinidad and Tobago or Peru or Bolivia

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00:23:17,740 --> 00:23:22,960

or Costa Rica and just doing internal training with their host nation, Coast Guard or maritime

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00:23:22,960 --> 00:23:24,240

assets.

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00:23:24,240 --> 00:23:31,440

And so it was on September 12th, 2001, we were supposed to fly to Bolivia to do a three-week

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00:23:31,440 --> 00:23:33,360

training mission for them.

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00:23:33,360 --> 00:23:37,360

And then September 11th happened and we're just kind of glued to the, to we're on the

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00:23:37,360 --> 00:23:40,960

quarter deck of the command watching everything kind of unfold on the screen.

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00:23:40,960 --> 00:23:45,800

And just as anybody can remember that was either, that was on active duty, knew that

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00:23:45,800 --> 00:23:48,640

things were about to really, really dramatically change.

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00:23:48,640 --> 00:23:54,000

And they did in a heartbeat, but we still had a focus for us as part of the contingent

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00:23:54,000 --> 00:24:00,960

and extremist force for South America, for Southcom, we still had a focus because Columbia

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00:24:00,960 --> 00:24:05,720

was still really hot during that time with the FARC and everything that was going on

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00:24:05,720 --> 00:24:07,860

20 plus years ago.

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00:24:07,860 --> 00:24:11,600

And there was American hostages in Columbia that we were getting spun up to actually go

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00:24:11,600 --> 00:24:15,640

and be a blocking force for a respective SEAL platoon for all of these different things.

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00:24:15,640 --> 00:24:19,800

We're also working with Charlie three seven, which was the ODA group that was based out

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00:24:19,800 --> 00:24:23,760

of there for Southcom, Southcom, what used to be located in Puerto Rico.

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00:24:23,760 --> 00:24:27,480

So there was this big contingent that was still focused on central and South America,

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00:24:27,480 --> 00:24:29,240

you know, when everything was going on.

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00:24:29,240 --> 00:24:35,160

So while we did spin, spin some guys up and send guys to East Africa post 9 11, just basically

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00:24:35,160 --> 00:24:36,160

for presence.

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00:24:36,160 --> 00:24:38,400

And that was where Djibouti kind of started to stand up.

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00:24:38,400 --> 00:24:42,860

We were still a contingent force for Southcom and they didn't want us, they, they couldn't

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00:24:42,860 --> 00:24:46,160

just take all assets they could and send them to the Middle East.

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00:24:46,160 --> 00:24:49,920

And plus, I'm a boat guy and Afghanistan was landlocked.

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00:24:49,920 --> 00:24:54,960

So, so we were, we, you know, there was only so much at that point that, that as a SWIT

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00:24:54,960 --> 00:24:58,320

guy that we were part of that, that, that operation.

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00:24:58,320 --> 00:25:04,000

So I had a guest on Kaye Hernandez, who actually came with us on 7X, which we'll get into in

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00:25:04,000 --> 00:25:06,440

a little while, but she used Army ODA.

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00:25:06,440 --> 00:25:10,080

So you just touched on being exposed to the ODA detachment.

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00:25:10,080 --> 00:25:14,800

Talk to me about, you know, what made you transition from the boats to that role?

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00:25:14,800 --> 00:25:17,040

So you know, over the next couple of years, we're really good.

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00:25:17,040 --> 00:25:24,000

You know, I mean, honestly, if you know, they're not being a war going on, being in the military,

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00:25:24,000 --> 00:25:28,120

being a SWIT guy down in Puerto Rico was, was one of the best kept secrets.

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00:25:28,120 --> 00:25:30,000

You know, we got a lot of really good training.

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00:25:30,000 --> 00:25:31,440

It was when Vieques was still open.

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00:25:31,440 --> 00:25:34,280

So we were able to do live shooting over at the Vieques Island.

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00:25:34,280 --> 00:25:37,040

And it was a lot, really a lot of good people.

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00:25:37,040 --> 00:25:39,640

You can get in shape, you could get, there was good surf down there.

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00:25:39,640 --> 00:25:41,280

It was just kind of like a dream.

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00:25:41,280 --> 00:25:45,000

But yeah, then the war kicked off and things started getting a little bit, yeah, a little

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00:25:45,000 --> 00:25:46,000

bit real.

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00:25:46,000 --> 00:25:49,480

Did a lot, still did some more training trips down to Columbia.

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00:25:49,480 --> 00:25:53,680

Did a really good, a really long one, about six weeks to Costa Rica, which I didn't have

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00:25:53,680 --> 00:25:57,840

any complaints about because I was able to find my way, my way, find my way to get some

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00:25:57,840 --> 00:25:59,880

surf while I was on that trip.

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00:25:59,880 --> 00:26:06,480

But then we, Puerto Rico, the Naval base was getting braked, was basically up for getting

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00:26:06,480 --> 00:26:08,440

foreclosure.

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00:26:08,440 --> 00:26:12,640

So the, you know, Congress approved it and they ended up closing that Naval base.

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00:26:12,640 --> 00:26:16,560

And so now all of us are sitting there like, what do I do?

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00:26:16,560 --> 00:26:20,880

At this point, I'd always had this in the back of my mind that I did want to put in

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00:26:20,880 --> 00:26:24,600

an explosive organ disposal technician package.

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00:26:24,600 --> 00:26:28,800

And the time it just, it opened up, like there's this path, there's this opportunity.

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00:26:28,800 --> 00:26:33,040

You're either going to go back to San Diego and be, you know, be a boat guy into your

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00:26:33,040 --> 00:26:39,520

late thirties and forties and, or you have an opportunity to switch to this community

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00:26:39,520 --> 00:26:41,120

and then actually get into the fight.

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00:26:41,120 --> 00:26:42,920

And, you know, Iraq had just kicked off.

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00:26:42,920 --> 00:26:44,440

This was March of 03.

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00:26:44,440 --> 00:26:45,960

Afghanistan was still hot.

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00:26:45,960 --> 00:26:49,720

Here's an opportunity to actually get, you know, build a new trade.

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00:26:49,720 --> 00:26:53,720

And that was what I thought was if I'm going to spend 20 years in this military, I'm going

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00:26:53,720 --> 00:26:57,000

to get as much out of it as I can.

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00:26:57,000 --> 00:26:58,880

So now you switched from the boats.

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00:26:58,880 --> 00:27:01,160

If you wouldn't mind, give us an overview of that role.

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00:27:01,160 --> 00:27:02,160

Yeah.

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00:27:02,160 --> 00:27:06,520

So, yeah, so I knew that the process, I was reluctant because I wasn't sure where like

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00:27:06,520 --> 00:27:09,000

the SWCC leadership was going to sit.

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00:27:09,000 --> 00:27:14,200

You know, I didn't want them to think or feel that I was turning my back on the community,

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00:27:14,200 --> 00:27:15,200

but it was really good.

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00:27:15,200 --> 00:27:19,400

And, you know, that last podcast, I couldn't remember his first name, but his name was

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00:27:19,400 --> 00:27:24,240

Mike Whirlman, who was the SWCC sort of detailer who detailed all the enlisted guys, wherever

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00:27:24,240 --> 00:27:25,240

they were.

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00:27:25,240 --> 00:27:29,320

And I remember the phone call, just like it was yesterday when I told him what I was thinking.

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00:27:29,320 --> 00:27:32,600

And he said, he goes, look, man, you've done six years for the community.

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00:27:32,600 --> 00:27:34,400

Like, if you want to go, you can go.

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00:27:34,400 --> 00:27:37,960

And if it doesn't work out for whatever reason, if you fail out or if you get dropped, you

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00:27:37,960 --> 00:27:38,960

can come back.

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00:27:38,960 --> 00:27:41,760

I mean, it was really, you know, he said, you did a really good job for us.

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00:27:41,760 --> 00:27:45,680

And so there's no hard feelings, at least not from from our office.

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00:27:45,680 --> 00:27:51,320

So an EOD school being, you know, academically challenging, more so academically challenging.

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00:27:51,320 --> 00:27:52,320

It starts with dive school.

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00:27:52,320 --> 00:27:55,400

It's about two and a half months of dive school in Panama City.

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00:27:55,400 --> 00:28:03,600

And I was surprised how there was, you know, the student, the class seemed pretty deep.

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00:28:03,600 --> 00:28:05,200

And we lost a lot of students in dive school.

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00:28:05,200 --> 00:28:06,680

They just weren't comfortable in the water.

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00:28:06,680 --> 00:28:07,680

And so it's dive school.

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00:28:07,680 --> 00:28:10,160

I mean, this was this was my this was my bread and butter.

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00:28:10,160 --> 00:28:11,160

This is where I was at.

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00:28:11,160 --> 00:28:13,760

And so I felt most comfortable.

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00:28:13,760 --> 00:28:17,400

Finished dive school and then EOD school is another 10, 11 months after that.

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00:28:17,400 --> 00:28:20,440

So we're looking at around 12 with a little bit of a hold time.

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00:28:20,440 --> 00:28:26,200

There was about 14 months of training of school before even getting to an EOD command or an

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00:28:26,200 --> 00:28:31,440

EOD mobile unit and then getting worked up and then assigned and then deployed.

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00:28:31,440 --> 00:28:32,840

So it's going to be a long time.

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00:28:32,840 --> 00:28:38,320

But I wouldn't I wouldn't have traded my timing for anything because it was just it was perfect.

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00:28:38,320 --> 00:28:44,000

You know, I went over to EOD schools and E6 finished EOD school in February of 2005.

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00:28:44,000 --> 00:28:49,240

So that whole cycle of one year long, you know, year and a half long process.

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00:28:49,240 --> 00:28:55,080

And then eventually found myself in August of 2005 after my first EOD workup and taking

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00:28:55,080 --> 00:29:00,880

it all in and this new new community, new personalities and new mentors being a new

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00:29:00,880 --> 00:29:02,800

guy all over again.

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00:29:02,800 --> 00:29:07,880

And then assigned to SEAL Team 3, which I which later I pretty much found my home for

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00:29:07,880 --> 00:29:12,520

the following, you know, eight, 10 years is where I would cycle in and out with those

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00:29:12,520 --> 00:29:14,320

guys.

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00:29:14,320 --> 00:29:17,600

So you talked about the diving portion.

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00:29:17,600 --> 00:29:21,240

When you're in this new role, was there a skydiving element to it as well?

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00:29:21,240 --> 00:29:22,240

There wasn't not yet.

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00:29:22,240 --> 00:29:26,960

There was like with EOD, there is a military freefall aspect to it, but it's not a pipeline

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00:29:26,960 --> 00:29:27,960

portion.

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00:29:27,960 --> 00:29:28,960

So not everybody's going through it.

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00:29:28,960 --> 00:29:35,760

I had gone to, you know, the formerly called Fort Benning, Georgia back in February 2002

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00:29:35,760 --> 00:29:37,120

for static line airborne.

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00:29:37,120 --> 00:29:43,040

So three weeks there, that was my first time jumping out of a plane at 1200 feet.

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00:29:43,040 --> 00:29:49,280

So speaking of that, I was just at a talk here in Ocala.

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00:29:49,280 --> 00:29:55,480

There's IHMC is a big research organization and they were doing a concussion study on

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00:29:55,480 --> 00:29:57,780

the airborne candidates.

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00:29:57,780 --> 00:30:01,540

So all the jumps and they would have this kind of ballistic helmet that they could figure

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00:30:01,540 --> 00:30:05,000

out kind of what level of impact they took when they fell.

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00:30:05,000 --> 00:30:09,360

And you know, it was an interesting perspective on something that ultimately seems mild.

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00:30:09,360 --> 00:30:13,360

Now when you're in the role that you're in now, we're talking about obviously explosives

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00:30:13,360 --> 00:30:15,840

and breaching some of these other elements.

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00:30:15,840 --> 00:30:20,440

Jumping ahead again, talk to me about the TBI and concussion element of the men and women

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00:30:20,440 --> 00:30:22,240

that serve in your role.

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00:30:22,240 --> 00:30:25,000

Oh, it's significant.

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00:30:25,000 --> 00:30:28,640

You know, at the time when you're standing up against a breach, you're setting a breach

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00:30:28,640 --> 00:30:32,680

or a charge is going off, you know, you're young and we hadn't had all these studies

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00:30:32,680 --> 00:30:34,320

yet.

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00:30:34,320 --> 00:30:35,320

It was awesome.

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00:30:35,320 --> 00:30:40,320

And we're like, yes, this is what I just created on the table or this is what we're doing.

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00:30:40,320 --> 00:30:42,560

And we love the fireworks show.

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00:30:42,560 --> 00:30:45,440

And now we're blowing doors open or we're getting rid of ordinance.

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00:30:45,440 --> 00:30:53,520

So we're basically practicing demo and feeling that shock of what these chemical compounds

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00:30:53,520 --> 00:30:54,520

can do.

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00:30:54,520 --> 00:30:55,520

It's a thrill.

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00:30:55,520 --> 00:30:57,720

It's a rush.

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00:30:57,720 --> 00:31:02,320

Over time and that exposure, we have found ways, thankfully in the military, I'm sure

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00:31:02,320 --> 00:31:07,000

at this point I'm granted a little far removed from it, but I found ways to mitigate that.

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00:31:07,000 --> 00:31:12,480

And what we did in I'd say 2012, 2013, it was a requirement for us to wear ballistic

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00:31:12,480 --> 00:31:15,960

helmets while we were doing breaching operations.

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00:31:15,960 --> 00:31:22,040

Well, the ballistic was for basically for shrapnel if you're exposed to it and then

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00:31:22,040 --> 00:31:24,480

any of the door shrapnel or anything comes flying at you.

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00:31:24,480 --> 00:31:27,480

What we started to do was kind of say, fuck that.

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00:31:27,480 --> 00:31:32,680

We're going to wear our vented helmets because when that shockwave goes into it goes everywhere

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00:31:32,680 --> 00:31:37,800

and it goes up into around your head, we don't want that kevlar ballistic helmet keeping

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00:31:37,800 --> 00:31:38,800

in that blast way.

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00:31:38,800 --> 00:31:39,800

We want it to vent out.

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00:31:39,800 --> 00:31:44,240

So we would wear our carbon fiber helmets that we were issued.

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00:31:44,240 --> 00:31:48,960

And so that was a way to so I mean, a lot of us were suffering from short term memory

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00:31:48,960 --> 00:31:52,640

loss and headaches and problems with sleep while we're on active duty.

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00:31:52,640 --> 00:31:55,280

But it's just that we thought, oh, well, like we're sleep deprived.

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00:31:55,280 --> 00:31:58,320

And this is just this is this is how it is and we just can keep going.

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00:31:58,320 --> 00:32:02,160

I mean, that's that was that was the beauty part about about working with so many great

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00:32:02,160 --> 00:32:07,640

guys was that we can operate in the red and we can still operate as hard as we can and

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00:32:07,640 --> 00:32:08,640

perform.

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00:32:08,640 --> 00:32:13,920

And so but yeah, the traumatic brain injury is definitely a real thing, especially in

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00:32:13,920 --> 00:32:17,920

a real, you know, almost, you know, kind of an epidemic that's happening because we had

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00:32:17,920 --> 00:32:23,100

no idea, you know, in the early 2000s, you know, up until just really fairly recently,

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00:32:23,100 --> 00:32:26,360

how bad it really is and what the after effects are.

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00:32:26,360 --> 00:32:29,720

You know, we thought it was just like, OK, well, this is just this.

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00:32:29,720 --> 00:32:30,720

This is part of it.

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00:32:30,720 --> 00:32:34,760

This is hard and it's cool that we're so close to these charges and it, you know, I'm going

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00:32:34,760 --> 00:32:35,760

to get your blood pumping, man.

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00:32:35,760 --> 00:32:36,760

I mean, it's it's awesome.

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00:32:36,760 --> 00:32:40,760

So but we just didn't know it wasn't good for you.

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00:32:40,760 --> 00:32:42,440

I had Sarah Wilkinson on this.

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00:32:42,440 --> 00:32:44,720
She's gone twice now, I think.

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00:32:44,720 --> 00:32:47,320
But she lost her husband, Chad, you know, who's the seal.

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00:32:47,320 --> 00:32:50,360
And then Jamie Metcalfe's husband, David, as well.

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00:32:50,360 --> 00:32:53,000
And both of them, it seems like there was a TBI element.

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00:32:53,000 --> 00:32:56,560
So when you know my profession, we don't get as much of that.

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00:32:56,560 --> 00:32:58,400
You know, we have ceiling fall on my heads.

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00:32:58,400 --> 00:33:03,320
And if we like I did martial arts, so I had a lot of impacts from other human beings.

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00:33:03,320 --> 00:33:07,840
But, you know, you and law enforcement, those are communities where if we're missing the

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00:33:07,840 --> 00:33:12,900
TBI element in the mental health conversation, someone might be doing all the right therapies

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00:33:12,900 --> 00:33:15,440
and still that one portion is being missed.

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00:33:15,440 --> 00:33:20,240
Yeah, no, because it develops scar tissue on the brain.

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00:33:20,240 --> 00:33:25,720

And it's it's from what I understand, it's not it's not really reversible.

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00:33:25,720 --> 00:33:30,600

We have to have different coping mechanisms and different methods in order to cope with

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00:33:30,600 --> 00:33:33,400

it in order to basically get through it.

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00:33:33,400 --> 00:33:40,240

And it develops into hormone imbalances, it develops into which really then develops into

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00:33:40,240 --> 00:33:49,440

just personality and mindset imbalances where it's just it's just functioning on a different

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00:33:49,440 --> 00:33:53,080

on a different plane because of that developed scar tissue, for sure.

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00:33:53,080 --> 00:33:54,080

Absolutely.

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00:33:54,080 --> 00:33:58,440

I've had quite a few people say that there's promising information coming out as far as

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00:33:58,440 --> 00:34:02,840

psilocybin, not just the mental health kind of, you know, ayahuasca element, but that

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00:34:02,840 --> 00:34:06,400

compound and actually be able to help the trauma from TBI.

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00:34:06,400 --> 00:34:09,680

Oh, I mean, not to get too far into it.

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00:34:09,680 --> 00:34:11,920

But yeah, I absolutely support that.

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00:34:11,920 --> 00:34:15,640

Because I think that what what I've seen that that does is that helps.

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00:34:15,640 --> 00:34:21,160

It doesn't it's another way of coping with it, but it helps remap how we make decisions.

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00:34:21,160 --> 00:34:22,960

It doesn't change who you are.

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00:34:22,960 --> 00:34:28,120

And that was never three thousand plus years ago when they first when when tribes in South

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00:34:28,120 --> 00:34:33,320

America were using these medicines was not to change the person but to help remap their

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00:34:33,320 --> 00:34:35,920

decision making process.

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00:34:35,920 --> 00:34:36,920

Absolutely.

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00:34:36,920 --> 00:34:38,960

Well, you mentioned Iraq then.

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00:34:38,960 --> 00:34:41,120

So 9-11 happens, you change into the EOD.

