

## [Transcript] Lex Fridman Podcast / #363 - B-Team Jiu Jitsu: Craig Jones, Nicky Rod, and Nicky Ryan

The following is a conversation with Craig Jones, Nicky Rod, and Nicky Ryan, who together with Ethan Creliston and others make up the B team, a legendary Jiu-Jitsu team here in Austin, Texas. It was formed after the so-called Donahar Death Squad, the team headed by John Donahar, split up, into New Wave Jiu-Jitsu and B Team Jiu-Jitsu, both located here in Austin, Texas. There has been a lot of trash talk back and forth, including accusations of greasing and steroid use. And I, as a practitioner and fan of grappling, Jiu-Jitsu, and martial arts in general, am here for it. To see the best grapplers in history, go at it, both on the mat and on Instagram. I like the people on both teams, and train with both, and am really happy to see the exciting rapid evolution of the sport that these athletes and coaches are catalyzing. And now, a quick few second mention of each sponsor. Check them out in the description. It's the best way to support this podcast. We got better help for mental health, eight sleep for naps, and athletic greens for daily multivitamins. Choose wisely, my friends. And if you want to work with our amazing team, or always hiring, go to [lexfreedmen.com](http://lexfreedmen.com) slash hiring. And now, onto the full ad reads. As always, no ads in the middle. I try to make this interesting, but if you most skip them, please still check out our sponsors. I enjoy their stuff. Maybe you will too. This episode is brought to you by Better Help, spelled H-E-L-P Help. There's that quote from Jack Kerouac, the book on the road that I recently finished reading, or rereading. Re-reading for like, I don't know, the 10th at least time in my life. And there's a quote in there about the Mad Ones. The main character, Sal. It's strange how bad my memory is, but something tells me that his last name is Paradise, Cell Paradise, and Dean Moriarty. And Sal is Jack Kerouac, and the real life name of Dean Moriarty, I don't remember, but the character name is Dean Moriarty, and he represents sort of the weird, the crazy, the chaotic friend, shaman guide through life, the drop of poison, and a perfectly calm drink, or a perfectly calm pond, or town like Tom Wade says. Anyway, those people, and that part of ourselves is really powerful, that weirdness, that darkness, that chaos. But you have to have control of it, I think. I think being self-aware and introspective about that, and bringing it to the surface, and knowing that that part of you exists. Check them out at [betterhelp.com](http://betterhelp.com) slash lex and save on your first month. This episode is also brought to you by 8Sleep, and it's Pod 3 Mattress. As I record these very words, it is extremely late at night. It has been a long night before then, and a long day. And the thing that carries me through is a beautiful power nap, or a couple of those, when I'm deprived down sleep, because of various curveballs that life throws at me, as it does for everybody. I think I at least maintain my sanity and my well-being by taking power naps. Sometimes I'll actually drink a coffee right before the nap, and then I take that nap, and about 30 minutes after, I pop up all refreshed, ready to go. Not like no. Actually, physically, mentally, spiritually refreshed. Now I'm more calm and zen, ready to take on the darkness that waits for me when I finally close my eyes, and I'm laying on that 8Sleep bed, as I'm ready to very soon. It is a source of happiness for me. A cold bed with a warm blanket. It's a peaceful escape from the chaos of life outside. It's a weird little feature of biology that we get to sleep, and that is both necessary, and it's just wonderful. Anyway, check it out and get special savings when you go to [8Sleep.com](http://8Sleep.com). This show is also brought to you by Athletic Greens, and it's a G1 drink, which is an all-in-one daily drink to support better health and peak performance. It is delicious. I've drank it twice today, because I'm traveling. I packed a few travel packs to go with me, like little travel companions

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that represent home, and then I get to the hotel, and I unpack it, and that's a little reminder, a little habit that I get to carry with me that represents home. That makes me feel like I'm at home. There's what is home after all, but a set of habits, and a set of people that bring joy to our lives, and a set of habits that bring joy, and Athletic Greens is that. It brings joy to my life. Above all the nutritional excellence it does for me, above all of that, it just makes me happy. A lot of things in my life making me happy, this is one of the consistent ones. They'll give you one month supply of fish oil, one of the only supplements I take, when you sign up at [athleticgreens.com slash Lex](https://athleticgreens.com/slash/Lex). This is the Lex Freedom Podcast. To support it, please check out our sponsors in the description. And now, dear friends, here's Craig Jones, Nicky Rod, and Nicky Ryan. Craig, can you introduce everyone?

Yeah, so we've got Nicky Rod here, Brown Belt, two-time ADCC silver medalist, Nicky Ryan here. That's it.

Who are you?

And I'm Craig Jones, also a two-time ADCC silver medalist.

Silver medalist, so the number one loser.

And maybe a little bit more.

Your bio says, widely known as the Black Belt Slayer Hills from New Jersey, the land of pizza and biceps.

Yes, it's pretty accurate.

You also do carry a gun on you a lot?

Yeah, I keep it loaded, you know, keep it on me.

You have one today?

In the car.

That was a mistake, it was your first mistake.

Yeah, I think you're too close.

And you are, Nicky, Ryan, what else is there? What else do we know?

Gordon Ryan's brother.

Gordon Ryan's brother.

All right, so and you're all together part of the leadership of the B team here in Austin.

Let's just get out some introductory questions.

What in general accomplishment are the things you mentioned you're most proud of?

I mean, I'm proud just to not have to work a full-time job, just to get by on the bullshit I've done so far.

Yeah.

Honestly.

Just making money of a thing you love.

Exactly, yeah.

When was the first time you made money on a thing you love?

Probably a jujitsu tournament, I think maybe in Abu Dhabi where I won \$1,000, thought I was rich.

Yeah, yeah, would you spend \$1,000 on?

Probably something bad, probably drugs or something at the time, maybe blew it at the after party.

That's a good introduction to Craig.

So what about you, when's the first time you made money on jujitsu?

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Or what's actually stepping back, like what's the thing you're most proud of?

Is it a similar kind of thing?

I think the thing I'm most proud of is, I mean, for sure, two ADCC silver medals, which hurts because you're so close to getting that gold, but it takes time.

I'm understanding that sport of jujitsu takes quite a while to be at the tip top to be the absolute best.

So I'm just being consistent in my training and my craft and I'll get that in the one spot one day.

What failure or loss is the most painful to you?

I don't know.

I can probably have a pretty short term memory, so my loss is, I'll just forget about it.

Yeah, I mean, for sure, my loss at this past ADCC in the finals, that one's something to bet because I definitely thought I was going to win.

I mean, it takes a while to produce the skills or the reactions more so that you need to have to be that number one pound for pound guy.

And pre-ADCC, I was coming off an injury, so it took me a little bit to find the right mentality and physicality that I needed in order to get the wins that required gold.

So yeah, it's just a process.

Interesting.

You keep saying process, like it takes a while to build up.

So you're not like thinking of a loss like ADCC is like a specific failures.

You're not, you haven't gone long enough in a particular process to being a champ.

Well, I mean, for me, I'm closing in on five years of specifically jujitsu training.

I'm about four and a half right now.

And yeah, it's just, you constantly have these ups and downs in training where like, as long as you stay consistent, you'll have a gradual raise.

But still, you'll have these peaks and lows and just trying to get better every day.

I'm definitely not where I will be in a few years from now, but my strivings get there.

Are you actually a brown belt?

Or was that a joke?

Brown belt, yeah.

You're a brown belt.

How many stripes?

No stripes.

No stripes.

Stripless.

Okay.

Is that part of the process that you're working through?

Definitely part of the process.

I mean, I think a black belt is just based upon how much knowledge you have.

Obviously, like, you know, if you're talking competitive wise, like from when I started,

I was able to beat most black belts.

So it's just kind of how I was gifted from my wrestling experience.

And, you know, the time will come when it's right, but I'm not in a rush at all.

I'm continuing.

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I just kind of take every day for what it is and try to improve upon that.

I mean, I want to give him the black belt.