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00:34:41,120 --> 00:34:43,640

I've got that anagram right this time.

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00:34:43,640 --> 00:34:47,360

So now, where did you find yourself in Iraq?

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00:34:47,360 --> 00:34:48,360

So I found myself in Iraq.

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00:34:48,360 --> 00:34:53,520

You know, first I was paired up with SEAL Team 3 in August of 2005.

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00:34:53,520 --> 00:34:56,720

And then I met the platoon.

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00:34:56,720 --> 00:35:01,280

And when I met the platoon, it was a really unique, really unique experience that first

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00:35:01,280 --> 00:35:06,240

day walking into the land warfare facility out there in Island, California, was I got

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00:35:06,240 --> 00:35:07,520

there when everybody was still sleeping.

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00:35:07,520 --> 00:35:12,040

They were already they were already had been there for a week training.

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00:35:12,040 --> 00:35:15,880

And this guy's walking down the hall and I'm in, you know, I'm in I'm in uniform because

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00:35:15,880 --> 00:35:19,000

I thought that's what I was supposed to be is in uniform driving out there.

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00:35:19,000 --> 00:35:23,240

And the guy walking down the hall walks up to me and I'm like, well, no shit.

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00:35:23,240 --> 00:35:24,880

That's my Tony.

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00:35:24,880 --> 00:35:31,400

The Tony was a team guy that was on my first deployment to Guam in 1999.

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00:35:31,400 --> 00:35:34,720

And he walks down the hallway and he's like, Nick, yes, he is.

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00:35:34,720 --> 00:35:35,720

Are you a guy?

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00:35:35,720 --> 00:35:37,720

I said, yeah, because you're in trouble, too.

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00:35:37,720 --> 00:35:38,720

OK.

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00:35:38,720 --> 00:35:41,480

And so that was that first, you know, so he already knew me from this.

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00:35:41,480 --> 00:35:46,760

He's been six, seven years prior to then putting me into this into his platoon, which turned

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00:35:46,760 --> 00:35:52,160

out to be, you know, Dr. Willings task unit with Charlie and Delta Platoon, Leif Babin

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00:35:52,160 --> 00:35:54,960

with the OIC, was the officer in charge of the platoon.

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00:35:54,960 --> 00:35:59,240

And so those dynamics really started to kind of to really take some really good shape.

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00:35:59,240 --> 00:36:01,640

You know, it got really good mentorship from those guys as well.

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00:36:01,640 --> 00:36:06,080

You know, guys like Chris Kyle, Ben Teder, Bob Holland.

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00:36:06,080 --> 00:36:11,040

I mean, the list goes on and on and, you know, form really long life standing friendships.

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00:36:11,040 --> 00:36:16,600

I'm still really good friends with Jake Heimbaum and Bob Holland and a lot of those great guys.

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00:36:16,600 --> 00:36:21,440

And we were getting spun up to go to Iraq and we were going to be doing a type of mission

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00:36:21,440 --> 00:36:22,920

that was like not all that sexy.

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00:36:22,920 --> 00:36:27,280

It was like we were just going to be doing some PSD, personal security details, what

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00:36:27,280 --> 00:36:28,520

we're going to be tasked with.

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00:36:28,520 --> 00:36:32,600

And I think we got that tasking right around February.

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00:36:32,600 --> 00:36:35,640

And then we had about a month and a half off.

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00:36:35,640 --> 00:36:39,200

I went to military free fall school, you know, sort of on my pre-deployment leave.

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00:36:39,200 --> 00:36:42,720

So I got a seat at free fall schools three weeks and out in San Diego.

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00:36:42,720 --> 00:36:46,680

And that was where I got my first dose of jumping out of a plane, at least in free fall

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00:36:46,680 --> 00:36:47,680

capacity.

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00:36:47,680 --> 00:36:54,960

When we get to the North Island to take off on the C-17, we were told that we were going

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00:36:54,960 --> 00:37:01,120

to Al Ambar province in Ramadi and we were going to basically be conducting the Sunni

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00:37:01,120 --> 00:37:09,160

Triangle conducting asymmetrical kinetic operations with the Marine Corps, with the Army and

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00:37:09,160 --> 00:37:15,680

basically being this big assist as advisors with the Iraqi Army, the Iraqi Jundis.

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00:37:15,680 --> 00:37:22,040

And so immediately while we're on the tarmac, we're like, oh shit, like this is going to

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00:37:22,040 --> 00:37:23,040

be pretty bad.

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00:37:23,040 --> 00:37:25,240

We thought we were just doing security detail, but okay.

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00:37:25,240 --> 00:37:30,000

So the quick shift in all of our sort of demeanor started to kind of happen that day.

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00:37:30,000 --> 00:37:35,080

And so we, yeah, we found ourselves in Iraq within the first two weeks.

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00:37:35,080 --> 00:37:36,680

We were out doing kinetic operations.

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00:37:36,680 --> 00:37:40,440

We were just getting fuel, doing some atmospheric and getting a lay of the land and just pouncing

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00:37:40,440 --> 00:37:46,120

on targets, taking Intel and yeah, and really doing our thing, what we're supposed to be

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00:37:46,120 --> 00:37:50,280

doing and going after bad guys and pissing people off.

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00:37:50,280 --> 00:37:53,240

Well, Jocko's been on the show a couple of times.

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00:37:53,240 --> 00:37:55,840

Leif, we were talking about him just before we hit record.

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00:37:55,840 --> 00:37:56,840

Amazing guy.

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00:37:56,840 --> 00:37:57,840

Loved having him on as well.

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00:37:57,840 --> 00:37:58,840

Great guy.

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00:37:58,840 --> 00:38:02,680

But I want to ask you a different question because I mean, first off, obviously those

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00:38:02,680 --> 00:38:07,320

deployments have been story told quite a lot now, that specific area.

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00:38:07,320 --> 00:38:13,320

However, I think the really valuable perspective that most people don't get, and I'll preface

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00:38:13,320 --> 00:38:18,500

it with this, when we're back home, when you're a civilian, you get a very polarized view

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00:38:18,500 --> 00:38:20,200

of war through your televisions.

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00:38:20,200 --> 00:38:24,560

Either kill them all, let God sort them out, stack bodies, or they're all baby killers.

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00:38:24,560 --> 00:38:29,240

And in the middle are the men and women, arguably sometimes children that we send overseas to

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00:38:29,240 --> 00:38:31,240

fight for our country.

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00:38:31,240 --> 00:38:37,200

So first part of the two part question, regardless of the politics that sent you to, in this

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00:38:37,200 --> 00:38:43,200

case Iraq, was there a point where you started witnessing horrors, atrocities, whatever it

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00:38:43,200 --> 00:38:47,120

was, where you realized, okay, there were some horrendous people that needed to be taken

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00:38:47,120 --> 00:38:48,120

care of?

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00:38:48,120 --> 00:38:50,120

Oh, without a doubt.

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00:38:50,120 --> 00:38:55,400

Yeah, regardless of politics, at the time, being in my mid, late 20s, and most of us

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00:38:55,400 --> 00:39:00,800

were all of that age, mid, late 20s, and we were older than what the guys were.

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00:39:00,800 --> 00:39:03,840

We were, Sebastian Younger followed at Restrepo.

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00:39:03,840 --> 00:39:10,240

I mean, a lot of those guys were 18, 19 years old, and over there for a long time, man,

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00:39:10,240 --> 00:39:14,320

I mean, a good year plus.

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00:39:14,320 --> 00:39:23,600

The atrocities of, it definitely wrecks, it impacts your hope in humanity when you see

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00:39:23,600 --> 00:39:29,280

the way that other people are and that other cultures are and how things just seem to be

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00:39:29,280 --> 00:39:30,280

okay.

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00:39:30,280 --> 00:39:33,360

You can sit there and say, hey, we should westernize all this, but there's just some

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00:39:33,360 --> 00:39:36,480

certain dignity that you got to have.

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00:39:36,480 --> 00:39:39,560

You can't treat people like this.

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00:39:39,560 --> 00:39:45,480

And there comes to a certain, there's got to be a line drawn in the sand.

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00:39:45,480 --> 00:39:49,920

This was in 2006, and so it wasn't something we were really ever concerned about getting

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00:39:49,920 --> 00:39:55,460

in trouble for interfering, but there's a line that's got to be drawn where your own

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00:39:55,460 --> 00:39:59,680

culture has to be implemented when it comes to the human decency.

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00:39:59,680 --> 00:40:03,600

Now granted, that can be a little bit subjective, especially in today's day and age, but there's

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00:40:03,600 --> 00:40:09,120

got to be a line that where you've got to impose some human decency in how you treat

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00:40:09,120 --> 00:40:11,880

people, no matter what.

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00:40:11,880 --> 00:40:19,760

I mean, we can look, we're directed at what we're looking at on Instagram, on the news

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00:40:19,760 --> 00:40:24,160

channels and things like that, but if you actually really look or you're able to see

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00:40:24,160 --> 00:40:28,960

some of these countries that are just basically suffering from total genocide because of their

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00:40:28,960 --> 00:40:36,200

religion, it's absurd that you've got to implement your culture in order for some human decency

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00:40:36,200 --> 00:40:38,000

to restore your hope in humanity.

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00:40:38,000 --> 00:40:40,200

There's no question about that.

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00:40:40,200 --> 00:40:43,080

And so there was, yeah, I mean, it was really bad.

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00:40:43,080 --> 00:40:51,240

I don't want to get into any gory details or anything like that, but I was, being in

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00:40:51,240 --> 00:40:56,800

the military, in combat with your brothers, shoulder to shoulder and seeing the way that

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00:40:56,800 --> 00:41:03,040

other cultures and other people sort of live and operate, it should really appreciate being

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00:41:03,040 --> 00:41:05,560

an American for sure.

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00:41:05,560 --> 00:41:06,560

Absolutely.

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00:41:06,560 --> 00:41:11,280

Well, the other side of the coin, another perspective that we really don't get, kindness

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00:41:11,280 --> 00:41:15,040

and compassion amidst these battlefields.

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00:41:15,040 --> 00:41:19,640

I've had so many people tell just incredible stories, whether it's our own men and women

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00:41:19,640 --> 00:41:23,860

in uniform, whether it's the indigenous people that you guys were over there to protect.

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00:41:23,860 --> 00:41:27,920

So what were some of the kind of moments that really stuck with you as you transitioned

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00:41:27,920 --> 00:41:28,920

out?

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00:41:28,920 --> 00:41:36,040

You know, I remember, I remember going, we were doing a morning daytime clearance and

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00:41:36,040 --> 00:41:43,320

I remember going and usually in the morning, it's really, there's not a lot of tension

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00:41:43,320 --> 00:41:44,320

in the air.

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00:41:44,320 --> 00:41:46,720

It's usually in the afternoons and evenings during prayer time.

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00:41:46,720 --> 00:41:50,120

The mornings we do these clearances and it's more of like a show of force.

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00:41:50,120 --> 00:41:52,520

It's more of a show of presence.

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00:41:52,520 --> 00:41:55,880

We go inside in this building, we've gone inside several, several buildings in this

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00:41:55,880 --> 00:42:04,200

very urban neighborhood and there's this dad standing up, not a threat, just standing there

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00:42:04,200 --> 00:42:06,240

with his daughter.

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00:42:06,240 --> 00:42:13,200

And I remember standing there seeing like he was, he put on this face, like he was trying

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00:42:13,200 --> 00:42:14,880

to be happy to see us.

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00:42:14,880 --> 00:42:16,520

He was, I mean, he was scared.

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00:42:16,520 --> 00:42:17,520

She was scared.

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00:42:17,520 --> 00:42:27,240

But I, and I, this was before I was a father and I remember his concern for her safety

666

00:42:27,240 --> 00:42:31,760

and I broke out a little glow stick, you know, kids love these things at Halloween.

667

00:42:31,760 --> 00:42:32,760

I broke out a little glow stick.

668

00:42:32,760 --> 00:42:34,360

I think it was green or you know, whatever.

669

00:42:34,360 --> 00:42:36,920

And I broke it and I gave it to her.

670

00:42:36,920 --> 00:42:41,240

And it wasn't that she was just showered with happiness, but it was more just like, we're

671

00:42:41,240 --> 00:42:46,960

not here to disrupt your way of life.

672

00:42:46,960 --> 00:42:50,960

It's like, you know, and I could see this, this compassion and this care of this father

673

00:42:50,960 --> 00:42:57,160

that he had for these, you know, these men and, you know, in ballistic, you know, attire

674

00:42:57,160 --> 00:43:01,160

and guns and all this shit and all these people coming in.

675

00:43:01,160 --> 00:43:05,320

And I just, that was the, that was a moment that I reflect back on sometimes.

676

00:43:05,320 --> 00:43:10,800

It's like, if that were me in my house and people were coming in, the way I would deal

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00:43:10,800 --> 00:43:13,920

with that would have been drastically different.

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00:43:13,920 --> 00:43:21,720

But the compassion that he had for his daughter definitely sat with me for a long time.

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00:43:21,720 --> 00:43:24,360

I think this is an important conversation.

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00:43:24,360 --> 00:43:25,360

You hear that over and over again.

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00:43:25,360 --> 00:43:30,080

And I think one of the things that the media does that's very irresponsible is paint the

682

00:43:30,080 --> 00:43:32,160

picture that we're at war with Iraq.

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00:43:32,160 --> 00:43:36,560

We're at war with Afghanistan where, you know, the truth is there's the average person is

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00:43:36,560 --> 00:43:40,720

just trying to get on with their life, but there are, you know, extremists in their country

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00:43:40,720 --> 00:43:42,320

that are terrorizing them.

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00:43:42,320 --> 00:43:47,000

So, you know, when you hear about what the average person was like in these countries

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00:43:47,000 --> 00:43:53,880

and the humanity, the shared experience of the soldier and the resident, I think it's

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00:43:53,880 --> 00:43:56,200

an important perspective that we just don't hear very often.

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00:43:56,200 --> 00:43:57,200

Yeah.

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00:43:57,200 --> 00:44:01,280

I mean, don't get me wrong, you know, like, you know, before Donald Rumsfeld passed away,

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00:44:01,280 --> 00:44:04,080

he, you know, there was a documentary that he did.

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00:44:04,080 --> 00:44:08,280

It was called, I think the, the, the unknown knowns.

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00:44:08,280 --> 00:44:11,160

And it was a really good documentary and he admitted to some of the mistakes.

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00:44:11,160 --> 00:44:14,840

I mean, it's like, yes, they made some mistakes and people died.

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00:44:14,840 --> 00:44:20,600

And, but these, these were at the time of the intelligence and the data that they were

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00:44:20,600 --> 00:44:23,960

provided, this was the best decision.

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00:44:23,960 --> 00:44:30,120

These were the, a series of decisions that were made for us to go and execute.

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00:44:30,120 --> 00:44:31,120

Yeah.

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00:44:31,120 --> 00:44:35,320

They made, they made some mistakes and where it's our job to go, you know, go through and

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00:44:35,320 --> 00:44:38,400

execute as cleanly and as effective as can be.

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00:44:38,400 --> 00:44:41,560

It's not, it wasn't a uniformed war against Iraq.

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00:44:41,560 --> 00:44:45,320

It really wasn't a uniformed war against Afghanistan.

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00:44:45,320 --> 00:44:47,320

It just, it doesn't happen that way.

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00:44:47,320 --> 00:44:51,400

It's kinetic and it's asymmetric and it's guerrilla warfare on a completely different playing

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00:44:51,400 --> 00:44:52,400

field.

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00:44:52,400 --> 00:44:54,800

And it continues to adapt.

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00:44:54,800 --> 00:45:01,360

It's this insurgency type of revolutionary set of mindset that is just, it is not easy

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00:45:01,360 --> 00:45:04,280

to play that chess game at all.

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00:45:04,280 --> 00:45:07,920

Now with K.E., I think there was another guest, I'm blanking who it was now, but someone else

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00:45:07,920 --> 00:45:10,000

was in the EOD role as well.

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00:45:10,000 --> 00:45:15,040

And they were talking about almost the chess game they were playing with the bomb makers.

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00:45:15,040 --> 00:45:18,780

And when, you know, when you guys found a solution, then they would then one up and

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00:45:18,780 --> 00:45:20,000

figure around that.

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00:45:20,000 --> 00:45:25,720

So what was your perspective when there was such a big IED element to both of these conflicts

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00:45:25,720 --> 00:45:27,440

through your EOD lens?

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00:45:27,440 --> 00:45:29,840

Oh, I was terrified.

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00:45:29,840 --> 00:45:32,280

I mean, I was, I was, I was terrified.

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00:45:32,280 --> 00:45:39,240

You know, the EOD role that I had with the SEAL teams is not EOD work every single day.

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00:45:39,240 --> 00:45:43,560

Whereas where some EOD guys were deployed into a capacity where they were doing response

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00:45:43,560 --> 00:45:47,800

work where they would be sitting at the FOB or the forward operating base, get a phone

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00:45:47,800 --> 00:45:53,840

call from an element that's out in the, outside the wire and say, hey, we have a suspect IED.

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00:45:53,840 --> 00:45:57,520

All right guys, load up the truck and then go prosecute an IED.

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00:45:57,520 --> 00:46:02,200

As simple as that sounds, it's very complex and very difficult and very dangerous.

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00:46:02,200 --> 00:46:08,400

My role as an EOD guy was the, we sort of adopted this adage of a, we're to clear the

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00:46:08,400 --> 00:46:13,240

impedance, any impedance to assault that has like an explosive component to it, an unknown

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00:46:13,240 --> 00:46:16,880

explosive, an improvised explosive device.

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00:46:16,880 --> 00:46:19,520

No, I was terrified.

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00:46:19,520 --> 00:46:24,040

You know, while being part of the assigned with the SEAL platoons, it was great because

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00:46:24,040 --> 00:46:26,480

I got to be on the assault.

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00:46:26,480 --> 00:46:28,080

I got to be on the offensive.

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00:46:28,080 --> 00:46:33,680

Whereas instead of being an EOD guy waiting for the phone call, that's more of a response

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00:46:33,680 --> 00:46:34,680

to something.

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00:46:34,680 --> 00:46:37,720

So I liked the part of it as being part of the offensive.

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00:46:37,720 --> 00:46:42,160

And so I sort of stuck with that the rest of my career as an EOD guy.

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00:46:42,160 --> 00:46:44,320

The, I was scared.

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00:46:44,320 --> 00:46:52,400

The thing was is that I adopted this mindset to where, and I used it later on when I would

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00:46:52,400 --> 00:46:57,560

train other EOD guys as I got older in the community was that I didn't want to make a

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00:46:57,560 --> 00:47:02,920

mistake that got someone else killed or hurt.

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00:47:02,920 --> 00:47:03,920

Like I'm okay.

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00:47:03,920 --> 00:47:06,920

Like wrapping my head around, I'm going to go to work on something.

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00:47:06,920 --> 00:47:09,160

And if it kills me, that'll suck.

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00:47:09,160 --> 00:47:10,160

It's fine.