Nicky Ryan says he's not ready.

Are you guys, like, us no-gee folks, do you take that seriously?

Like the black belt?

Or, like, how much does it come into play into...

Yeah, I mean, it's like Nicky Ryan said, you know, it's based off of knowledge, not just, you know, what you do out on the competition mats.

Because, you know, like he said, he had years of wrestling experience, and obviously he's very physically gifted.

So we grade based off of the amount of knowledge that you have.

Like, how do you measure knowledge?

I think teaching is a good measurement of it.

Like, how well you're able to show the moves and, you know, really make sure that you have an understanding of what you're doing.

Yeah, it's an interesting rank.

It's like something that takes many years to accomplish.

And for a lot of people, it's truly meaningful.

It's like it represents a particular step in a journey.

But for you guys, it's almost, like, different.

Because you've been so focused on competition that I guess if you take it seriously, it is a big step for you, too.

Like, as martial artists, that's bigger than just being, like, top of the world competitors, right?

So I thought it was a joke.

You guys are actually taking it seriously.

Like-

That is a brown belt.

That is a brown belt.

And you're taking seriously the rank of black belt.

And like, it's part of your journey.

I think by the time I get a black belt, I'll be no more pound for pound.

I think it'd be pretty nice to accomplish that as a brown belt.

And then maybe toss a black belt on top.

Maybe get promoted on the podium.

What do you guys, do you love winning or hate losing more?

I definitely don't hate losing.

If it pays the bills, I don't mind.

Oh, really?

Yeah, but honestly, if I win, I feel more relief than anything rather than, like, excitement and stuff.

I'm like, oh, fuck, thank god that's over.

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You know?

I hate losing, for sure.

But I understand that it's necessary to get to where you want to be.

And then winning is like, I mean, what I think, winning is probably the closest you can get to, like, heroin or something.

Because I mean, we're all on a, like, if you do have extreme success and a torment that you've been, you know, adamant about training for and competing in for a while, and you end up winning it,

I mean, I feel like you're on that high for days at a time afterwards.

Heron's going to be better.

You think so?

I'm a stick with no, but.

I'm not going to suck dick to win.

You suck dick for heroin?

Okay.

I guess that's a good point, yeah.

But you know, like, because you come from a little bit of a wrestling culture, one of the things I really love is at the end of the match, when they lose, they just, there's no, they just run off.

They're like almost pissed off.

It's like some mixture of anger and frustration at themselves.

I think, I think sometimes that people like freak out on the mat.

And I think that's just a, to show everybody, like, they're acting like they cared a lot.

And really, maybe they didn't work enough to, to, you know, get to where they want, to where they expect it to be.

And they lost and then they had this big boost of emotion, like after their, after their loss.

But yeah, I mean, I think you just cry in the mirror and not to everybody else, you know.

What have you ever cried watching a movie?

I don't think I've ever cried, period.

Okay.

Have you cried watching a movie?

Not yet.

Not yet.

The notebook.

I try to avoid those movies.

Lying.

Actually, I lie, actually.

Titanic.

The last part of a difficult wake up for me,

is I try to find a sad movie and at least cry about a pound out.

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Yeah.

That really gets me out of the line.

Low energy cutting.

The tears.

There's other following liquids I could talk to you about, but let's just, let's just, let's just continue on.

Low energy.

What, what about you, Nikki?

Love of winning versus hate of losing.

I'm a very competitive person.

So I for sure hate losing more than I like winning.

I do think it's something that's kind of held me back over the, the past few years, because it makes it so that I'm not as active as I should be.

Because it's like, I really hate that feeling of, you know, after a match that you just lost.

So it kind of prevents me from competing.

So it's definitely something I need to work past.

So like when you think about a competition,

the possibility of losing, which is always there in competition,

is the thing that like weighs heavy on you in the months and weeks leading up to.

Yeah.

My whole life, you know, my financial stability, everything depends on, you know, my ability to go out there and compete and my ability to teach.

So, you know, it's, it's a huge hit to the brand if you lose.