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00:47:10,160 --> 00:47:12,680

But as long as I don't get anybody else hurt.

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00:47:12,680 --> 00:47:15,920

So that was, it had to do with the training that I gave the guys.

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00:47:15,920 --> 00:47:20,860

When you see me take a knee, get the fuck out of the room, like leave, because if something

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00:47:20,860 --> 00:47:22,800

goes off, it's, it's me.

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00:47:22,800 --> 00:47:23,800

This is my job.

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00:47:23,800 --> 00:47:28,160

And it's not yours to take the blast for it.

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00:47:28,160 --> 00:47:33,120

And so that was, but yeah, I mean, every target, you know, I would hear over the radio, EOD

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00:47:33,120 --> 00:47:34,920

up and I'm like, oh shit.

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00:47:34,920 --> 00:47:37,200

You know, like I get pumped and it's like, I get to go to work.

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00:47:37,200 --> 00:47:39,680

But then again, it's like, oh man, what am I going to find?

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00:47:39,680 --> 00:47:43,880

And so, you know, the first time I got a call was on our first target and I rise and I got

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00:47:43,880 --> 00:47:49,240

a call was like, EOD up and I'm like, go and I go over and it was this stealing fan underneath

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00:47:49,240 --> 00:47:50,240

the stairs.

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00:47:50,240 --> 00:47:52,040

And I'm like, what's up?

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00:47:52,040 --> 00:47:54,480

He's like, I don't know, that looks weird.

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00:47:54,480 --> 00:47:59,080

Like it is weird to put a ceiling fan underneath the stairs, but it's just a ceiling fan.

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00:47:59,080 --> 00:48:04,400

So he said, well, fuck you then, you know, it was, it was good, but it was like, that

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00:48:04,400 --> 00:48:06,480

was the first time that it was like, okay, it's on.

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00:48:06,480 --> 00:48:11,080

And so throughout that, you know, any of those deployments, it's like, yeah, I was, I mean,

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00:48:11,080 --> 00:48:15,400

I was afraid, man, I didn't, I didn't want to get in any of my, my, my friends and my

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00:48:15,400 --> 00:48:18,520

teammates who get killed or hurt, you know, because of something that I was responsible

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00:48:18,520 --> 00:48:19,520

for.

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00:48:19,520 --> 00:48:22,360

So that's kind of, that's everybody.

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00:48:22,360 --> 00:48:24,760

So, yeah.

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00:48:24,760 --> 00:48:29,880

When I was listening to you on the EOD podcast and you said this same thing about wanting

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00:48:29,880 --> 00:48:32,600

to make sure that your mistake didn't get someone else killed.

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00:48:32,600 --> 00:48:36,560

I don't know if I just picked on something wasn't there, but it almost sounded like there

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00:48:36,560 --> 00:48:40,000

was a real raw emotion behind that statement.

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00:48:40,000 --> 00:48:41,000

Yeah.

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00:48:41,000 --> 00:48:45,760

So, you know, I, I came back from those deployments.

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00:48:45,760 --> 00:48:52,960

There's a lot of combat lost, lost more guys than we, we thought, you know, we weren't

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00:48:52,960 --> 00:48:59,640

supposed to lose anybody because we've got, you know, we have the tactical advantage.

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00:48:59,640 --> 00:49:02,880

We have the equipment, we have nighttime, we have night vision equipment, you know,

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00:49:02,880 --> 00:49:06,080

we have all these things that are advantage, but yet we still, you know, we're able to

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00:49:06,080 --> 00:49:10,520

find that, find out that we were human.

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00:49:10,520 --> 00:49:16,960

So I wanted to package everything that I learned and pass that down and, and it wasn't just

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00:49:16,960 --> 00:49:22,200

the actions on because actions on they change in even from region to region, whether that

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00:49:22,200 --> 00:49:26,280

be in the West and now AMBAR or in Baghdad, you know, they operate and they have different

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00:49:26,280 --> 00:49:32,240

equipment they have, they're able to get different technology for their IDs and weapon systems

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00:49:32,240 --> 00:49:33,240

in different areas.

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00:49:33,240 --> 00:49:38,200

So it was different, but what I was trying to adopt was a mindset pass down.

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00:49:38,200 --> 00:49:42,480

And that was just take care of your guys better.

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00:49:42,480 --> 00:49:44,840

I mean, it better than you take care of yourself.

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00:49:44,840 --> 00:49:45,840

And that's the mindset.

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00:49:45,840 --> 00:49:50,600

And that's the, that's the, what brotherhood really is, is putting the, you know, the safety

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00:49:50,600 --> 00:49:54,240

and wellbeing of others above your own.

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00:49:54,240 --> 00:50:05,600

And to, yeah, just to not do something so ballsy that it was, it's irresponsible and

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00:50:05,600 --> 00:50:08,760

get someone else killed.

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00:50:08,760 --> 00:50:17,840

It was, it is emotional because I, I, you know, I got out of it unscathed and I never

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00:50:17,840 --> 00:50:20,840

any of the decisions I made, I made, you know, for the team.

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00:50:20,840 --> 00:50:25,560

It wasn't just for, for me and my safety was to make sure that I didn't put my hands on

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00:50:25,560 --> 00:50:30,880

something that I came across until everybody was out because I didn't, I can't imagine

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00:50:30,880 --> 00:50:36,120

someone, one of the, another EOD guy or living with themselves after that and knowing that

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00:50:36,120 --> 00:50:41,680

if you, you know, you made a mistake and you got someone fucking blown up and killed, um,

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00:50:41,680 --> 00:50:43,240

would just be really, really hard.

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00:50:43,240 --> 00:50:49,960

And so that was, um, it still is something that, that, that, that stays with me for sure.

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00:50:49,960 --> 00:50:55,160

Um, I just, even with the work that I do now is to make sure that everything is covered

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00:50:55,160 --> 00:51:01,160

the best I can so that way anybody that, that I'm working with is as safe as possible.

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00:51:01,160 --> 00:51:04,520

Because I just can't be in that position.

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00:51:04,520 --> 00:51:12,280

Um, if it, yeah, safety begins, you know, they like, we like to, the officers and everybody

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00:51:12,280 --> 00:51:13,800

used to like to say, well, safety is paramount.

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00:51:13,800 --> 00:51:17,280

And we would say, well, safety is third, you know, get it done.

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00:51:17,280 --> 00:51:20,840

But at the end of the day, you, if you're going to do something risky, just make sure

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00:51:20,840 --> 00:51:25,920

that it's just you and you don't take down your brothers, uh, for, for fucking up.

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00:51:25,920 --> 00:51:30,680

So I had, I think it was Alistair McCarthy, McCarthy that was on the show, a fellow Brit

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00:51:30,680 --> 00:51:31,960

and then base jumper.

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00:51:31,960 --> 00:51:37,120

Um, and we were talking about diligence and he said, uh, I forget I'm paraphrasing, but

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00:51:37,120 --> 00:51:41,400

he says something like, you know, most people will say, well, you know, as long as I'm 95%

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00:51:41,400 --> 00:51:42,680

there, then we good.

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00:51:42,680 --> 00:51:45,680

He said in the world of base jumping, there is no 95%.

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00:51:45,680 --> 00:51:47,400

It's gotta be a hundred.

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00:51:47,400 --> 00:51:54,200

And what I see in my profession, there are some phenomenal firefighters that understand

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00:51:54,200 --> 00:51:58,040

that lives are at stake in our job, you know, our own lives, the lives of men and women

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00:51:58,040 --> 00:52:01,240

to the left and right of us and obviously who we serve.

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00:52:01,240 --> 00:52:04,800

But there's also a real cancer of complacency and that can be organizational, it can be

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00:52:04,800 --> 00:52:05,800

personal.

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00:52:05,800 --> 00:52:11,600

Um, that drives me crazy because lives are at stake, you know, lives depend on us.

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00:52:11,600 --> 00:52:15,960

So through this, you know, journey, as you get through Iraq and ultimately Afghanistan

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00:52:15,960 --> 00:52:22,600

and out into the skydiving world, how have you managed to, to fight complacency yourself

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00:52:22,600 --> 00:52:27,320

and then also culturally or with the people around you?

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00:52:27,320 --> 00:52:34,400

So, um, the fighting complacency is actually not been, um, it hasn't been too hard.

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00:52:34,400 --> 00:52:42,360

Um, I think that what I've done is with the, the types of the types of the type of work

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00:52:42,360 --> 00:52:48,320

that I do and the type of jumps that I do or, you know, can be really, uh, sketchy at

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00:52:48,320 --> 00:52:54,320

best, um, sometimes and, you know, really, you know, high altitude testing, new parachutes,

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00:52:54,320 --> 00:52:57,840

um, heavy weights testing, new parachutes.

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00:52:57,840 --> 00:53:04,000

Um, it's, I'm very calculated, uh, when it comes to, when it comes to this kind of, when

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00:53:04,000 --> 00:53:07,920

it comes to these types of operations, uh, these types of, you know, events, the testing

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00:53:07,920 --> 00:53:12,400

events or even just basically executing very similar and we'll talk about later in the

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00:53:12,400 --> 00:53:14,600

triple seven very calculated.

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00:53:14,600 --> 00:53:17,600

What, when, what does it look like?

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00:53:17,600 --> 00:53:20,280

What is, what is, what does X look like?

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00:53:20,280 --> 00:53:23,480

Or how does it, what does it take to get there?

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00:53:23,480 --> 00:53:25,200

What are going to be the effects of it?

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00:53:25,200 --> 00:53:28,720

So when, when I talk about the effects of it, it's like doing, you know, deploying a

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00:53:28,720 --> 00:53:32,400

parachute at a, at a moderate, you know, a moderate to heavy weight at high altitudes

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00:53:32,400 --> 00:53:35,280

at high speeds, that's going to fucking hurt.

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00:53:35,280 --> 00:53:38,600

And that's going to hurt the body and it's going to be 60 below.

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00:53:38,600 --> 00:53:41,280

So there's a lot that you have to contend with.

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00:53:41,280 --> 00:53:47,520

So the prep work that goes into it is trying to think of every single, every single factor

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00:53:47,520 --> 00:53:51,160

that contributes to success or failure.

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00:53:51,160 --> 00:53:56,320

And so I think that that's what like a lot of the EOD work and my experience in EOD really

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00:53:56,320 --> 00:53:59,240

has provided for me is I'm very, very calculated.

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00:53:59,240 --> 00:54:04,280

I'm not going to do anything that's, is just like, it doesn't make any sense or the reward

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00:54:04,280 --> 00:54:07,720

is minimal for the, for the, for the risk.

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00:54:07,720 --> 00:54:12,920

You know, for testing, it's like, I have to go through, you know, I, my, my team and I

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00:54:12,920 --> 00:54:18,860

go through a lot of arduous testing when it comes to the engineering aspect and the design

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00:54:18,860 --> 00:54:24,160

of the parachutes, the intricate design of the parachutes in order to minimize the impacts

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00:54:24,160 --> 00:54:30,000

that the test jumper myself gets and receives, you know, the opening shock.

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00:54:30,000 --> 00:54:33,040

So it's very, very calculated.

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00:54:33,040 --> 00:54:34,760

So I don't feel there's a whole lot of complacency.

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00:54:34,760 --> 00:54:40,520

And I think that a little bit driving force behind that was that I look at it like I survived

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00:54:40,520 --> 00:54:41,520

multiple combat deployments.

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00:54:41,520 --> 00:54:44,040

I retired at 39.

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00:54:44,040 --> 00:54:45,480

I'm 46 now.

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00:54:45,480 --> 00:54:48,520

I'd like to see 76.

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00:54:48,520 --> 00:54:53,920

So I'm going to take care of my body and take care of my mind by basically, if we're going

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00:54:53,920 --> 00:54:57,880

to do these high risk things at my age, then they're going to be very calculated for the

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00:54:57,880 --> 00:55:00,320

best, best possible outcome.

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00:55:00,320 --> 00:55:01,760

It happens.

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00:55:01,760 --> 00:55:09,440

I get hard hits all the time, shitty landings, and it sucks, but I'm able to keep going because

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00:55:09,440 --> 00:55:15,320

I feel like that we're very calculated in looking at the risks and really doing a lot

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00:55:15,320 --> 00:55:19,120

of like kind of risk management, risk mitigation.

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00:55:19,120 --> 00:55:23,160

I'm the, a lot of the operators that this equipment is going to be going to are, you

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00:55:23,160 --> 00:55:25,400

know, 12, 15 years younger than I am.

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00:55:25,400 --> 00:55:30,740

Some of them are a little bit, a little bit less, but I've got to stay, I have to stay

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00:55:30,740 --> 00:55:37,320

in shape so I can perform as close to that, you know, as close to that top tier as I can,

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00:55:37,320 --> 00:55:41,960

you know, considering the body degradation at 46 years old, but I try to do the best

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00:55:41,960 --> 00:55:44,560

I can so that way I can mimic the results.

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00:55:44,560 --> 00:55:49,600

Well, while we're on the kind of training philosophy conversation, again, in the EOD

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00:55:49,600 --> 00:55:54,360

podcast, you touched on the importance of the basics and it's something that I talk

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00:55:54,360 --> 00:55:55,520

about a lot in the fire service.

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00:55:55,520 --> 00:55:56,880

There's a lot of shiny objects.

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00:55:56,880 --> 00:56:02,360

There's a lot of, you know, videos on Instagram of firefighters doing, you know, poodle tricks

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00:56:02,360 --> 00:56:04,320

for lack of a better word.

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00:56:04,320 --> 00:56:08,240

And that's great if you are an absolute master of the bread and butter movements that we

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00:56:08,240 --> 00:56:09,240

have to do.

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00:56:09,240 --> 00:56:12,760

But talk to me about your philosophy, especially as you transitioned into the training role

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00:56:12,760 --> 00:56:15,440

when it comes to mastery of the basics in your profession.

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00:56:15,440 --> 00:56:21,720

Well, I think that if we always remember the basics, then the advanced movements will then

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00:56:21,720 --> 00:56:22,960

start to reveal themselves.

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00:56:22,960 --> 00:56:29,600

I think we had a tendency to do was get in, being so being such in such a rush to be the

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00:56:29,600 --> 00:56:33,560

best to be the fastest, to be the quick, you know, the quickest, the cleanest, the most

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00:56:33,560 --> 00:56:35,560

efficient get in and get out.

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00:56:35,560 --> 00:56:40,320

But if you go back to the very rudimentary basics and use those as stepping stones, the

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00:56:40,320 --> 00:56:45,040

only reason that we're here is because of the foundation that was laid in the framework

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00:56:45,040 --> 00:56:51,480

that was created in order for us to accomplish, you know, be so fast because we would find

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00:56:51,480 --> 00:56:57,360

that doing you're doing a lot of our training runs that we would be in such a hurry that

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00:56:57,360 --> 00:57:02,800

we would we would we would say no more comps stop talking because people would yell and

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00:57:02,800 --> 00:57:04,440

people would be all over the radio.

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00:57:04,440 --> 00:57:08,840

And so stripping that down, going back to the basics using hand and arm signals and

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00:57:08,840 --> 00:57:17,880

normal two man, four man room clearance type of mindset really helps reset, reset everything

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00:57:17,880 --> 00:57:20,960

because everybody's already made it through to different types of basics.

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00:57:20,960 --> 00:57:22,760

So we don't have to be so advanced.

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00:57:22,760 --> 00:57:29,320

We have to master the basics that then in turn reveals your expertise and that you're

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00:57:29,320 --> 00:57:31,480

able to fine tune those things.

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00:57:31,480 --> 00:57:35,880

And so we really carry that over into the civilian world that I work in in this industry

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00:57:35,880 --> 00:57:40,720

is that keeping it simple and mastering the basics and understanding what these different

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00:57:40,720 --> 00:57:44,600

types of components do and why they do it and stick with those things and evolve and

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00:57:44,600 --> 00:57:50,520

innovate from that as opposed to completely coming out of a different direction.

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00:57:50,520 --> 00:57:53,840

I know you found yourself, as I said, in the kind of training development role and obviously

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00:57:53,840 --> 00:57:56,200

ultimately in the skydiving area.

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00:57:56,200 --> 00:58:01,800

One thing I'm always intrigued is the EOD in this case, you know, the special operator,

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00:58:01,800 --> 00:58:06,640

special forces soldiers perspective of the first responder professions, because in many,

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00:58:06,640 --> 00:58:11,040

many of the conversations that I have with them, they kind of hold us to the same standard.

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00:58:11,040 --> 00:58:14,520

And obviously we're protecting their families when you guys are overseas.

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00:58:14,520 --> 00:58:20,760

However, behind the curtain, it's a very different scenario as far as our support, training,

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00:58:20,760 --> 00:58:24,120

equipment, etc. than some of the tier one groups.

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00:58:24,120 --> 00:58:27,560

So I don't know if you've had any perspective in law enforcement or fire.

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00:58:27,560 --> 00:58:33,120

If you have, have you noticed any inequities between maybe some of the training and equipment

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00:58:33,120 --> 00:58:36,640

that you were afforded versus the people on the street back home?

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00:58:36,640 --> 00:58:43,000

Oh, I think that the from, you know, I work with some with a few guys down at in Lee County,

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00:58:43,000 --> 00:58:45,600

Lee County Sheriff's Department SWAT team.

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00:58:45,600 --> 00:58:52,920

And those poor guys, it feels it seems like, you know, they are stuck with a lot more administrative

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00:58:52,920 --> 00:58:54,960

work than we were ever stuck with.

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00:58:54,960 --> 00:59:01,160

Then and that was that that that sucks.

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00:59:01,160 --> 00:59:06,320

So these guys are not like able to pound on doors, do call outs and things like that,

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00:59:06,320 --> 00:59:10,720

do their job because they're stuck in a lot of the bureaucratic stuff because in my in

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00:59:10,720 --> 00:59:15,960

my perspective is that, you know, with firefighters as well as obviously with the police departments

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00:59:15,960 --> 00:59:20,840

and sheriff's departments throughout the country is that there's more of a spotlight on your

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00:59:20,840 --> 00:59:25,400

guys is daily operations when you're going into a fire, you're going into onto a target

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00:59:25,400 --> 00:59:30,640

to, you know, to issue a warrant or anything like that or arrest somebody.

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00:59:30,640 --> 00:59:35,800

There's more the potential of a spotlight and people, you know, fellow Americans seeing

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00:59:35,800 --> 00:59:40,680

your actions on target are way more prevalent than us.

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00:59:40,680 --> 00:59:44,760

I mean, granted, you know, when video gets out of us from, you know, from, you know,

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00:59:44,760 --> 00:59:49,280

from any type of ISR platform or things like that, that's that would piss us off.

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00:59:49,280 --> 00:59:53,720

So you guys definitely have a lot of our sympathy and appreciation for having to deal with,

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00:59:53,720 --> 00:59:58,320

you know, being operating within the confines of the audience themselves.

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00:59:58,320 --> 01:00:00,680

You know, so, you know, we operate.

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01:00:00,680 --> 01:00:03,080

The idea was that nobody sees us.

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01:00:03,080 --> 01:00:09,680

But when I think of, again, the that group within the SEAL teams, you're looking for

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01:00:09,680 --> 01:00:14,720

the best new techniques, the best equipment, you know, the best nutrition, strength, conditioning,

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01:00:14,720 --> 01:00:16,760

mindfulness training, et cetera.

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01:00:16,760 --> 01:00:20,480

And I think that this is something that we need to elevate ourselves in the first responder

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01:00:20,480 --> 01:00:25,800

professions that we are asked to do, you know, from zero to a hundred in a numerous amount

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01:00:25,800 --> 01:00:26,800

of ways.

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01:00:26,800 --> 01:00:29,560

I mean, just for example, my shopping mall here in Ocala, Florida, a few days ago, two

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01:00:29,560 --> 01:00:33,840

days before Christmas, someone was executed in front of everyone that was Christmas shopping.

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01:00:33,840 --> 01:00:34,840

I saw that.

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01:00:34,840 --> 01:00:37,800

So all the first responders that responded there were probably sitting around waiting

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01:00:37,800 --> 01:00:38,800

for a call.

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01:00:38,800 --> 01:00:42,480

And then all of a sudden, they're doing a manhunt and trying to clean a dead guy off

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01:00:42,480 --> 01:00:43,480

the floor.

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01:00:43,480 --> 01:00:49,840

So, you know, for me, I feel like we need to kind of lean into the ethos from your profession

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01:00:49,840 --> 01:00:53,800

more as far as hiring standards, as far as fitness standards, but also equipment and

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01:00:53,800 --> 01:00:54,800

training as well.

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01:00:54,800 --> 01:00:56,320

I couldn't agree more.

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01:00:56,320 --> 01:01:00,800

I feel I think that it's underappreciated and it's not looked at as much as because

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01:01:00,800 --> 01:01:02,120

it really wasn't trendy.

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01:01:02,120 --> 01:01:06,840

I mean, it was, it was, it made sense to like look at the military, look what they've done,

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01:01:06,840 --> 01:01:11,280

look what all these men and women have done for the past 20 plus years in Iraq and Afghanistan

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01:01:11,280 --> 01:01:13,720

and in Syria and in Africa and everywhere.

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01:01:13,720 --> 01:01:16,720

So like, let's throw all this attention to them.

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01:01:16,720 --> 01:01:22,600

Whereas I'm sure guys, you know, like in hotspots of fire departments and police departments

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01:01:22,600 --> 01:01:24,960

are kind of like, well, yeah, we support that.

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01:01:24,960 --> 01:01:27,760

You know, we could probably use some of that human performance initiative as well.

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01:01:27,760 --> 01:01:28,760

I'm sure.

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01:01:28,760 --> 01:01:31,800

And I think, you know, with the matter of speaking, I think, I think it's coming, you

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01:01:31,800 --> 01:01:35,840

know, I think that like the guys that I work with down in South Florida, they do have a

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01:01:35,840 --> 01:01:38,200

small human performance stuff that they're working on here.

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01:01:38,200 --> 01:01:41,560

They've got, they're doing hormone levels and hormone treatment stuff with those guys

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01:01:41,560 --> 01:01:43,560

or at least monitoring and advising.

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01:01:43,560 --> 01:01:46,480

So some of that, it looks like it's starting to take off.

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01:01:46,480 --> 01:01:52,760

I think that traditionally and notoriously, it's always been sort of behind, you know,

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01:01:52,760 --> 01:01:57,080

your tier one to tier three military operators.

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01:01:57,080 --> 01:02:04,200

The local first responders and treatment and care has been just a little bit behind of

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01:02:04,200 --> 01:02:05,200

the military.

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01:02:05,200 --> 01:02:07,920

And I think that that's like, that's something that I think we can look back on the past

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01:02:07,920 --> 01:02:10,080

30 or 40 years and sort of do that.

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01:02:10,080 --> 01:02:12,480

I mean, in the nineties, there was no humor performance stuff.

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01:02:12,480 --> 01:02:16,400

You know, it's like with being a SWIT guy, it's like, you're, you're going to be, you

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01:02:16,400 --> 01:02:18,800

know, three inches shorter if you do this for 15 years.

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01:02:18,800 --> 01:02:22,080

That was a big incentive for me to get out of, stop riding boats because I don't, you

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01:02:22,080 --> 01:02:24,880

know, back in the back knee and neck problems.

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01:02:24,880 --> 01:02:29,200

So the, you know, those guys have done a whole lot of studies because there was people that

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01:02:29,200 --> 01:02:33,040

were that study cases over 15 years of riding boats.

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01:02:33,040 --> 01:02:38,000

And I think that it's only, you know, I think that only a matter of time before, you know,

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01:02:38,000 --> 01:02:42,360

your local fire departments and your police officers and sheriff's department actually

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01:02:42,360 --> 01:02:46,360

do start to get some of those treatments and some of that attention.

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01:02:46,360 --> 01:02:47,360

Absolutely.

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01:02:47,360 --> 01:02:51,440

Well, I want to get to the transition out and then obviously we'll talk about 7X and

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01:02:51,440 --> 01:02:52,440

7X7.

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01:02:52,440 --> 01:02:56,720

Before we do though, you talked about Iraq.

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01:02:56,720 --> 01:03:00,480

What were the contrasts between Iraq and your time in Afghanistan?

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01:03:00,480 --> 01:03:03,080

Oh man, that was really interesting.

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01:03:03,080 --> 01:03:06,080

You know, cause I had, there was a bit of a hiatus before I went, you know, after I

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01:03:06,080 --> 01:03:11,520

left Iraq for my last time and then went to Afghanistan.

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01:03:11,520 --> 01:03:15,760

The Afghanistan piece, as you heard before, was really unique for me because I was in

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01:03:15,760 --> 01:03:19,200

the training detachment in the urban combat cell.

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01:03:19,200 --> 01:03:25,020

So I was basically responsible for giving, you know, EOD training to EOD technicians

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01:03:25,020 --> 01:03:28,440

that were assigned with their seal platoons during urban combat.

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01:03:28,440 --> 01:03:34,240

So it was a huge opportunity to really help shape those guys, their expectations and,

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01:03:34,240 --> 01:03:38,200

and get some really good training for them so they could provide training for their respective

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01:03:38,200 --> 01:03:39,740

seal platoons.

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01:03:39,740 --> 01:03:45,960

And so I was able to pull off going to Afghanistan as an augment, as an augmentee, which is most,

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01:03:45,960 --> 01:03:49,480

as a lot of people know, if you're able to pull that off from being in a training, you

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01:03:49,480 --> 01:03:54,440

know, a training command to go on deployment is gold because you kind of miss most of the

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01:03:54,440 --> 01:03:55,440

workup.

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01:03:55,440 --> 01:03:58,160

If you have good rapport with the guys, you don't really, like you're going to, you're

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01:03:58,160 --> 01:04:01,020

going to get there and you're going to have good rapport with them already.

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01:04:01,020 --> 01:04:06,160

So I went over there and, you know, took a couple of guns with me and some equipment

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01:04:06,160 --> 01:04:10,000

and some cold weather gear and was basically just operating out of a basic, a big backpack.

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01:04:10,000 --> 01:04:16,320

So that way I can move around by myself from, from a couple of different locations.

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01:04:16,320 --> 01:04:20,880

I remember going into the dining facility for the first time in Afghanistan.

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01:04:20,880 --> 01:04:26,320

Now, the last time I had been into in a dining facility overseas was in Iraq.

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01:04:26,320 --> 01:04:27,760

Yeah.

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01:04:27,760 --> 01:04:31,840

Outside of Biop when we were working Sadr city.

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01:04:31,840 --> 01:04:35,160

And so, or Biop being Baghdad international airport.

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01:04:35,160 --> 01:04:41,400

And you remember seeing, and this was really prevalent in Al Ambar in 2006 in Iraq, when

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01:04:41,400 --> 01:04:46,000

you would sit down at the dining facility and you would look over at other people in

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01:04:46,000 --> 01:04:49,000

their, their faces, they're, they were just, they were just staring.

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01:04:49,000 --> 01:04:51,080

It was just the very thousand yard stare.

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01:04:51,080 --> 01:04:55,000

Like they just came out of the shit or they were just getting ready to go back into it.

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01:04:55,000 --> 01:04:58,640

And they're just basically trying to get some caloric intake and get some energy and get

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01:04:58,640 --> 01:04:59,640

some fuel.

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01:04:59,640 --> 01:05:03,640

But there were, there were, that was hard to see that.

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01:05:03,640 --> 01:05:06,320

That was not the case in Afghanistan in 2014.

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01:05:06,320 --> 01:05:09,440

I mean, it looked like a, you know, a shopping mall food court.

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01:05:09,440 --> 01:05:15,640

And it was just, it was really a stark reality for me that to see the difference between

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01:05:15,640 --> 01:05:21,960

guys and girls that were doing conducting conventional kinetic operations.

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01:05:21,960 --> 01:05:27,120

And then a few, several years later, retrograde and pulling, getting ready to pack things

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01:05:27,120 --> 01:05:31,680

up, cutting vehicles in half and getting knowing that the withdrawal is coming.

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01:05:31,680 --> 01:05:34,280

And so that was a huge difference.

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01:05:34,280 --> 01:05:38,840

However, our kinetic operations were still very prevalent.

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01:05:38,840 --> 01:05:42,680

Something that I didn't do very much that I can't even recall anything that, that stands

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01:05:42,680 --> 01:05:46,240

out in Iraq was we'd never really did any helicopter inserts.

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01:05:46,240 --> 01:05:51,440

So getting on 46s and, and flying, you know, the target and then walking, you know, five,

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01:05:51,440 --> 01:05:55,120

eight kilometers, it was not something that was all that common for us in Iraq.

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01:05:55,120 --> 01:05:57,200

So that was a huge difference for me.

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01:05:57,200 --> 01:06:00,920

And then, you know, going to 8,000 feet above sea level, you know, takes them getting used

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01:06:00,920 --> 01:06:03,520

to January in Afghanistan.

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01:06:03,520 --> 01:06:09,880

So there was definitely the, the playing field was different for me going over there.

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01:06:09,880 --> 01:06:14,640

And but the guys, man, the guys, the guys were, I mean, it was, it was remarkable to

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01:06:14,640 --> 01:06:17,880

be with the, with that task unit and that, that troop and those, those guys from the

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01:06:17,880 --> 01:06:23,960

platoon and with the, the, the, the 10th special forces, ODA group that was out there with

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01:06:23,960 --> 01:06:24,960

us.

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01:06:24,960 --> 01:06:29,200

They're just a lot of great people doing a lot of really good, really good kinetic operations.

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01:06:29,200 --> 01:06:30,200

It was fantastic.

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01:06:30,200 --> 01:06:31,200

I loved it.

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01:06:31,200 --> 01:06:37,120

A lot of people that have come on the show that served in Afghanistan, that, you know,

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01:06:37,120 --> 01:06:41,040

obviously lost friends in Afghanistan is of course applies to Iraq as well.

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01:06:41,040 --> 01:06:46,040

But you know, that particular withdrawal, the way it was done, I think, I don't think

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01:06:46,040 --> 01:06:47,040

there's a single person out there.

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01:06:47,040 --> 01:06:51,160

I hope there's not, that doesn't realize that they made a huge difference while they were

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01:06:51,160 --> 01:06:52,160

there.

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01:06:52,160 --> 01:06:54,920

And even like you said, if it's handling a scared girl, a glow stick all the way through

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01:06:54,920 --> 01:06:58,320

to building schools and, you know, all the things that you guys did.

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01:06:58,320 --> 01:07:05,880

However, you know, that sudden just evacuation, I think left a lot of our veterans feeling,

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01:07:05,880 --> 01:07:09,280

you know, a multitude of emotions.

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01:07:09,280 --> 01:07:13,120

I think it contributed probably to a lot of mental health challenges as well.

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01:07:13,120 --> 01:07:14,320

You know, what was it for?

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01:07:14,320 --> 01:07:19,800

And the, the, the survivor element, I mean, all these different things.

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01:07:19,800 --> 01:07:21,700

And I think organizational betrayal too.

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01:07:21,700 --> 01:07:24,600

You were part of this tribe, you wore this flag on your shoulder.

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01:07:24,600 --> 01:07:29,040

And then the very organization that you represented did something like that.

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01:07:29,040 --> 01:07:33,760

So I mean, I was going to say without loading the question, clearly I just loaded already,

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01:07:33,760 --> 01:07:35,720

but what is your perspective of that?

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01:07:35,720 --> 01:07:38,480

Because just like the pandemic, for example, people are like, Oh, I don't want to talk

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01:07:38,480 --> 01:07:39,480

about anymore.

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01:07:39,480 --> 01:07:43,360

I think it's important because these are lessons that we can learn and maybe apply God forbid

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01:07:43,360 --> 01:07:46,800

if there's another sort of combat, apply that to the next one.

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01:07:46,800 --> 01:07:51,880

So kind of giving you the microphone, what is your perspective of Iraq and or Afghanistan

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01:07:51,880 --> 01:07:55,520

as we sit here outside both those countries?

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01:07:55,520 --> 01:08:01,080

These are going to be, you know, hopefully they're going to be huge lessons learned in

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01:08:01,080 --> 01:08:02,080

a hundred years.

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01:08:02,080 --> 01:08:06,800

You know, we can look at, you know, Washington crossing the Delaware, you know, 200 years

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01:08:06,800 --> 01:08:12,480

ago as at least like lessons learned in military history, we can look at the long shakes, you

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01:08:12,480 --> 01:08:17,080

know, and look at the way that they operated and they did kinetic operations, you know,

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01:08:17,080 --> 01:08:18,580

hundreds and hundreds of years ago.

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01:08:18,580 --> 01:08:23,380

So like this, these mistakes, you know, or hopefully the way that they're going to be

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01:08:23,380 --> 01:08:29,240

perceived is like these lessons learned or should be definitely, you know, lack of a

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01:08:29,240 --> 01:08:33,600

better way of putting it in the textbooks going forward for military history and tacticians

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01:08:33,600 --> 01:08:36,000

as a whole.

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01:08:36,000 --> 01:08:41,620

The withdrawal of Afghanistan specifically because it was so abrupt, there was a lot

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01:08:41,620 --> 01:08:46,040

of like this Vietnam type of feel to it.

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01:08:46,040 --> 01:08:50,200

This granted when we pulled out of Vietnam, you know, I was born in 77.

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01:08:50,200 --> 01:08:55,320

So obviously that the withdrawal out of Vietnam, but those videos in the way that it was depicted

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01:08:55,320 --> 01:08:58,840

and depicted today was reminiscent of that.

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01:08:58,840 --> 01:09:04,240

I can only imagine, you know, being in Afghanistan during the withdrawal, I can only imagine being

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01:09:04,240 --> 01:09:09,020

in Vietnam during that withdrawal, during that hasty withdrawal.

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01:09:09,020 --> 01:09:18,280

We know deep down what the score is, you know, it's really easy for us as Americans and policymakers

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01:09:18,280 --> 01:09:25,280

to get us into and into conflict and disrupt things and basically turn them into our operating

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01:09:25,280 --> 01:09:27,480

system very, very quickly.

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01:09:27,480 --> 01:09:33,260

What it appears to me, what we suck at is actually rebuilding and building and then

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01:09:33,260 --> 01:09:35,360

leaving and continuing to support.

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01:09:35,360 --> 01:09:40,120

Because we look at Afghanistan now, it's like how much we're funding the Taliban right now

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01:09:40,120 --> 01:09:43,720

to be able to fight Al Qaeda in Iraq or in Afghanistan.

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01:09:43,720 --> 01:09:45,560

It's mind blowing to me.

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01:09:45,560 --> 01:09:56,360

So that hasty, hasty, that incredibly hasty withdrawal from Afghanistan just does not

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01:09:56,360 --> 01:09:59,760

seem like it was very well calculated at all.

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01:09:59,760 --> 01:10:05,720

And me being me, a very calculated person, I don't feel like we were looking at as a

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01:10:05,720 --> 01:10:12,480

whole, the first, second, third order effects of what we were doing.

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01:10:12,480 --> 01:10:19,280

We were trying to basically appease the American public by stop spending money in Afghanistan,

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01:10:19,280 --> 01:10:21,160

stop spending money in Iraq and get out of it.

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01:10:21,160 --> 01:10:22,160

We were there.

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01:10:22,160 --> 01:10:24,160

We've been there for over 20 years, you know, 20 plus years.

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01:10:24,160 --> 01:10:25,160

Let's get out.

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01:10:25,160 --> 01:10:27,740

And so that was sort of the popular thing to do.

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01:10:27,740 --> 01:10:37,840

But it just surprised me how we were not very calculated as policy enforcers and policymakers

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01:10:37,840 --> 01:10:39,720

to do that.

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01:10:39,720 --> 01:10:42,640

And it just, I mean, I can't imagine.

1103

01:10:42,640 --> 01:10:43,960

Jericho was actually there.

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01:10:43,960 --> 01:10:48,120

You know, Travis's brother was there, you know, when all that was going down, he was

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01:10:48,120 --> 01:10:49,120

there reporting.

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01:10:49,120 --> 01:10:51,040

And so that hit him pretty hard.

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01:10:51,040 --> 01:10:55,760

And when I talked to him, you know, talking to someone that was there, out of all the

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01:10:55,760 --> 01:10:58,520

combat operations he had done, that was one of them.

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01:10:58,520 --> 01:10:59,800

That was not a combat operation.

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01:10:59,800 --> 01:11:01,280

That was one of the hardest ones.

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01:11:01,280 --> 01:11:03,920

And the anniversary always kind of gets to him.

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01:11:03,920 --> 01:11:07,240

I mean, that was fucked.

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01:11:07,240 --> 01:11:09,040

Now it went down for sure.

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01:11:09,040 --> 01:11:10,040

Absolutely.

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01:11:10,040 --> 01:11:15,760

Well, one kind of one element or one more area on this topic.

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01:11:15,760 --> 01:11:22,680

When I think about the pharmaceutical industry and the nation's health, I'm hoping for an

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01:11:22,680 --> 01:11:28,240

honest box here, as someone who's come from a wellness background and fitness and all

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01:11:28,240 --> 01:11:29,600

that stuff.

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01:11:29,600 --> 01:11:36,160

Clearly, there is an element where if we make Americans sick, but keep them alive, you have

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01:11:36,160 --> 01:11:38,000

an incredible consumer.

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01:11:38,000 --> 01:11:43,000

Well with that same lens, when you look at war and you make uniforms, MREs, weapons,

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01:11:43,000 --> 01:11:47,520

whatever it is, there's an element that wants war to continue so that certain groups can

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01:11:47,520 --> 01:11:48,960

make a huge amount of money.

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01:11:48,960 --> 01:11:53,720

Now that's separate from protecting our country and being there when we're absolutely needed.

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01:11:53,720 --> 01:11:57,040

Oh no, it's a war machine for sure.