So, you know, leading up to matches, that's, that's definitely something that's in my mind.

I know you, so you guys are like world-class athletes, but for me more like a hobbyist competitor, I compete a lot.

The thing I was, because I really wanted to win, the thing I was probably most afraid of was not just losing, but like embarrassing myself.

Yeah.

Even, even actually winning by stalling.

That was the thing I hated the most about myself in terms of crying in the mirror is like being too afraid to take risks after I'm up on two points or something.

I think you got a competition.

Sometimes it's good to take the emotion out of it.

It's too easy sometimes to like think about all my girls and in the crowd and my family's watching like I want to win because they're there, but the highest level if you're emotional at all, no, that's affecting you.

Yeah, that's tough though.

That's tough, especially like leading up to when you're on the map maybe, but leading up to it.

I think it's okay to be emotional prior.

Like, you know, if we know ADCC or it's coming up and we have a big match,

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like definitely I'll go out in practice and I'll, I'll visualize, I'll put myself in that competition that way when it's game time, it's like I've been there a thousand times already. So not the actual competition, but even leading up to it, like stepping on the mat, like all the walk, the walk tours, all that. All that stuff.

Like I'll do the same exact warmup for weeks on end until my competition day comes. That's way, that way, you know, when I compete, I'm just like, oh, it's another Tuesday at practice.

What about you, Craig?

How do you prepare mentally for a tournament like ADCC?

I push it completely out of my mind.

Don't even think about it.

Try to avoid any visualization, any rituals, warmups, anything like that.

Block it out until the last second.

Yeah, trying not to think about it.

I just go to training to have fun, learn a bit.

So I try to approach competition the exact same way.

I don't warm up at training, do very little warmup for competition.

And do you just step on the mat?

Step on the mat.

My philosophy is there's no warmups on the street.

We're so vastly different.

All right.

So you legit don't warm up?

No, I probably should now I'm 31, but I would just like in the gym, take it easy the first round.

You know, like if I look around the room and Nikki Ryan's down my go, all right, we'll have an easier first round today.

So even for like the most high stakes matches, you try to push it out.

Yeah, I didn't even think about it.

What about like all the social, like Instagram posts you have to do about that match?

You just make a joke out of it and kind of, you're not actually-

I mean, it's all kind of pretty silly, you know?

We're just wrestling each other, you know?

We put the meaning into it, but to someone that doesn't feel the sport, it looks stupid.

Well, all of human existence is pretty silly.

Like what are we doing?

None of us really know what's going on.

We kind of have sex to reproduce, we get hungry to eat, and then we're all chasing money and cars and whatever the hell in a capitalist society, or we worship a dictator in a authoritarian regime.

Yeah.

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And then we get off on, we let power abuse us and then we just murder others because we get off on it.

Yeah.

And then eventually all of us will die because the sun will run out of energy because colonizing other planets is very difficult.

So none of that matters.

It's a good philosophy.

It's pretty good.

That's exactly what I was thinking.

How does the sun run out of energy?

Well, you called me there.

It's a good burnout.

It's a nuclear fusion engine and eventually burns out.

Like when you get tired of training.

Yeah.

It's never happened.

I try to get tired.

I was like, dude, it's not working.

All right.

Cool.

So you legit don't care about losing.

It doesn't weigh heavy on you.

I try not to list, like if I win, I try to block out all the compliments, all the niceties and stuff.

So I try to do the same with losing.

It's happened, move on to the next one, don't dwell on it too much.

And sometimes make a joke out of it.

Yeah, exactly.

Winning or losing, with the right joke, we can make money off of the events that's transpired.

That's what's most important.

Excellent.

Thank you.

I have a bunch of your merch.

Oh, nice.

Thank you.

This one's the Jordan Byros ripoff.

All I see is silver.

The way pronounced boroughs is very, very sexy.

Okay.

I throw lines at people and I try to gauge your reaction.

Like sometimes I'll say something to Nikki and I'll be like, all right, that's probably crossing the line.

You know what I mean?



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We'll tone it down for the public.

So yeah, yeah, yeah.