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01:11:57,040 --> 01:12:03,600

So how do we, you're king for a day, how do we increase accountability so that we don't

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01:12:03,600 --> 01:12:09,360

allow certain groups to keep forcing us into conflicts that we may or may not need to be

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01:12:09,360 --> 01:12:12,280

in in the first place?

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01:12:12,280 --> 01:12:19,240

A very deliberate and calculated level of transparency.

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01:12:19,240 --> 01:12:24,600

I just don't think that we are having the right conversations.

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01:12:24,600 --> 01:12:28,600

Maybe we are having the right conversations, but we're not being transparent.

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01:12:28,600 --> 01:12:31,080

And that usually, that breeds itself, right?

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01:12:31,080 --> 01:12:34,240

So calm breeds calm and honesty breeds honesty.

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01:12:34,240 --> 01:12:42,600

So if we can have some actual king for a day transparency, I think is, I can't go wrong

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01:12:42,600 --> 01:12:43,600

there.

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01:12:43,600 --> 01:12:48,280

But what we have now is king for a day is where's the money at?

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01:12:48,280 --> 01:12:49,280

Where does the money go?

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01:12:49,280 --> 01:12:53,160

I mean, you talked about the pharmaceutical company, companies in the pharmaceutical industry.

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01:12:53,160 --> 01:12:54,880

That's a money thing.

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01:12:54,880 --> 01:12:55,880

That's exactly where it's at.

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01:12:55,880 --> 01:13:02,040

And I remember not to get too much on the pharmaceutical stuff, but the Lipitor and

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01:13:02,040 --> 01:13:03,960

cholesterol meds, same thing.

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01:13:03,960 --> 01:13:06,080

My dad was on Lipitor and he's like, fuck this.

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01:13:06,080 --> 01:13:07,720

I've got all these different side effects.

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01:13:07,720 --> 01:13:11,680

And then later on, after he got off of it, these cholesterol companies, these companies

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01:13:11,680 --> 01:13:17,680

making this cholesterol medication were like, hey, this is a great way to basically pump

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01:13:17,680 --> 01:13:24,320

meds into our society because everybody has, the number one killer is heart disease.

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01:13:24,320 --> 01:13:30,200

So I think that if we could just be a little bit more transparent and be welcome to the

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01:13:30,200 --> 01:13:33,040

vulnerability and accept that.

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01:13:33,040 --> 01:13:36,560

I think that if you can have a little bit of like self-compassion as opposed to being

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01:13:36,560 --> 01:13:39,360

selfish, I think is going to really, really help.

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01:13:39,360 --> 01:13:45,040

And I really think that a lot of policymakers could benefit from some of the treatments

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01:13:45,040 --> 01:13:51,360

that veterans are getting with hormone treatment, psychedelic treatment, and actual like no

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01:13:51,360 --> 01:13:56,440

kidding, like getting in touch with who you are kind of treatment moving forward.

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01:13:56,440 --> 01:14:01,080

I think that congressmen, senators, and cabinet members could benefit from that kind of treatment

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01:14:01,080 --> 01:14:02,080

themselves.

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01:14:02,080 --> 01:14:03,080

Just my opinion.

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01:14:03,080 --> 01:14:04,080

No, I agree 100%.

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01:14:04,080 --> 01:14:08,800

When we talk about the mental health crisis, obviously we focus on, you know, whether it's

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01:14:08,800 --> 01:14:13,480

the addiction we see on our streets and homelessness, whether it's our veterans and first responders,

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01:14:13,480 --> 01:14:17,800

but there was a guy, a sad guru who was on Joe Rogan's podcast and he made, it was almost

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01:14:17,800 --> 01:14:21,960

in passing, he made a comment, but Joe was talking about, I think it was drug companies

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01:14:21,960 --> 01:14:23,280

and he was like, no, even them.

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01:14:23,280 --> 01:14:25,720

And I was like, I'd never thought about that.

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01:14:25,720 --> 01:14:29,880

There's only way that you can sleep at night knowing that you pulled out of a country and

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01:14:29,880 --> 01:14:35,000

betrayed all the allied nations that were there and all the people that serve in uniforms

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01:14:35,000 --> 01:14:37,480

is you have to be a sociopath.

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01:14:37,480 --> 01:14:41,880

The only way you can sleep at night knowing that drug prohibition is an epic failure and

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01:14:41,880 --> 01:14:46,720

yet your prisons are full of people that were caught with marijuana 20 years ago is you

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01:14:46,720 --> 01:14:47,960

have to be a sociopath.

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01:14:47,960 --> 01:14:53,040

So our mental health crisis, I think extends deeply into our politicians and owners of

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01:14:53,040 --> 01:15:00,840

news stations and other drug company execs and people that should not be able to sleep

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01:15:00,840 --> 01:15:04,760

knowing the unethical practices of the organizations they work for.

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01:15:04,760 --> 01:15:06,080

I couldn't agree more.

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01:15:06,080 --> 01:15:11,160

But yeah, but I think it boils down to money, power and position of authority for sure.

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01:15:11,160 --> 01:15:12,160

Yeah.

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01:15:12,160 --> 01:15:16,640

Because, you know, a king can move a man, right?

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01:15:16,640 --> 01:15:21,960

And so that's the mindset is I can just move all of these different pieces, these 400 million

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01:15:21,960 --> 01:15:25,840

pieces that I have in the United States, I can move all this and I can adjust all this.

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01:15:25,840 --> 01:15:32,880

But we have to really look at is that like you're in your own good, keep it alone.

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01:15:32,880 --> 01:15:40,240

And you can't say, you know, before, you know, religious stuff aside, but when you go before,

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01:15:40,240 --> 01:15:44,880

when you die, these are your decisions that you have made.

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01:15:44,880 --> 01:15:49,120

You know, so if people are going to basically do all of these puppeteer work and all these

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01:15:49,120 --> 01:15:54,120

different things in order for their own benefit, you've got to be able to make your own decisions

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01:15:54,120 --> 01:15:56,080

and be good with what you're doing.

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01:15:56,080 --> 01:15:58,600

And so I wholeheartedly agree with you, man.

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01:15:58,600 --> 01:16:04,280

Like I think that if I was, I couldn't ever do that and be in good, in good keeping alone

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01:16:04,280 --> 01:16:07,960

with myself and sleep at night for sure.

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01:16:07,960 --> 01:16:13,040

Well speaking of mental health, one area that I think is very jarring for military and first

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01:16:13,040 --> 01:16:17,560

responders is the transition out, whether it's injury, whether it's being fired, whether

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01:16:17,560 --> 01:16:19,800

it's simply retiring.

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01:16:19,800 --> 01:16:22,640

We and you talk about Sebastian Junger, he's been on the show several times.

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01:16:22,640 --> 01:16:24,760

You know, that tribal element is so important.

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01:16:24,760 --> 01:16:29,360

You know, we had a purpose, we were part of a tribe, you know, we knew when we went home

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01:16:29,360 --> 01:16:31,980

that day that we made the world a little bit better.

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01:16:31,980 --> 01:16:35,640

And then you find yourself the other side, your ID doesn't work, you know, you're not

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01:16:35,640 --> 01:16:38,120

around the same people anymore.

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01:16:38,120 --> 01:16:42,180

Some people transition well, they already have those tribes set up for moving out.

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01:16:42,180 --> 01:16:44,080

Some people it's a little bit more difficult.

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01:16:44,080 --> 01:16:45,960

What was your transition story yourself?

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01:16:45,960 --> 01:16:49,520

I mean, it was terrifying.

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01:16:49,520 --> 01:16:54,800

But just like me, I tried to be very calculated in what I was going to do.

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01:16:54,800 --> 01:16:59,860

You know, leaving Coronado and leaving Southern California after being there for so many years

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01:16:59,860 --> 01:17:03,680

and having so many close friends and somebody within the community and having someplace

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01:17:03,680 --> 01:17:07,880

to always go with people was gone.

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01:17:07,880 --> 01:17:12,120

You moved to Florida and it's like just a few, you know, family members that live out

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01:17:12,120 --> 01:17:18,180

here and starting over out here in Florida and trying to basically make a name for myself

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01:17:18,180 --> 01:17:22,520

in the industry and work in the industry.

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01:17:22,520 --> 01:17:24,200

I say make a name for myself in the industry.

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01:17:24,200 --> 01:17:25,200

That's not really correct.

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01:17:25,200 --> 01:17:28,480

I think it's really just contribute to the industry because what I do for a living is

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01:17:28,480 --> 01:17:34,080

and this is how I sit comfortably with what I do for a living is that I'm helping equip

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01:17:34,080 --> 01:17:39,440

still, because like almost as if I was still on active duty, helping train and equip military

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01:17:39,440 --> 01:17:42,800

service members, you know, not just US, but also our allies.

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01:17:42,800 --> 01:17:47,520

So there's a big part of that for me that I'm still kind of this active duty sort of

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01:17:47,520 --> 01:17:55,920

training component that in itself has definitely helped with my transition because I'm still

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01:17:55,920 --> 01:18:01,280

around some of the boys, not like, you know, it is, you know, when I was back home in San

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01:18:01,280 --> 01:18:05,800

Diego or back in Coronado, but it's really close to it.

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01:18:05,800 --> 01:18:10,480

And so I've been out, I've been retired for seven years and the first few years were really,

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01:18:10,480 --> 01:18:18,200

really hard because I was struggling to find purpose.

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01:18:18,200 --> 01:18:23,440

And on the daily was tough to find out.

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01:18:23,440 --> 01:18:25,280

I'm 39 years old.

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01:18:25,280 --> 01:18:26,280

Who am I?

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01:18:26,280 --> 01:18:27,280

Why am I here?

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01:18:27,280 --> 01:18:33,720

I still have a lot of life left over and I don't know what to do with it.

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01:18:33,720 --> 01:18:40,920

And I've got this, I've got a family, but I'm still so, I mean, I was looking at like,

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01:18:40,920 --> 01:18:41,920

I'll deploy again.

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01:18:41,920 --> 01:18:42,920

Like, I don't care.

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01:18:42,920 --> 01:18:45,720

Like, you know, whatever it is, I would, you know, I was just looking for something to

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01:18:45,720 --> 01:18:46,720

grasp a hold of.

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01:18:46,720 --> 01:18:52,320

And it was really hard to find anything that was not, it was really hard to find a grip

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01:18:52,320 --> 01:18:54,200

hold on something.

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01:18:54,200 --> 01:18:57,880

And then, yeah, a few years into it, I finally did.

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01:18:57,880 --> 01:19:04,600

And then I realized, you know, that my family has been there the whole time and I just didn't

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01:19:04,600 --> 01:19:07,080

grab a hold of them the way I should have.

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01:19:07,080 --> 01:19:12,840

And while I don't have a whole lot of regret, I'm glad I learned the way I learned as opposed

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01:19:12,840 --> 01:19:14,760

to just like, oh yeah, this is how you're supposed to do it.

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01:19:14,760 --> 01:19:19,880

But where I found that was through some mentorship and through, you know, through community with

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01:19:19,880 --> 01:19:26,720

seeing other guys retire and get out, them have problems going down, you know, trying

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01:19:26,720 --> 01:19:30,520

to find their solution at the bottom end of a bottle, at the bottom of a bottle, but still

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01:19:30,520 --> 01:19:33,360

some guys being able to have that strong family component.

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01:19:33,360 --> 01:19:39,520

And then it sort of started to get me like reset into, yes, being a father, being a husband

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01:19:39,520 --> 01:19:42,800

and doing this piece is my mission.

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01:19:42,800 --> 01:19:43,800

And that's my purpose.

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01:19:43,800 --> 01:19:48,680

So because they're my teammates for life, you know, it's not like they're going to rotate

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01:19:48,680 --> 01:19:49,680

after two years.

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01:19:49,680 --> 01:19:50,680

So that really helped.

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01:19:50,680 --> 01:19:58,920

But with my work now, it was tough, but to be able to find my niche within the industry

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01:19:58,920 --> 01:20:04,000

and to still be up around, you know, different tier levels in the community has been beneficial

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01:20:04,000 --> 01:20:05,000

for me.

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01:20:05,000 --> 01:20:08,480

I mean, it really helps find that mission and find that purpose and give me value because

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01:20:08,480 --> 01:20:13,440

I think that that's what we're missing in society, especially younger men is that is

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01:20:13,440 --> 01:20:19,520

being valued and having that value and knowing that our job is really just to protect and

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01:20:19,520 --> 01:20:24,040

provide and not only for yourself, but obviously primarily for your family, because that's

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01:20:24,040 --> 01:20:29,120

what's in our DNA, in our male DNA for thousands and thousands of years is that the perfect

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01:20:29,120 --> 01:20:32,880

and provide to go out and hunt and then to provide shelter and to provide food and to

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01:20:32,880 --> 01:20:37,200

provide these different types of things so we can have sustenance and live.

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01:20:37,200 --> 01:20:44,040

So that is what's really gotten me through a lot of this, a lot of the shit and a lot

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01:20:44,040 --> 01:20:51,680

of like the dark times is realizing that this my baseline is this caveman genetics that

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01:20:51,680 --> 01:20:55,480

I have to be able to protect and provide.

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01:20:55,480 --> 01:20:59,000

And then throughout the, you know, the small little things like I write a lot.

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01:20:59,000 --> 01:21:03,400

I'm trying to reading some good books and the writing has really helped.

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01:21:03,400 --> 01:21:07,520

You know, I was working with a coach a couple of years ago and she told me, Nick, you and

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01:21:07,520 --> 01:21:08,520

you guys are all the same.

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01:21:08,520 --> 01:21:10,000

You're all fucking chess players.

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01:21:10,000 --> 01:21:13,360

You like to use all these different things with your words and you're so fancy with your

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01:21:13,360 --> 01:21:17,800

words and you can dance around this stuff, but you really can't get into your emotions

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01:21:17,800 --> 01:21:19,560

and just sit and feel your emotions.

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01:21:19,560 --> 01:21:20,920

And she got me to start writing.

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01:21:20,920 --> 01:21:24,280

And so like the journaling has been going really, really good.

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01:21:24,280 --> 01:21:26,560

And I try to be an advocate for it for other guys.

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01:21:26,560 --> 01:21:28,440

It's like, just write, like, I don't know what to write about.

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01:21:28,440 --> 01:21:29,720

It's like, don't write about anything.

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01:21:29,720 --> 01:21:33,520

Just almost like free association, pull up a pen and paper, pull up your phone, listen

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01:21:33,520 --> 01:21:35,000

to a song, inspire it.

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01:21:35,000 --> 01:21:36,000

It can be dark.

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01:21:36,000 --> 01:21:37,000

It can be light.

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01:21:37,000 --> 01:21:41,440

It can be whatever you want, but at least you're getting something out, you know, and

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01:21:41,440 --> 01:21:45,600

not in itself as a form of art, you know, like just, just put it, get it out.

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01:21:45,600 --> 01:21:46,600

You don't have to share it.

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01:21:46,600 --> 01:21:47,600

Nobody's going to read it.

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01:21:47,600 --> 01:21:51,920

Just write because it's very cathartic and very therapeutic.

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01:21:51,920 --> 01:21:55,600

Even if you reread it and you like see all these typos and, and you're like, man, this

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01:21:55,600 --> 01:21:57,760

sounds like I'm fucking, I'm a sociopath.

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01:21:57,760 --> 01:22:00,560

Just write because it'll get better.

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01:22:00,560 --> 01:22:01,560

It will get better.

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01:22:01,560 --> 01:22:02,880

Just practice at it.

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01:22:02,880 --> 01:22:03,880

So.

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01:22:03,880 --> 01:22:07,280

Well, two things that you said, firstly, purpose being your family.

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01:22:07,280 --> 01:22:12,680

I think that's a really important conversation because they were without you for, you know,

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01:22:12,680 --> 01:22:17,520

in my profession every third day for 14 years, you know, and yours, you were deployed months

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01:22:17,520 --> 01:22:18,520

at a time.

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01:22:18,520 --> 01:22:22,160

So that, you know, and I think also you're, you're rebuilding yourself.

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01:22:22,160 --> 01:22:25,600

I mean, I know you're still beating your body up at the moment, but I mean, 14 years for

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01:22:25,600 --> 01:22:29,680

me, hormonally and mentally, you know, there's, there's a lot of fixing that I'm doing right

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01:22:29,680 --> 01:22:30,680

now.

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01:22:30,680 --> 01:22:32,240

But the other thing is that purpose.

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01:22:32,240 --> 01:22:37,280

And I think that it's hard for some of us in uniform to understand that there are so

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01:22:37,280 --> 01:22:38,520

many ways to serve.

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01:22:38,520 --> 01:22:42,000

There are so many ways to keep giving and it could be become a counselor or a fitness

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01:22:42,000 --> 01:22:47,840

coach or, you know, write books or, you know, whatever it is, or create the best new shoots

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01:22:47,840 --> 01:22:51,200

for people that are going to deploy 10 years from now.

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01:22:51,200 --> 01:22:55,680

But where I've heard people struggle, you know, if we're talking about the, the role

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01:22:55,680 --> 01:23:00,400

that they go into is, is the seal that becomes a realtor or goes into finance.

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01:23:00,400 --> 01:23:02,800

I think it's because there isn't that service.

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01:23:02,800 --> 01:23:07,080

So there are so many ways to serve, but there are also ways not to serve.

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01:23:07,080 --> 01:23:12,920

And I think for a lot of us that did that for so many years wearing a uniform, I think

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01:23:12,920 --> 01:23:16,640

it's important to kind of ask yourself, all right, what kind of position do I want to

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01:23:16,640 --> 01:23:17,640

want to go in?

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01:23:17,640 --> 01:23:21,360

And when I lay my head on the pillow that night, do I still feel like I made the world

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01:23:21,360 --> 01:23:22,840

a little bit better?

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01:23:22,840 --> 01:23:23,840

Yeah.

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01:23:23,840 --> 01:23:30,640

I think that we, I remember having this, this, this misconception that it's like, wait a

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01:23:30,640 --> 01:23:35,320

minute, like I've been in combat and I led people and I was the TL on this and I did

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01:23:35,320 --> 01:23:36,320

all this.

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01:23:36,320 --> 01:23:40,920

I should, you should bring me in as the fucking president of this company or the CEO or the

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01:23:40,920 --> 01:23:42,080

CFO or something.

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01:23:42,080 --> 01:23:44,320

So no, it doesn't.

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01:23:44,320 --> 01:23:49,240

And I had that mindset for a long time and it doesn't work that way, unfortunately.

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01:23:49,240 --> 01:24:00,440

But I think that finding that purpose for me, finding that purpose for me has been crucial.

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01:24:00,440 --> 01:24:04,320

In late 2017, now I wasn't sure if I was going to talk about this or not, but I think it's

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01:24:04,320 --> 01:24:09,080

really important because I think that a lot of people can relate to this.

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01:24:09,080 --> 01:24:12,200

So I retired in October, 2016.