So it's not just right.

You have to think this is crossing the line.

Yeah, yeah.

I get as close to it as possible.

Yeah.

I feel like you can't really cross it.

And then cross it just a little bit.

Just a little bit, yeah.

Okay.

Speaking of which, you said that I'm Switzerland in World War II, since I'm friends with both you and Gordon and John.

Very rich country.

Are you a Hitler or Stalin, by the way, in this analogy?

Would you like to be Hitler or Stalin?

And should you make a t-shirt out of it or?

I mean, a Nazi t-shirt, I don't know how well that sells.

I think it would, you know, I think, let's brainstorm on this one offline.

I think since Hitler lost.

So you got second place in World War II.

That's true, that's true.

I think that makes you Hitler.

Anyway, to the degree that you can, can you tell the story of how, the time you've had with the Donna Hart death squad and why you split up?

I competed against Gordon for ADCC and the EBI in 2017.

And I remember I competed against him at ADCC, and then we had the EBI event.

And then I had a Kasai.

I used to compete all the time, every week.

I wouldn't even do the preparation or anything.

I'd just be like trying to do seminars, make money, and then jump in and compete.

I remember I showed up to Kasai after I faced him twice, and there were like four locker rooms, and they put me with all the DDS guys.

It was just me and all of DDS.

And I think we competed the week, weekend before.

So I thought it was going to be super awkward.

But it was actually pretty chill.

And the Kasai was in New York, and they suggested to come train that week.

So I came trained, hung out with them a bit.

Ultimately, the goal was to move to America and join a bigger team,

just because that flight to Australia's death, Australia's so far away from everywhere.

It's kind of like not realistic to base yourself in Australia when all the tournaments are in America.

And then I went and trained with the guys, and they just had a massive

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massively deep talent pool in that room, show up to like a, meant to be 7 AM, actual 8 AM class on Brazilian time.

There'd be like 100 people in there, maybe, I don't know how many black belts, but a ton of elite guys.

And I was coming from Australia, training with Lachlan Giles.

But really that room was pretty shallow, and most people had serious jobs and stuff.

So it was like basically me just training with Lachlan, maybe a couple of other guys, and then to go to New York and have access to a wide array of training partners, and guys that are training twice each day.

I feel like that's what you really need.

You need people that can train as much as you are.

Yeah, humbled in that room at first.

For sure, because my style of the time was basically a rip-off version of what they were doing.

Leg locks came in.

I remember just watching Eddie Cummings non-stop, and just seeing this guy rip people's legs off, and I was like, you know what, that's probably a good move.

That looks like an easier path to victory than trying to beat these guys at what they're good at already.

My philosophy at the time was, if it's bothering old Brazilians, it's bothering them for a reason.

It's probably effective.

And that's the path I took to try to rip off their moves, and then obviously to go into that room, try to do them to them, it's going to be a bit more difficult.

All right, so that's how it started.

How did you end up here?

How do we end up here?

We're in Austin, Texas.

I mean, I like to think of Puerto Rico as apocalypse now.

John Danaher as Colonel Kurtz.

Things got very weird in the jungle, and the teams went in two different directions.

But honestly, I mean, it's not really my story to tell.

I had some issues with some of those people.

At the time of the split, I got along very well with John.

I feel like me and him connected very well.

I don't know why that was.

Maybe it was just because he missed home.

He missed a familiar accent, an Australian New Zealand accent.

But I basically followed Nicky, left with Nicky, sort of that core group of guys left with Nicky.

And I mean, there was personal problems, and I just backed Nicky, basically.

Got it.

Just sticking on you for a bit.