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01:24:12,200 --> 01:24:17,400

We moved here the summer of that year and throughout that year was really tough for

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01:24:17,400 --> 01:24:18,400

me.

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01:24:18,400 --> 01:24:22,040

I was just doing some coaching and some jumping, making very little money.

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01:24:22,040 --> 01:24:26,440

I mean, thankfully retirement and, and some other stuff, uh, it's financially kept us

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01:24:26,440 --> 01:24:29,320

afloat living in Florida is a lot better than living in Southern California financially

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01:24:29,320 --> 01:24:31,920

on for obvious reasons.

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01:24:31,920 --> 01:24:40,800

Late 2017, um, I left my wife and we split for about two years and I went off and just

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01:24:40,800 --> 01:24:46,800

wanted, I was in such a dark place that I didn't like myself.

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01:24:46,800 --> 01:24:51,120

And so that resentment carried, you know, basically went to her and I resented her for

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01:24:51,120 --> 01:24:58,320

it because when we first met in 2005, when I moved to San Diego, she, not that I had

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01:24:58,320 --> 01:25:02,800

a whole lot of life problems or life experiences, but she was there for everything and she solved

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01:25:02,800 --> 01:25:03,800

everything.

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01:25:03,800 --> 01:25:09,720

She was part of these, these training trips, these deployments, these losses, these gains,

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01:25:09,720 --> 01:25:13,480

you know, with every, with every victory, there is a fall, you know, I mean, part of

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01:25:13,480 --> 01:25:14,480

all of it.

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01:25:14,480 --> 01:25:18,640

And then now that I'm retired and we've had two kids, I'm retired and I've got all these

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01:25:18,640 --> 01:25:23,640

like issues that I can't seem to wrap my head around about my identity.

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01:25:23,640 --> 01:25:25,440

She wasn't solving it anymore.

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01:25:25,440 --> 01:25:29,560

And so this resentment built up and this wasn't just, you know, over the span of a year and

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01:25:29,560 --> 01:25:33,120

a half, the span of probably a good like, you know, nine, 10 years, I was dealing with

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01:25:33,120 --> 01:25:34,120

a lot of darkness.

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01:25:34,120 --> 01:25:41,680

And so finally in November, 2017, um, I said, I have to go and we split up and I stayed

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01:25:41,680 --> 01:25:53,320

close and we co-parented, um, and we went into, I dove into work really, really hard.

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01:25:53,320 --> 01:26:01,120

And May of 2019, um, I did a retreat with a buddy of mine who encouraged me to go with

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01:26:01,120 --> 01:26:05,600

him, came back about six, eight months later and things started to kind of come back to

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01:26:05,600 --> 01:26:06,600

me.

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01:26:06,600 --> 01:26:12,720

I forgave myself for the things that I've done and I started to like myself again and

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01:26:12,720 --> 01:26:17,880

have some self-compassion sort of remap things, if you will, in my decision making process.

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01:26:17,880 --> 01:26:22,000

And I could sort of see the forest for the trees were all these years before I thought

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01:26:22,000 --> 01:26:23,640

I was.

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01:26:23,640 --> 01:26:32,600

Um, and then early December, uh, 2019, uh, I bought her a car for her, for Christmas

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01:26:32,600 --> 01:26:37,760

to always surprise her and then I asked her on a date and then, uh, about three months

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01:26:37,760 --> 01:26:40,880

later we got back together and we've been together ever since.

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01:26:40,880 --> 01:26:48,720

So it's a hard one though, because I put that woman through a lot, you know, and, uh, the

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01:26:48,720 --> 01:26:58,560

fact that she took me back and without skipping a beat to really let me back in and allow

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01:26:58,560 --> 01:27:04,520

us to create this, this, this bloodline, this Kush family bloodline, this legacy for both

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01:27:04,520 --> 01:27:11,560

of us, um, has been, yeah, I'm grateful for her every day, man.

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01:27:11,560 --> 01:27:16,240

So, well, firstly, thank you for trusting me enough to share that because it is, it

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01:27:16,240 --> 01:27:18,280

is important and so many people struggle.

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01:27:18,280 --> 01:27:24,120

I've watched firefighters that I adore, you know, incredible men literally start to crumble

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01:27:24,120 --> 01:27:29,040

before my eyes and, and, you know, just head over heels with their wives and all of a sudden

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01:27:29,040 --> 01:27:32,120

their marriages start devolving.

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01:27:32,120 --> 01:27:33,360

And it's, you know, it's the job.

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01:27:33,360 --> 01:27:37,440

And I always tell people that if someone was a shit bag day one on the grinder, then they're

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01:27:37,440 --> 01:27:42,120

probably a shit bag and they got some stuff from before, but if they were, you know, loyal

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01:27:42,120 --> 01:27:47,620

and, and, and all the things that we admire in someone and then five, 10 years later,

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01:27:47,620 --> 01:27:51,600

they weren't anymore, then it's the job, you know, it is the job.

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01:27:51,600 --> 01:27:57,160

So you talked about a retreat, you know, what kind of a treat was it?

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01:27:57,160 --> 01:28:03,200

And then what were the observations that you made that you were then able to forgive yourself

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01:28:03,200 --> 01:28:08,560

and navigate yourself back to that incredible man that you were that she fell in love with

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01:28:08,560 --> 01:28:09,560

in the first place?

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01:28:09,560 --> 01:28:12,520

Oh, yeah, that's a good one.

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01:28:12,520 --> 01:28:16,600

Um, so I'll just keep it, um, at surface level.

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01:28:16,600 --> 01:28:25,360

Um, but it was, it was, um, yeah, it was like a four day retreat, um, down, uh, down south.

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01:28:25,360 --> 01:28:28,840

So I do want to keep it service level just for some of the, some of the other reasons,

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01:28:28,840 --> 01:28:29,840

for some other reasons.

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01:28:29,840 --> 01:28:36,400

Um, and it, and it, and it allowed me to really, I mean, it allowed me, it forced me to take

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01:28:36,400 --> 01:28:41,960

a long look at my, not when look at my life.

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01:28:41,960 --> 01:28:45,540

When I, when I say I look at my life, it wasn't just here.

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01:28:45,540 --> 01:28:49,780

So it forced me to take a long look at my life here.

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01:28:49,780 --> 01:28:56,200

So from birth, childhood, present, and then projections of a future.

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01:28:56,200 --> 01:29:01,920

And that was a huge eye opening experience for me.

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01:29:01,920 --> 01:29:07,240

And it caused me throughout the following, you know, six, eight months, I just, I paused

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01:29:07,240 --> 01:29:12,160

and I was in like really deep and good thought.

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01:29:12,160 --> 01:29:16,580

And I knew that I would eventually, I felt drawn that I would find my way home.

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01:29:16,580 --> 01:29:18,740

I didn't know that she was going to say yes.

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01:29:18,740 --> 01:29:21,120

I was really apprehensive that she would say yes.

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01:29:21,120 --> 01:29:29,760

Um, and so this long buildup of is this going to happen, um, was really nerve wracking,

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01:29:29,760 --> 01:29:32,920

but I wasn't, I wasn't super, I wasn't hyper focused on it.

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01:29:32,920 --> 01:29:37,320

I was really focused on finding some compassion in myself.

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01:29:37,320 --> 01:29:41,920

And it's like what I've done and what I've been through, whether it was by, you know,

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01:29:41,920 --> 01:29:47,120

because of me or not because of me, just by circumstance and being in combat and you know,

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01:29:47,120 --> 01:29:55,000

these, these different atrocities, but I was able to finally take a look inward, which

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01:29:55,000 --> 01:29:59,600

then helped me view things outward a lot better.

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01:29:59,600 --> 01:30:04,600

Um, so I could, the biggest thing was actually to find to like myself again, cause I didn't,

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01:30:04,600 --> 01:30:08,800

I didn't for the longest time was to actually appreciate what I actually provide and what

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01:30:08,800 --> 01:30:12,240

I give and what I, what I receive because of it.

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01:30:12,240 --> 01:30:20,080

Um, the self-compassion I think is literally be a lot of, can solve a lot of, uh, can help

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01:30:20,080 --> 01:30:23,800

open doors for, for, for solving a lot of problems for us down the road.

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01:30:23,800 --> 01:30:24,800

Yeah.

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01:30:24,800 --> 01:30:29,600

Well, again, it's a powerful story, you know, because the job does have an impact.

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01:30:29,600 --> 01:30:30,600

It just does.

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01:30:30,600 --> 01:30:31,600

It's just the bottom line.

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01:30:31,600 --> 01:30:36,160

So to be able to navigate back and for your wife to have the forgiveness as well, I had

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01:30:36,160 --> 01:30:38,880

a guest on Chris Fields who became a good friend.

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01:30:38,880 --> 01:30:43,360

And he, if you think about the Oklahoma bombing, there's an iconic, tragically iconic picture

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01:30:43,360 --> 01:30:45,880

of a firefighter holding a dead toddler.

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01:30:45,880 --> 01:30:47,160

And that was Chris.

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01:30:47,160 --> 01:30:51,740

So you imagine you talk about anniversaries every year that that happened.

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01:30:51,740 --> 01:30:55,940

His picture is all over the magazines, all over the TV screens.

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01:30:55,940 --> 01:31:02,700

And he had a complete, you know, spiral downwards and ended up being unfaithful and ultimately

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01:31:02,700 --> 01:31:07,240

was able to get help navigate his way back and his amazing wife, Cheryl took him back

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01:31:07,240 --> 01:31:09,680

and they're still happily married again today.

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01:31:09,680 --> 01:31:14,160

But I think, you know, these, we need to hear this because you fell in love with, with an

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01:31:14,160 --> 01:31:19,460

incredible first responder soldier, whoever it was, and then they went to war or then

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01:31:19,460 --> 01:31:22,920

they did what we do for 10, 20, 30 years.

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01:31:22,920 --> 01:31:27,920

Doesn't give you an excuse to behave in a certain way, but it's a reason.

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01:31:27,920 --> 01:31:32,680

And if a couple's dynamic is able to navigate that and a person's going to put in the work

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01:31:32,680 --> 01:31:36,760

and get help, then there's hope for some of these relationships that are struggling right

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01:31:36,760 --> 01:31:37,760

now.

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01:31:37,760 --> 01:31:38,760

It's true.

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01:31:38,760 --> 01:31:39,760

Yeah.

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01:31:39,760 --> 01:31:48,560

And, and she's the, she's the, the best and the best, she's the best kind of best kind

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01:31:48,560 --> 01:31:52,160

of person and I'm very fortunate, but also sometimes unfortunate because she has her

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01:31:52,160 --> 01:31:53,640

doctorate in clinical psychology.

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01:31:53,640 --> 01:31:58,520

So, you know, you get where I'm going with that and she'll be okay with it.

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01:31:58,520 --> 01:31:59,520

I said that.

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01:31:59,520 --> 01:32:02,680

But yeah, so she's very analytical as well.

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01:32:02,680 --> 01:32:06,000

And so she looked at things.

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01:32:06,000 --> 01:32:09,920

It was really hard for her not to, for her not to look at things, obviously with a huge

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01:32:09,920 --> 01:32:14,080

bias because I completely upended her world, you know, by doing that.

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01:32:14,080 --> 01:32:18,480

And for us to continue to work on stuff because it's, everything's a process.

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01:32:18,480 --> 01:32:22,440

You know, you just go to the gym and peek out at your deadlift or bench press and then

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01:32:22,440 --> 01:32:23,440

that's it.

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01:32:23,440 --> 01:32:24,440

I'm good.

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01:32:24,440 --> 01:32:27,440

You know, you still, it still takes discipline, it still takes practice and commitment for

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01:32:27,440 --> 01:32:28,440

sure.

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01:32:28,440 --> 01:32:29,440

So yeah.

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01:32:29,440 --> 01:32:30,440

Beautiful.

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01:32:30,440 --> 01:32:31,680

That's what, that's what I want to be good at.

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01:32:31,680 --> 01:32:34,880

You know, for so many years I want to be good at this, this, this, and this.

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01:32:34,880 --> 01:32:37,080

I want to be good at being a dad.

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01:32:37,080 --> 01:32:39,280

I want to be good at being a teammate.

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01:32:39,280 --> 01:32:41,160

That's what I want to be good at.

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01:32:41,160 --> 01:32:46,800

And the fact that she never told me that's what you need to do in order for this to be

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01:32:46,800 --> 01:32:52,720

successful that I figured that out on my own was, was one of my bigger accomplishments

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01:32:52,720 --> 01:32:58,040

for myself, you know, at least in the, in the head space world was that I realized that

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01:32:58,040 --> 01:32:59,480

this is what I want to be good at.

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01:32:59,480 --> 01:33:01,320

I want to be, I want to be good at being a husband.

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01:33:01,320 --> 01:33:04,920

I want to be good at being a dad, you know, so.

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01:33:04,920 --> 01:33:06,120

Well I think that's what a man is.

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01:33:06,120 --> 01:33:09,600

And we've had lots of conversations about this, but you know, the, the kind of two dimensional

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01:33:09,600 --> 01:33:12,240

facade of masculinity is, oh, it's the seal.

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01:33:12,240 --> 01:33:13,240

It's the firefighter.

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01:33:13,240 --> 01:33:15,200

It's like, no, we're a yin and a yang.

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01:33:15,200 --> 01:33:18,080

You know, we're also a father, a husband, a lover.

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01:33:18,080 --> 01:33:21,840

You know, you can, you can be shooting a terrorist or you can be handing a little girl a chem

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01:33:21,840 --> 01:33:22,840

stick.

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01:33:22,840 --> 01:33:27,760

Still the same seal or EOD operator, but you know, two sides of the same coin.

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01:33:27,760 --> 01:33:30,480

All right.

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01:33:30,480 --> 01:33:34,640

Well then one more area I want to hit before we go to the closing questions.

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01:33:34,640 --> 01:33:40,280

February last year, you and I both were part of a round the world trip.

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01:33:40,280 --> 01:33:41,280

Yours was seven by seven.

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01:33:41,280 --> 01:33:45,040

Mine was seven X. When I say mine, it was my friend Ryan's, Ryan Parrot, and then the

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01:33:45,040 --> 01:33:48,080

Navy seal who, who was spearheading that.

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01:33:48,080 --> 01:33:53,140

We went around the world and the goal really was to break down these, these incredible

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01:33:53,140 --> 01:33:58,720

humans and kind of plan how to, how to train them for it, break them down, which they did

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01:33:58,720 --> 01:33:59,720

incredibly successfully.

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01:33:59,720 --> 01:34:01,040

It destroyed us.

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01:34:01,040 --> 01:34:04,520

And then how do we kind of put the pieces back together again?

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01:34:04,520 --> 01:34:07,520

Yours was, you know, I know there was some kind of human performance studying going on

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01:34:07,520 --> 01:34:10,520

as well, but also there was an actual record attempt with your group.

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01:34:10,520 --> 01:34:15,200

So talk to me about your experience of circumnavigating the globe skydiving.

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01:34:15,200 --> 01:34:16,200

Geez.

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01:34:16,200 --> 01:34:17,200

Yeah.

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01:34:17,200 --> 01:34:20,800

So, I mean, I got to give it a little bit of history, not to, not to repeat it too,

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01:34:20,800 --> 01:34:30,880

too much from, from, from, from earlier, but the, it was July, 2021 that my former teammate,

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01:34:30,880 --> 01:34:36,960

Mike Cirelli gave me a call and Mike and I had done two deployments to Iraq in 2006 and

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01:34:36,960 --> 01:34:37,960

in 2008.

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01:34:37,960 --> 01:34:38,960

And we had lost touch.

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01:34:38,960 --> 01:34:42,480

He would gone, he'd gone over to the East coast and I was staying on the West coast.

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01:34:42,480 --> 01:34:45,400

And then we, you know, every once in a while conversations would come up, but then he reached

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01:34:45,400 --> 01:34:49,440

out to me and kind of cold called me and said, I have this idea.

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01:34:49,440 --> 01:34:55,120

We'd like to do seven skydives on seven continents in seven days.

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01:34:55,120 --> 01:35:00,760

And I was like, bro, you are, you are, you are biting off a lot on this one, you know,

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01:35:00,760 --> 01:35:03,760

just to do that logistically.

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01:35:03,760 --> 01:35:04,760

And so we started planning.

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01:35:04,760 --> 01:35:08,800

I had a really good friend who had been to all seven continents and who actually held

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01:35:08,800 --> 01:35:12,200

the skydiving record for all seven continents.

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01:35:12,200 --> 01:35:16,400

He had done it in like six months and like three weeks, I think.

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01:35:16,400 --> 01:35:23,880

And his name was Tom Noonan and Tom was a world renowned tandem master tandem instructor.

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01:35:23,880 --> 01:35:30,040

So he ran the tandem program for United parachute technologies, which is a manufacturer, sort

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01:35:30,040 --> 01:35:33,760

of the birthplace of tandem skydiving here in Deland.

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01:35:33,760 --> 01:35:38,800

And so Tom was the pioneer sort of leader for that, for the safety and training for

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01:35:38,800 --> 01:35:40,160

that program.

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01:35:40,160 --> 01:35:46,200

Sadly, we were planning and October 16th, 2021, Tom died.

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01:35:46,200 --> 01:35:52,800

So now our go-to guy for all this overseas and all of his experience worldwide was now

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01:35:52,800 --> 01:35:54,360

kind of in ashes.

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01:35:54,360 --> 01:35:56,720

And so, you know, went to Tom's funeral.

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01:35:56,720 --> 01:36:02,080

That was really tough because Tom is a very dear friend of mine.

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01:36:02,080 --> 01:36:05,680

And then we sort of circled the wagons and decided to keep going.

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01:36:05,680 --> 01:36:11,920

And so fast forward to summer of 2022, we started to get some funding.

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01:36:11,920 --> 01:36:17,280

Like in Andy Stump, who was a big part of the expedition team.

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01:36:17,280 --> 01:36:23,120

They got on, did a podcast with Joe Rogan and was able to do a pitch for the overall

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01:36:23,120 --> 01:36:26,200

nonprofit we were raising money for, which was Folds of Honor.

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01:36:26,200 --> 01:36:31,080

And Folds of Honor is a nonprofit that raises money for kids' education scholarships for

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01:36:31,080 --> 01:36:35,920

deceased, disabled, first responders and service members.

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01:36:35,920 --> 01:36:38,920

And so they do basically private education.

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01:36:38,920 --> 01:36:41,160

And so we wanted to raise money for Folds.

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01:36:41,160 --> 01:36:45,880

And the big reason we wanted to do it for Folds was we really liked their mission.

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01:36:45,880 --> 01:36:48,600

And we had an eclectic group on our team.

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01:36:48,600 --> 01:36:54,240

We had a Ranger, we had a Canadian guy, we had a couple of team guys, we had a Marine

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01:36:54,240 --> 01:36:58,160

Scout sniper, and then we have myself.

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01:36:58,160 --> 01:37:02,040

And so we had this group where if we went to the Navy SEAL Foundation or another foundation,

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01:37:02,040 --> 01:37:05,540

it's not their against Navy SEAL Foundation or any other foundation was that in order

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01:37:05,540 --> 01:37:10,640

to get support from some of those foundations, you had to have had been an SF guy or a Ranger

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01:37:10,640 --> 01:37:11,640

or a SEAL.

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01:37:11,640 --> 01:37:16,680

So with Folds, it was, it didn't matter who you are, if you're a first responder, you

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01:37:16,680 --> 01:37:21,760

know, 100% disabled service, you know, veteran or deceased family, dependent of a deceased

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01:37:21,760 --> 01:37:24,040

service member, you qualify.

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01:37:24,040 --> 01:37:25,720

That was kind of, we looked at it.

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01:37:25,720 --> 01:37:29,240

Was it like we want to spread it out and push forward from there.

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01:37:29,240 --> 01:37:34,680

So we had a training camp in October with the guys were, you know, kind of, you know,

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01:37:34,680 --> 01:37:38,320

getting a feel for everybody, you know, jumping, you know, we had some low jump numbers, some

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01:37:38,320 --> 01:37:41,960

high jump numbers, and so we're just trying to get some reps, because all we were doing

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01:37:41,960 --> 01:37:42,960

was jumping.

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01:37:42,960 --> 01:37:47,840

Then we did, you know, along the way, I was having to do paperwork for all of these respective

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01:37:47,840 --> 01:37:54,080

locations, Antarctica, the drop zone in Chile, drop zone in Florida, Barcelona, Egypt, UAE,

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01:37:54,080 --> 01:37:57,200

and Australia, and working all of those pieces.

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01:37:57,200 --> 01:38:02,440

So we had seven skydivers, and then myself was going to be, I was the tandem instructor,

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01:38:02,440 --> 01:38:07,480

and then Jim Wiginton was my tandem passenger and Jim Wiginton was Tom's passenger for the

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01:38:07,480 --> 01:38:08,680

other seven continents.

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01:38:08,680 --> 01:38:13,400

So Jim had already had the record as a passenger, but he wanted to do it in seven days.

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01:38:13,400 --> 01:38:16,360

So and he's, I think he's now 74 years old.

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01:38:16,360 --> 01:38:19,800

So good on him.

1539

01:38:19,800 --> 01:38:26,400

So yeah, then in right before New Year's of December of 22, we flew down to Chile, and

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01:38:26,400 --> 01:38:28,720

we were down in Chile for about a week or so.

1541

01:38:28,720 --> 01:38:30,200

And it flew down to Antarctica.

1542

01:38:30,200 --> 01:38:31,760

And then the machine just started.

1543

01:38:31,760 --> 01:38:36,560

You know, we were, we tried and we sat there and looked at like, do we build a contingency

1544

01:38:36,560 --> 01:38:37,560
list?

1545

01:38:37,560 --> 01:38:41,400

Do we have, you know, do we like kind of basically do this as if we're planning and, you know,

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01:38:41,400 --> 01:38:42,400

a big operation?

1547

01:38:42,400 --> 01:38:43,400

Yes and no.

1548

01:38:43,400 --> 01:38:48,120

I mean, we were prepared for delayed flights, lost baggage, we had those types of contingencies

1549

01:38:48,120 --> 01:38:52,760

in place, but we didn't really see the point of building out and trying to get super creative

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01:38:52,760 --> 01:38:54,880

with this long list of contingencies.

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01:38:54,880 --> 01:39:00,800

And then, you know, spending all this unnecessary time trying to figure out this enigma, we

1552

01:39:00,800 --> 01:39:04,580

were going to basically deal this with this puzzle as it came to us.

1553

01:39:04,580 --> 01:39:07,200

So we planned it and we planned it flawlessly.

1554

01:39:07,200 --> 01:39:11,400

And if we knew that it wasn't going to be executed flawlessly, but we were able to respond.

1555

01:39:11,400 --> 01:39:16,240

And that was why we built the team that we had was the guys were incredibly resourceful.

1556

01:39:16,240 --> 01:39:20,760

You know, they had connections in aviation, they had connections with finance, they like

1557

01:39:20,760 --> 01:39:23,160

all these, you know, it's a lot of social media presence.

1558

01:39:23,160 --> 01:39:29,520

So there was all of this resources that opened up this huge scope that we could tap into.

1559

01:39:29,520 --> 01:39:32,520

And we weren't, none of the guys were like professional skydivers.

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01:39:32,520 --> 01:39:36,720

You know, like there was two of us that do this for a living on the entire expedition.

1561

01:39:36,720 --> 01:39:40,480

You know, Fred Williams, the president of Complete Parachute Solutions has got 15,000

1562

01:39:40,480 --> 01:39:41,480

jumps.

1563

01:39:41,480 --> 01:39:42,480

I have 12,000 jumps.

1564

01:39:42,480 --> 01:39:46,440

And then right behind me is somebody with like 4,000 jumps on the team.

1565

01:39:46,440 --> 01:39:50,600

And that trickles all the way down to the lowest jump number was 200, because that was

1566

01:39:50,600 --> 01:39:53,260

the base minimum for us to go to Antarctica.

1567

01:39:53,260 --> 01:39:57,640

So we weren't really wasn't a complex skydiving, you know, event.

1568

01:39:57,640 --> 01:40:01,880

It was just it was a logistical enigma is what we were basically going through.

1569

01:40:01,880 --> 01:40:07,440

And the idea was to do something really, you know, loud and over the top to get attention,

1570

01:40:07,440 --> 01:40:11,840

people to follow us kind of Forrest Gump style, and then, you know, raise money for folds

1571

01:40:11,840 --> 01:40:15,960

and talk about folds of honor and tell the story of of our fallen comrades.

1572

01:40:15,960 --> 01:40:21,080

You know, I got to talk about Mark Lee, you know, who is in my platoon and was shot and

1573

01:40:21,080 --> 01:40:25,960

killed on August 2, 2006, while we were on a, you know, on an assault.

1574

01:40:25,960 --> 01:40:30,160

And the friendship and relationship I formed with Debbie Lee, his mom and her foundation,

1575

01:40:30,160 --> 01:40:33,440

because Mighty Warriors doing, you know, traumatic brain injury treatment.

1576

01:40:33,440 --> 01:40:37,480

And so it was it was a really good experience overall.

1577

01:40:37,480 --> 01:40:40,080

And then the platform that we created in order to tell the story.

1578

01:40:40,080 --> 01:40:44,720

And I think the documentary is due to screen I think in February or March of next of this

1579

01:40:44,720 --> 01:40:46,440

coming year.

1580

01:40:46,440 --> 01:40:51,360

And but it was physically like, as you know, a kick in the ass.

1581

01:40:51,360 --> 01:40:55,400

I mean, we were monitored by whoop and whoop did a small, you know, pretty cool little

1582

01:40:55,400 --> 01:40:57,160

study for a few of us.

1583

01:40:57,160 --> 01:41:01,320

And it took me about three weeks to fully get back into the swing of things.

1584

01:41:01,320 --> 01:41:05,400

I mean, sleep and body aches and like, I wasn't sure what was going on, but it was definitely

1585

01:41:05,400 --> 01:41:06,920

we were smashed for sure.

1586

01:41:06,920 --> 01:41:08,200

Yeah, it was brutal.

1587

01:41:08,200 --> 01:41:11,080

I mean, obviously, ours was a couple months later in February.

1588

01:41:11,080 --> 01:41:15,840

And ours was I think total travel time was I think we were gone for 12 days because we

1589

01:41:15,840 --> 01:41:17,840

were in South Africa for a few days.

1590

01:41:17,840 --> 01:41:22,920

Antarctica fell through like last last minute, like, you know, hours before, which was was

1591

01:41:22,920 --> 01:41:23,920

the same.

1592

01:41:23,920 --> 01:41:25,480

But it was funny.

1593

01:41:25,480 --> 01:41:29,240

I'd actually reached out to Kurt Parsley about the sleep supplement.

1594

01:41:29,240 --> 01:41:30,920

And then he's like, Oh, I'm already part of something.

1595

01:41:30,920 --> 01:41:32,120

I'm like, Oh, really?

1596

01:41:32,120 --> 01:41:33,240

And he was part of yours.

1597

01:41:33,240 --> 01:41:40,100

So I remember pictures of the man who really opened my eyes about sleep deprivation, exhausted

1598

01:41:40,100 --> 01:41:44,520

on your social media posts as everyone was fast asleep in an airport.

1599

01:41:44,520 --> 01:41:46,440

We did not intend for it to be a competition.

1600

01:41:46,440 --> 01:41:49,240

And I'm so glad that it wasn't perceived like that.

1601

01:41:49,240 --> 01:41:54,160

You know, really, you know, I mean, maybe between, you know, you know, like, sort of

1602

01:41:54,160 --> 01:41:57,920

like in the team room, if it were, you know, like if Ryan and I are because I met Ryan

1603

01:41:57,920 --> 01:42:01,720

years and years ago and I don't know if he remembers me, but like on the West Coast.

1604

01:42:01,720 --> 01:42:05,800

So but it really like big picture was just like, hey, we're both doing something really

1605

01:42:05,800 --> 01:42:08,960

good for, you know, for veterans.

1606

01:42:08,960 --> 01:42:10,720

And that was basically it in their families.

1607

01:42:10,720 --> 01:42:13,000

So but yeah, Kurt Parsley is awesome.

1608

01:42:13,000 --> 01:42:16,280

Yeah, I still he just got married a few weeks ago.

1609

01:42:16,280 --> 01:42:19,920

And yeah, I still take his sleep remedy every night because it's awesome.

1610

01:42:19,920 --> 01:42:20,920

Yeah, it's great.

1611

01:42:20,920 --> 01:42:21,920

It is.

1612

01:42:21,920 --> 01:42:22,920

And everyone was impressed.

1613

01:42:22,920 --> 01:42:25,080

People had he donated some for us as well.

1614

01:42:25,080 --> 01:42:26,080

Oh, good.

1615

01:42:26,080 --> 01:42:27,080

And people were blown away.

1616

01:42:27,080 --> 01:42:28,800

How well it well I've used it for years myself.

1617

01:42:28,800 --> 01:42:29,800

Yeah.

1618

01:42:29,800 --> 01:42:31,000

One more area.

1619

01:42:31,000 --> 01:42:34,360

I've only done two skydives ever, both tandem.

1620

01:42:34,360 --> 01:42:38,680

One was in New Zealand and then one was out of a Russian helicopter over the pyramids.

1621

01:42:38,680 --> 01:42:43,040

Now, I know there's a very iconic picture from your trip of you guys all, you know,

1622

01:42:43,040 --> 01:42:46,520

holding hands with the pyramids kind of in the middle of the circle.

1623

01:42:46,520 --> 01:42:47,680

Talk to me about that jump for you.

1624

01:42:47,680 --> 01:42:52,160

I mean, you're so experienced already, but was that a pretty, pretty powerful moment

1625

01:42:52,160 --> 01:42:54,520

for you, even though you had so many jumps?

1626

01:42:54,520 --> 01:42:56,520

Yeah, it was.

1627

01:42:56,520 --> 01:43:00,040

You know, out of all of it, out of all those jumps, Antarctica was still my favorite just

1628

01:43:00,040 --> 01:43:04,240

because there's been so few to ever jump over Antarctica.

1629

01:43:04,240 --> 01:43:06,400

And also Antarctica is like another planet.

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01:43:06,400 --> 01:43:11,800

You know, I mean, it's just it doesn't feel or look like it makes sense, you know,

1631

01:43:11,800 --> 01:43:12,800

but the place is amazing.

1632

01:43:12,800 --> 01:43:16,280

And hopefully you get to go back there next December, next year, doing some other stuff

1633

01:43:16,280 --> 01:43:22,840

with Fulnes of Honor with the company that runs the Union Glacier camp down there.

1634

01:43:22,840 --> 01:43:25,040

But the pyramids, yeah, that was really iconic.

1635

01:43:25,040 --> 01:43:30,200

It was funny because I think it was about a 14 mile flight from the airport to the pyramid

1636

01:43:30,200 --> 01:43:31,200

location.

1637

01:43:31,200 --> 01:43:33,600

And then did you guys land on the golf course as well?

1638

01:43:33,600 --> 01:43:37,560

No, we landed right next to the pyramids, right next to the pyramids.

1639

01:43:37,560 --> 01:43:38,560

Yeah.

1640

01:43:38,560 --> 01:43:41,120

So I don't know how they managed to make that work, but it was it was pretty crazy.

1641

01:43:41,120 --> 01:43:42,120

Yeah.

1642

01:43:42,120 --> 01:43:45,040

There's a couple of different companies that sort of operate down there.

1643

01:43:45,040 --> 01:43:46,960

And it was just happened like the one that we were with.

1644

01:43:46,960 --> 01:43:50,440

Yeah, we landed on that golf course just on the east side, I think, of the pyramids.

1645

01:43:50,440 --> 01:43:53,120

But it was really it was really cool.

1646

01:43:53,120 --> 01:43:56,520

I remember getting out with you because I had I was doing the tandem.

1647

01:43:56,520 --> 01:43:58,360

So I had Jim attached to me.

1648

01:43:58,360 --> 01:44:02,000

And it's more like, you know, kind of what Jim moved your head so I can see, you know,

1649

01:44:02,000 --> 01:44:03,000

like this.

1650

01:44:03,000 --> 01:44:07,200

But, you know, we when we were under under canopy flying.

1651

01:44:07,200 --> 01:44:13,480

Yeah, it's really surreal because you see the very tip top of the pyramids and the way

1652

01:44:13,480 --> 01:44:16,360

the sun is hitting it and the shadow that it casts.

1653

01:44:16,360 --> 01:44:22,440

It's just so it's like it's so perfect in a very imperfect type of like kind of world

1654

01:44:22,440 --> 01:44:24,240

almost, it seems like.

1655

01:44:24,240 --> 01:44:26,840

But it was a really good it was really cool.

1656

01:44:26,840 --> 01:44:30,680

You know, we landed and we packed our packer parachutes and they had tea and food and everything

1657

01:44:30,680 --> 01:44:31,680

like that.

1658

01:44:31,680 --> 01:44:37,720

And they said, hey, do you guys want to do like this VIP tour of the pyramids?

1659

01:44:37,720 --> 01:44:43,400

And no, we just want to go to sleep because we were we were so smart.

1660

01:44:43,400 --> 01:44:45,960

I mean, in hindsight, maybe we should have.

1661

01:44:45,960 --> 01:44:49,520

But not there wasn't one person that said, oh, man, I kind of want to go.

1662

01:44:49,520 --> 01:44:51,400

Everybody was just like, we had like four hours.

1663

01:44:51,400 --> 01:44:52,400

We can get sleep at the hotel.

1664

01:44:52,400 --> 01:44:53,960

We're going to get some sleep.

1665

01:44:53,960 --> 01:44:56,280

So it was cool.

1666

01:44:56,280 --> 01:45:00,080

But it was I think that it was surreal to finish.

1667

01:45:00,080 --> 01:45:01,080

You know, it was cool.

1668

01:45:01,080 --> 01:45:04,880

Like we did the jump in Florida, our third location, a lot of our friends and family,

1669

01:45:04,880 --> 01:45:08,000

a lot of people from Folds of Honor had flown down to support us.

1670

01:45:08,000 --> 01:45:13,880

Then to Barcelona, then to Cairo, UAE, and then to Perth.

1671

01:45:13,880 --> 01:45:17,800

And Perth was was great because you had all these people following Black Rifle Coffee

1672

01:45:17,800 --> 01:45:20,960

because we had two Black Rifle Coffee guys with us.

1673

01:45:20,960 --> 01:45:24,840

And and Andy's obviously social media presence and following Legacy Expeditions.

1674

01:45:24,840 --> 01:45:29,240

It was neat to see like 40, 50 people just come out of the woodwork just to be there

1675

01:45:29,240 --> 01:45:33,640

when we finished it, take a big picture and drinking beers at 1030 in the morning Australian

1676

01:45:33,640 --> 01:45:34,640

style.

1677

01:45:34,640 --> 01:45:35,640

It was just it was cool.

1678

01:45:35,640 --> 01:45:36,640

It was great.

1679

01:45:36,640 --> 01:45:43,560

It was great to see all these people around the world, you know, whether it be part of

1680

01:45:43,560 --> 01:45:48,400

skydiving or not, just come together and support.

1681

01:45:48,400 --> 01:45:53,720

I mean, they're supporting a nonprofit that's based in the United States that is educating

1682

01:45:53,720 --> 01:45:56,120

the kids of U.S. citizens.

1683

01:45:56,120 --> 01:45:58,400

They didn't care.

1684

01:45:58,400 --> 01:46:00,960

They just liked being part of what we were being part of.

1685

01:46:00,960 --> 01:46:04,680

And that was like something that I remember thinking at the end of it was with all of

1686

01:46:04,680 --> 01:46:11,720

the stuff that's going on in the world today, where it kind of diminishes your hope in humanity,

1687

01:46:11,720 --> 01:46:14,440
stuff like that restored it for sure.

1688

01:46:14,440 --> 01:46:15,440
100 percent.

1689

01:46:15,440 --> 01:46:16,440
Yeah.

1690

01:46:16,440 --> 01:46:18,600
One of the highlights for us, I think, was London.

1691

01:46:18,600 --> 01:46:22,280
So the lads went off and did they did a base jump out of a crane, I think, in England.

1692

01:46:22,280 --> 01:46:23,280
Yeah, I saw that.

1693

01:46:23,280 --> 01:46:24,280
Yeah.

1694

01:46:24,280 --> 01:46:28,160
I think one guy had a very low opening as well, from what I understand, not one of our

1695

01:46:28,160 --> 01:46:30,800
team, but someone that came along.

1696

01:46:30,800 --> 01:46:36,080
But Leo and the other guys were doing the marathon in the park.

1697

01:46:36,080 --> 01:46:39,280

And I was there kind of, you know, at this place and they were doing loops.

1698

01:46:39,280 --> 01:46:44,800

But I'd got the firefighter charity and Royal British Legion Industries to come over.

1699

01:46:44,800 --> 01:46:48,760

And it was it was again, like you said, a bunch of Americans are doing this run.

1700

01:46:48,760 --> 01:46:52,080

And yet all these people come and then people that were running in the park started joining

1701

01:46:52,080 --> 01:46:53,080

them and doing laps.

1702

01:46:53,080 --> 01:46:54,080

That's so cool.

1703

01:46:54,080 --> 01:46:55,760

Like you said, it was a beautiful moment.

1704

01:46:55,760 --> 01:46:58,920

It's freezing and I'm English and it was still fucking cold.

1705

01:46:58,920 --> 01:47:01,040

But yeah, so powerful.

1706

01:47:01,040 --> 01:47:02,760

Yeah, that's so cool.

1707

01:47:02,760 --> 01:47:03,760

Yeah.