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Is there a part of you that finds it heartbreaking that DDS split up?  
Does a part of you miss working with John and everybody?  
Nicky, can you steal me on the case for that?  
I mean, I miss certain aspects of it,  
but I also do prefer the freedom of being apart from it.  
It's obviously a very strict regime under John Danaher.  
You know, obviously, it's part of it.  
I miss the parts that the public doesn't see of John.  
The behind the scenes banter, I feel like he's very conscious  
of the image he portrays to the world.  
But basically, it closed doors.  
He's always making jokes, always finding, I guess, more in line  
with the Australian Kiwi sort of culture.  
But you don't really see that in the public eye.  
So that perspective, I do miss that relationship with John.  
In terms of setting aside personal differences,  
Gordon was a good training partner,  
definitely a good training partner to train with.  
But obviously, the negative things we can't really talk about  
outweighed all of those things.  
And we obviously had to make a decision to leave.  
Is that happening in the jungle?  
The things that happen in the jungle.  
Should never be spoken of.  
That I personally cannot speak of.  
Yeah, but obviously, I do miss certain aspects.  
Like, I mean, nothing's all bad, nothing's all good, you know?  
Yeah, this goes back to your, like, everything we're doing is silly.  
Yeah, exactly.  
I saw it on Gep.  
People take it so serious.  
Martial arts so serious.  
It's just pretty stupid, really.  
Especially in the ghee, it looks just, it looks bad.  
I mean, it's pretty silly with and without the ghee.  
It's just a bunch of apes.  
What's silly about no ghee and what's silly about the ghee  
and just makes them match bottoms there, you know what I mean?  
Wait, which one?  
Sambo, yeah.  
I see what you're doing.  
Brother, you come to my house and offend my people.  
All right.

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All right, we're going to go to every dark place, apparently.

Nick, how did you get with DDS?

Like, what was that journey like?

Is there, try to see if there's things that you remember fondly that you've gotten from the experience?

All right, so the way I started training with DDS, initially, I was training for like, well, initially, I was a bouncer, right?

I dropped out of college to pursue this fitness modeling career.

I ended up signing with the Wilhelmina models up in New York, and I was like, just trying to get in better shape.

And while I was bouncing, kind of the talk of like, you know, who's tougher came up between the wrestlers and a few of the bouncers that trained jiu-jitsu.

And, you know, they convinced me to go to practice, and I went to my first practice over there.

And for the most part, I just controlled everybody, got on top of them, was able to avoid like,

kind of like, you know, shitty submissions,

because I had an awareness of the sport,

and, you know, I'm a fan of fighting and whatnot.

So, you know, I kind of understood it pretty well.

And then soon after that, I joined a school,

and my second week of jiu-jitsu, I started competing, had pretty good success.

You know, I was like subbing a few black belts

and beating everybody like, you know,

pretty decisively with points and stuff.

And about three months into training locally,

I got connected with Gordon,

Gordon Ryan and John Danner up in New York,

and I started, I committed to, you know,

make the drive up there as many days as I could.

At the time, I lived in South Jersey,

and it was about a two-and-a-half-hour,

three-hour drive without traffic to New York.

Wait, where in South Jersey?

Gloucester County.

Clayton, New Jersey, specifically, but Gloucester County.

Yeah, so it was about 130 miles,

and without traffic, you know, about two-and-a-half hours or so.

But on the way back, man, it'd be three-plus sometimes,

you know, catching that rush hour.

What year was this, do you remember?

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This was in 2018.

For a bit, I forget how young you are.

Yeah, I was there before all that.

All right, cool.

Anyway, you're doing the long drive, and then what?

Yeah, doing the long drive, and then, you know, once I went ADCC trials, I was able to make a couple bucks, and then, you know, I got my silver medal at ADCC, and I was able to afford to live up there in New York and North Jersey area.

So I lived up there, trained there full-time every day, and it was kind of stuck with the team throughout the turbulent times, and found ourselves in Austin.

In the jungle.

In the jungle, yeah.

One of the things we shall not speak of.

What other things that you remember that you've learned from John Donahue, from your time spent with him?

Yeah, I mean, I definitely learned a ton from John and the team as a whole.

Like, you know, you have to be the guy that asks questions in that type of environment, right? Because there's not, you're not going to get singled out to be that specific, like, star or the best guy in the room when you have all these other, you know, stud athletes. So I really had to seek out and figure out the kind of questions that I needed to ask.