1708

01:47:03,760 --> 01:47:07,800

No, I love that how it, you know, how it how it unveiled itself, because I remember when

1709

01:47:07,800 --> 01:47:13,300

we announced it in September, I think someone from 7X Media had, you know, popped a comment

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01:47:13,300 --> 01:47:14,560

on LinkedIn or something like that.

1711

01:47:14,560 --> 01:47:15,560

It was a good comment.

1712

01:47:15,560 --> 01:47:19,240

There was that it never felt like there was any hostility, you know, competition.

1713

01:47:19,240 --> 01:47:21,080

I mean, competition is good, right.

1714

01:47:21,080 --> 01:47:22,880

And that's that's in our nature.

1715

01:47:22,880 --> 01:47:29,620

You know, a good friend of mine, DF, he had said that the combat is emotionally and physically

1716

01:47:29,620 --> 01:47:31,600

taxing and it's competition based.

1717

01:47:31,600 --> 01:47:34,080

So that just kind of goes into who we are.

1718

01:47:34,080 --> 01:47:38,800

It's like, yes, we're going to push ourselves physically, emotionally, and even in the gym

1719

01:47:38,800 --> 01:47:44,920

at home in San Diego, shit's competitive, you know, when it comes to each other, shooting,

1720

01:47:44,920 --> 01:47:49,600

jumping, anything it is, it's like it's in our nature to just continue to, you know,

1721

01:47:49,600 --> 01:47:51,880

to be competitive with one another for sure.

1722

01:47:51,880 --> 01:47:55,000

So it was cool that this was not that case.

1723

01:47:55,000 --> 01:47:56,800

It was like we were kind of boosting.

1724

01:47:56,800 --> 01:47:59,560

We could probably could have in hindsight, we kind of boosted each other up a little

1725

01:47:59,560 --> 01:48:00,560

bit better.

1726

01:48:00,560 --> 01:48:04,800

But I think it's really cool that it was it was one right after the other.

1727

01:48:04,800 --> 01:48:07,560

And it wasn't like one was any it was any more significant.

1728

01:48:07,560 --> 01:48:09,200

You know, that was great.

1729

01:48:09,200 --> 01:48:10,200

Yeah, exactly.

1730

01:48:10,200 --> 01:48:12,200
Two good causes going on simultaneously.

1731
01:48:12,200 --> 01:48:13,200
For sure.

1732
01:48:13,200 --> 01:48:14,200
It's awesome.

1733
01:48:14,200 --> 01:48:15,200
All right.

1734
01:48:15,200 --> 01:48:17,280
Well, then closing questions before I let you go.

1735
01:48:17,280 --> 01:48:21,840
First one I love to ask, is there a book or are there books that you love to recommend?

1736
01:48:21,840 --> 01:48:25,480
It can be related to our discussion today or completely unrelated.

1737
01:48:25,480 --> 01:48:29,960
Well, definitely one of the first one that pops out.

1738
01:48:29,960 --> 01:48:31,040
It's a really easy read.

1739
01:48:31,040 --> 01:48:36,080
And I know it's been recommended probably very extensively is Tribe by Sebastian Younger,

1740
01:48:36,080 --> 01:48:41,960
because I think that what he did in that book was he took all of his time and what he saw,

1741

01:48:41,960 --> 01:48:47,040

you know, in the 80s and Beirut and everywhere he's been and then really wrapped it up with

1742

01:48:47,040 --> 01:48:54,640

his like, I mean, his shock and awe documentation of of Restrepo.

1743

01:48:54,640 --> 01:48:59,440

I think that a lot of his studies and interviews and everything like that really compiled into

1744

01:48:59,440 --> 01:49:00,440

that.

1745

01:49:00,440 --> 01:49:02,200

You know, I mean, he may not say it.

1746

01:49:02,200 --> 01:49:03,520

And I don't I don't know him personally.

1747

01:49:03,520 --> 01:49:06,200

But it's to me, it's a it's a short book.

1748

01:49:06,200 --> 01:49:07,320

It's an easy read.

1749

01:49:07,320 --> 01:49:08,720

But it was like his swan song.

1750

01:49:08,720 --> 01:49:14,120

I mean, it really is everything when it comes to the tribe, because I think that it's not

1751

01:49:14,120 --> 01:49:17,360

just military combatants and things like that.

1752

01:49:17,360 --> 01:49:19,320
I think that it serves in our community.

1753
01:49:19,320 --> 01:49:21,400
It's like, man, be a good neighbor.

1754
01:49:21,400 --> 01:49:26,760
Like, like that's because that's how we were, you know, not that many not that not that

1755
01:49:26,760 --> 01:49:30,440
many years ago is we were living in, you know, living in caves, living in tents, and we had

1756
01:49:30,440 --> 01:49:33,000
to be good neighbors and take care of one another.

1757
01:49:33,000 --> 01:49:36,420
And that's the overall sort of premise I got from that.

1758
01:49:36,420 --> 01:49:39,240
And then one that I'm reading now by Eckhart Tolle is The Power of Now.

1759
01:49:39,240 --> 01:49:44,600
Actually, a friend of mine gave me that book, and that has really helped me in my mind,

1760
01:49:44,600 --> 01:49:53,520
sort of just be more of an observer of the the thoughts that come up and like the dark

1761
01:49:53,520 --> 01:49:55,720
stuff that doesn't is not self serving.

1762
01:49:55,720 --> 01:50:01,440
I can just sort of like sit back and just just observe and don't have to dwell in these

1763

01:50:01,440 --> 01:50:06,000

negative these negative areas, you know, and sort of even in the positive areas, I don't

1764

01:50:06,000 --> 01:50:09,840

treat any of them differently, because I think that there's there's service in both of them

1765

01:50:09,840 --> 01:50:16,720

and growth in both of them is really just to be an observer and act when it's appropriate.

1766

01:50:16,720 --> 01:50:21,320

And it's helped me it's you know, that is influenced me to write and listen to really

1767

01:50:21,320 --> 01:50:22,320

good.

1768

01:50:22,320 --> 01:50:27,080

I love like, good classical music and a lot of piano work and string work.

1769

01:50:27,080 --> 01:50:28,640

It's like it's just it's soothing.

1770

01:50:28,640 --> 01:50:29,640

It's calming.

1771

01:50:29,640 --> 01:50:32,880

But when I go into gym, of course, it's you know, metal and, you know, standard music,

1772

01:50:32,880 --> 01:50:33,880

of course.

1773

01:50:33,880 --> 01:50:37,960

But there's a balance to what I'm finding.

1774

01:50:37,960 --> 01:50:41,400

What I surround myself in my environment is what is who I become.

1775

01:50:41,400 --> 01:50:44,040

So that's that's I think that's true of it all.

1776

01:50:44,040 --> 01:50:45,040

So

1777

01:50:45,040 --> 01:50:46,040

Absolutely.

1778

01:50:46,040 --> 01:50:49,040

Well, what about films and or documentaries?

1779

01:50:49,040 --> 01:50:51,040

Oh, man.

1780

01:50:51,040 --> 01:50:57,440

Well, I mean, we stay on the Sebastian Younger kid, but definitely I watched Restrepo again

1781

01:50:57,440 --> 01:51:04,200

with my son, and I took that off of advice that Andy stumped when he interviewed Sebastian

1782

01:51:04,200 --> 01:51:05,200

Younger a few months ago.

1783

01:51:05,200 --> 01:51:09,640

I remember texting Andy about how good how good of a interview I thought that was.

1784

01:51:09,640 --> 01:51:13,640

Andy had said he watched Restrepo with his kid and his son is a little bit he's a little

1785

01:51:13,640 --> 01:51:14,640
bit older than mine.

1786
01:51:14,640 --> 01:51:17,040
Mine will be 15 next week.

1787
01:51:17,040 --> 01:51:18,720
And that was really cool.

1788
01:51:18,720 --> 01:51:23,480
A really good experience because it wasn't it wasn't I didn't talk to him a whole lot

1789
01:51:23,480 --> 01:51:24,480
through it.

1790
01:51:24,480 --> 01:51:29,600
I sat through it, and I was able to give my perspective of my combat of what they were

1791
01:51:29,600 --> 01:51:30,600
going through.

1792
01:51:30,600 --> 01:51:32,120
And I respected what they were going through.

1793
01:51:32,120 --> 01:51:37,360
It wasn't that mine was any more significant or because I'm not I was part of the special

1794
01:51:37,360 --> 01:51:38,360
operations.

1795
01:51:38,360 --> 01:51:39,360
It wasn't like that.

1796

01:51:39,360 --> 01:51:41,440

It was just like, this is what fucking people are doing.

1797

01:51:41,440 --> 01:51:45,680

You know, these kids are four years older than you, you know, to kind of talking to

1798

01:51:45,680 --> 01:51:50,320

him like that and giving him a little bit of perspective with that.

1799

01:51:50,320 --> 01:51:57,880

I think let's see another one.

1800

01:51:57,880 --> 01:51:58,880

How to Change Your Mind.

1801

01:51:58,880 --> 01:52:02,360

It was a really good book.

1802

01:52:02,360 --> 01:52:09,840

And I think that that goes hand in hand with a lot of the treatments that he he has been

1803

01:52:09,840 --> 01:52:10,840

doing.

1804

01:52:10,840 --> 01:52:13,960

Yeah, that was a really that was a really, really good book.

1805

01:52:13,960 --> 01:52:14,960

I highly recommend that one.

1806

01:52:14,960 --> 01:52:16,240

I won't get too much into that one.

1807

01:52:16,240 --> 01:52:18,080

But How to Change Your Mind, it's a pretty common one.

1808

01:52:18,080 --> 01:52:20,640

I think that people know about this.

1809

01:52:20,640 --> 01:52:21,640

Absolutely.

1810

01:52:21,640 --> 01:52:22,640

All right.

1811

01:52:22,640 --> 01:52:25,800

Well, then the next question, is there a person that you recommend to come on this podcast

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01:52:25,800 --> 01:52:30,080

as a guest to speak to the first responders, military and associated professions of the

1813

01:52:30,080 --> 01:52:31,080

world?

1814

01:52:31,080 --> 01:52:33,640

You know, man, when I looked at your list that we talked about this the other day was

1815

01:52:33,640 --> 01:52:38,320

like, man, like to see Debbie Lee, Lave, JP, Danelle, Richard, Rich Graham, Jock, you've

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01:52:38,320 --> 01:52:40,680

had Jocko on, I believe, right?

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01:52:40,680 --> 01:52:41,680

Yeah.

1818

01:52:41,680 --> 01:52:46,080

I think honestly, I think Jericho would be a really good one to tie the brothers together,

1819

01:52:46,080 --> 01:52:50,800

especially to see how yeah, I think Jericho would be a great one to have on.

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01:52:50,800 --> 01:52:51,800

He's a good friend.

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01:52:51,800 --> 01:52:54,480

And he's he's a travel machine.

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01:52:54,480 --> 01:52:59,200

Like I said, he's got this like, Anthony Bourdain sort of feel, you know, he loves food, he

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01:52:59,200 --> 01:53:03,120

loves writing, you know, he kind of these are my words, you know, he might not be crazy

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01:53:03,120 --> 01:53:04,120

about it.

1825

01:53:04,120 --> 01:53:07,480

But he sort of put down the gun and picked up a camera, you know, was doing he's got

1826

01:53:07,480 --> 01:53:12,160

so many interesting stories when he was in Ukraine, Afghanistan, Ukraine.

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01:53:12,160 --> 01:53:14,000

And then he was just got back from Israel.

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01:53:14,000 --> 01:53:16,960

He was there for about 10 days earlier this month.

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01:53:16,960 --> 01:53:21,120

You know, so he's got a lot of really unique perspective.

1830

01:53:21,120 --> 01:53:28,840

I love his his overall picture on just on on what we're doing kinetically overseas.

1831

01:53:28,840 --> 01:53:33,440

Another one that would be phenomenal is a good friend of mine would be Eric Prince.

1832

01:53:33,440 --> 01:53:37,400

I think that for years, he's gotten a lot of you know, he's gotten some bad press.

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01:53:37,400 --> 01:53:42,440

The great thing about Eric is he's so well read and so incredibly educated and so incredibly

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01:53:42,440 --> 01:53:48,840

smart that he does I'm jealous that he can really not let that shit bother him.

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01:53:48,840 --> 01:53:52,480

The man the guy is the guy is rock solid and a very good friend.

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01:53:52,480 --> 01:53:53,920

So you're friends would be great.

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01:53:53,920 --> 01:53:57,400

Yeah, if you can help us make both of those happen, I think it'd be phenomenal.

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01:53:57,400 --> 01:53:58,400

Absolutely.

1839

01:53:58,400 --> 01:53:59,400

Yeah.

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01:53:59,400 --> 01:54:00,400

Thank you so much.

1841

01:54:00,400 --> 01:54:01,400

All right.

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01:54:01,400 --> 01:54:04,760

Well, then the very last question before we make sure people know where to find you, what

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01:54:04,760 --> 01:54:07,520

do you do to decompress these days?

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01:54:07,520 --> 01:54:13,840

So a lot of it is is my therapy is found in the gym.

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01:54:13,840 --> 01:54:15,760

And I think that that's like getting more and more common.

1846

01:54:15,760 --> 01:54:20,440

I think that 315 on the bar is always going to be 315 on the bar.

1847

01:54:20,440 --> 01:54:24,760

I think that no matter what you're doing, you can get the gym and it can if you put

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01:54:24,760 --> 01:54:26,880

40% in, you're gonna get 40% out.

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01:54:26,880 --> 01:54:30,680

I think it's the most honest place with that you can be with yourself.

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01:54:30,680 --> 01:54:31,680

So that's why I love it so much.

1851

01:54:31,680 --> 01:54:34,920
But that's also why I kind of hate it sometimes.

1852
01:54:34,920 --> 01:54:35,920
But the gym is great.

1853
01:54:35,920 --> 01:54:39,200
I've been playing golf a lot.

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01:54:39,200 --> 01:54:41,400
I picked it up when I was in high school.

1855
01:54:41,400 --> 01:54:46,080
And then a little bit while being on active duty and then moved to Florida, it's like,

1856
01:54:46,080 --> 01:54:48,560
okay, got time, may as well start swinging the clubs.

1857
01:54:48,560 --> 01:54:52,880
And my oldest, both my kids are actually starting to get kind of into it as well.

1858
01:54:52,880 --> 01:54:57,200
So that kind of brings a new little bit of enjoyment, you know, enjoyment to it where

1859
01:54:57,200 --> 01:54:58,680
it's fun for me.

1860
01:54:58,680 --> 01:55:00,280
Golf is very calculated.

1861
01:55:00,280 --> 01:55:04,000
And so I can definitely get, you know, definitely go down the rabbit hole on it.

1862

01:55:04,000 --> 01:55:08,040

I like golf because you can experience pretty much every emotion known to man in the span

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01:55:08,040 --> 01:55:12,720

of about four hours, you know, love, hate, victory, defeat, you know, the whole thing.

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01:55:12,720 --> 01:55:14,920

So that's been a really good experience.

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01:55:14,920 --> 01:55:20,080

So yeah, I feel like happy Gilmore when I'm on the bloody golf course.

1866

01:55:20,080 --> 01:55:23,120

It shows me how bad my anger actually is.

1867

01:55:23,120 --> 01:55:28,400

All right, well then for everyone listening, where are the best places to find you online

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01:55:28,400 --> 01:55:31,000

and or social media?

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01:55:31,000 --> 01:55:33,460

So I pretty much stick to just the Instagram.

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01:55:33,460 --> 01:55:37,400

So I'm at Nick Kush 237, pretty easy.

1871

01:55:37,400 --> 01:55:39,760

I'm the owner operator of my own LLC.

1872

01:55:39,760 --> 01:55:42,000

It's called Deland High Performance.

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01:55:42,000 --> 01:55:46,760

And I do my primary means for that was to be able to, you know, create the company for

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01:55:46,760 --> 01:55:47,760

tax purposes.

1875

01:55:47,760 --> 01:55:50,620

Also, I can bid on government contracts.

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01:55:50,620 --> 01:55:55,400

But I really just use that for when I get sole source from different organizations or

1877

01:55:55,400 --> 01:55:58,240

different agencies to basically contract me for work.

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01:55:58,240 --> 01:56:02,920

But I'll do anything from skydiving to any EOD support or diving support or anything

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01:56:02,920 --> 01:56:05,520

that's in my wheelhouse that I can do.

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01:56:05,520 --> 01:56:10,800

And then I also work for Performance Designs Incorporated, which is a parachute manufacturer

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01:56:10,800 --> 01:56:11,800

here in Deland.

1882

01:56:11,800 --> 01:56:14,280

And that's what I'm a test jumper and project lead.

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01:56:14,280 --> 01:56:15,280

Beautiful.

1884

01:56:15,280 --> 01:56:18,080

Well, I want to say a shout out to Jack Lane as well.

1885

01:56:18,080 --> 01:56:19,240

I know he's another mutual friend.

1886

01:56:19,240 --> 01:56:20,440

I know you work with him too.

1887

01:56:20,440 --> 01:56:22,160

So put that in before we leave.

1888

01:56:22,160 --> 01:56:24,480

Well, Nick, I want to say thank you so much.

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01:56:24,480 --> 01:56:29,040

I think it's been an incredible conversation just hearing, you know, your journey starting

1890

01:56:29,040 --> 01:56:34,160

off on boats and then EOD and then ultimately in this skydiving world that you exist in

1891

01:56:34,160 --> 01:56:35,160

now.

1892

01:56:35,160 --> 01:56:42,320

But also for the transparency, I think in our generation, it was raised on arguably

1893

01:56:42,320 --> 01:56:46,800

a pretty two dimensional facade of masculinity.

1894

01:56:46,800 --> 01:56:51,120

There's no better antidote than the man to the man that says, oh, I'm too tough to have

1895

01:56:51,120 --> 01:56:57,160

feelings than having someone from EOD, a Navy SEAL, SAS, firefighter, police officer, whatever

1896

01:56:57,160 --> 01:56:59,960

it is, being courageously vulnerable.

1897

01:56:59,960 --> 01:57:03,200

And so by telling your story today, I know that it's going to resonate with a lot of

1898

01:57:03,200 --> 01:57:04,200

people.

1899

01:57:04,200 --> 01:57:07,040

So I want to thank you so, so much for being so generous with your time and coming on the

1900

01:57:07,040 --> 01:57:09,280

Behind the Shield podcast today.

1901

01:57:09,280 --> 01:57:10,280

I appreciate it, James.

1902

01:57:10,280 --> 01:57:14,160

And I really want to thank you for what you're doing with all the guests and the messages,

1903

01:57:14,160 --> 01:57:17,840

the multiple messages that you're sending and the projects that you're on and involved

1904

01:57:17,840 --> 01:57:18,840

in.

1905

01:57:18,840 --> 01:57:22,920

So I really appreciate what you're doing for the community, for humanity in general.

1906

01:57:22,920 --> 01:57:23,920

So I really appreciate it.

1907

01:57:23,920 --> 01:57:27,840

I think that sometimes might be underappreciated, but I sincerely appreciate what you're doing.