And once I became a bit more verbal with my training, and, you know, I'm expressing all my curiosities about grappling to these guys, definitely helped boost my technique and my career as a whole.

Yeah, did you understand what kind of stuff, like, technically you want to get good at?

What fits your body?

What, like, what would be good for you?

What are your weaknesses and all that?

So initially, when I started grappling, I had an innate ability to just get to opponents back. So I was like, all right, I'm good at getting to the back. Let me get, let me perfect controlling the back

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and then submitting opponent via renega choke.  
And then besides that, I really focused on leg lock defense  
and then eventually came the roti lock pass  
where, you know, I'm really good at body lock pass  
with my opponents now.  
And then, yeah, it just takes quite a long time  
because you have to find different sequences  
and then there's always these an abundance of opportunities  
that your opponent gets from these specific sequences.  
So it takes a while.  
Is there part of you that finds the fact  
that DGS split up heartbreaking?  
I definitely, you know, having one person to go to  
that runs practice every day that's, you know, consistent,  
it was definitely a gift.  
But now I'm also gifted with many, many other partners.  
I have Nicky Ryan, you know, Craig Jones, Ethan.  
He just did pause.  
Craig Jones.  
Yeah, yeah.  
We have Ethan Crelecine, Damian Anderson.  
So a full team of knowledgeable athletes  
that I can continue to go to with multiple questions.  
But yeah, definitely, it took me some time to adjust  
to training or to learning from, you know,  
specifically my team and not just one person.  
We should mention for people just listening  
because you can't visually see that Nicky Ryan  
is currently terrified and Craig Jones  
is currently enjoying the fact that he's terrified.  
But anyway, can you talk about your, Nicky,  
can you talk about your time with DDS?  
I started training when I was like around 13.  
You know, my brother Gordon had started prior to me  
and I really just went into training just as like a means  
to exercise and lose weight at the beginning  
because I was pretty fat as a kid.  
So I went to the first class, loved it,  
and then just started training every day  
at Gary's Gym, Brunswick.  
And then during the summer, when I'd get off from school,  
they would take me up to New York to train under John.  
And, you know, I just absolutely loved it.

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I knew what I wanted to do with my life at a young age.  
So I ended up dropping out of school actually  
after my freshman year in high school.  
So yeah, 15, I ended up dropping out  
and just pursuing Jiu Jitsu full time, you know,  
training every day up in the blue basement.  
Well, like what aspects of Jiu Jitsu was made you  
know that this is the thing for you?  
It was just something I just enjoyed being, you know,  
like on the mats every day.  
I love that there's, you know,  
a problem solving aspect to it.  
So it's, you know, it's mentally challenging.  
It's physically challenging.  
Helps me get in shape.  
So I just, yeah, right off the bat, I knew I loved it.  
Okay. So then we'll go to the jungle.  
What happened in the jungle?  
And in general, like,  
I like this, I like this, this is like this like shroud  
of mystery that she'll never be penetrated.  
That she'll never be like-  
We've got a book deal.  
It's coming once.  
A book deal?  
Yeah, right.  
Obviously left to high school.  
He's not riding it.  
Okay. I'll do the Russian translation.  
Okay. So what are, what are things that you enjoy  
that you remember from working with John Donner?  
Yeah. I mean, you know, obviously he's considered one  
of the best coaches in the world.  
You know, very charismatic guy when you see him in person,  
you know, I pretty much was, you know,  
kind of raised in the DDS, you know,  
that's where I spent the majority of my time every day.  
So I obviously had very deep connections, you know,  
with John, my brother, Gary, you know,  
even Eddie Cummings and stuff back then.  
So obviously I miss interacting with those guys every day.  
And, you know, it's like they said,  
it's good to have somebody to kind of crack the whip at you every day.

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And John, John was very good at that.

When you're like younger in your teenage years,  
you can kind of, you like have to get humbled, right?

There's like a process to that.

Yeah, for sure.

And it's a pretty good room to get humbled in, I guess.

Yeah, exactly.

I mean, I, I was, I started training with them  
just when like everybody started to break out.

Gary was like the biggest name at the time,  
just because he had won ADCC trials already.

And he had a crazy match with Cron at Cron Gracia at ADCC.

But Eddie was just starting to break out.

Gordon just started winning EBI.

So I started training under John, you know,  
right when, when everything was exploding.

What are the good things about life,  
about Jiu Jitsu, you learned from your brother?

Both me and my brother never really wanted to, you know,  
work a full-time job doing something that we hate.

And he was always, you know, a very confident person.

So he just went, you know, full, fully started pursuing Jiu Jitsu.

So I'm very happy that, you know,

he did that and I ended up following in his footsteps  
because you can ask these guys, I'm a lazy sack of shit  
out of, outside of the, the, the mat.

So that's, that's definitely one thing that I'm very grateful for.

That he paved the way like you can,  
you can make money doing stuff you love.

Yeah, exactly.

And he was, he was a big reason, you know,  
why my parents eventually let me drop out of school  
because, you know, when, when they were coming up,  
there was, there's no money in the sport.

It was very hard to make a full living.

Like if you wanted to actually make a living,  
you'd eventually have to transfer to MMA.

And I feel like Gordon and Gary and those guys were,  
you know, some of the first people to make a very good living  
off of Jiu Jitsu.

At this part of you find it heartbreaking  
that you've split up from GDS,

but also from your brother in terms of spending time



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in the mat every day.

Yeah, for sure.

You know, I mean, growing up, you know, obviously he's, he's my big brother.

I looked up to him a lot.

So I definitely, like I said,

I'm misinteracting with those guys.

I was pretty much raised, you know, in that blue basement, you know, that John was like, you know, a father figure to me.

So I definitely, you know, miss, missing those guys every day.

Do you have animosity towards Gordon?

And does he have animosity toward you?

And what is the source of that?

And do you think you'll ever be able to forgive each other?

Definitely initially during the, the initial split, we definitely hated each other at the beginning, but it's definitely started to calm down.

Actually just prior to, you know, all this social media drama that's going on currently, he had reached out to me.

And that was literally like the first time that we have actually talked since the split happened.

So we didn't talk to each other for was it now, like almost two years.

And that was the first time that, you know, we interacted again.

And overall, you know, he wasn't, you know, aggressive towards me.

I wasn't aggressive towards him.

He were cracking some jokes.

So hopefully the, the animosity is going down.

Well, there's this Godfather quote that wrote down.

I recently rewatched it from, from the Don, from Don Corleone, Vita Corleone.

The strength of a family, like the strength of an army lies in its loyalty to each other.

Is there some aspect of family that you miss?

Of the blood that kind of connects you that you can count on?

Yeah, my parents, you know, they, they both raised us that, you know, like family is everything.

You never, you know, betray your family or anything like that.

So I definitely, you know, miss him from time to time.

Okay. Imagine you're like 40 years from now,

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sitting on a porch with a shotgun, drinking whiskey,  
looking over like all the land you've conquered.  
Looking back to this moment,  
is the reason you split up a bullshit reason or is it a good reason?  
From the perspective of the king who has now conquered the lands,  
have proven himself, have done everything?  
I think it was definitely like a justifiable reason for the team splitting.  
Like it just, with the way things were going,  
it just was not going to work with, you know,  
all of us in the same room together.  
I was a, started, you know, affecting training.  
People didn't feel comfortable in things.  
So I definitely think that it was a justifiable reason to split.  
Like the things that happened in the jungle to be told about in the book.  
Is it going to be an audio book or is it just going to be?  
And who's going to voice it?  
Might be a play.  
A musical on Broadway.  
How's your singing voice?  
Mine's not so good, but Nicky has a beautiful voice.  
Does he? Of an angel?  
Nicky, I bet.  
Okay. Speaking of the social media drama,  
I should mention that I've talked to recently to Gordon a bunch.  
I've talked to him about talking to you guys.  
And he's had nothing but really nice things to say about you, Nicky, right?  
And he has had nothing but bad things.  
What was some of the things?  
Well, let's just go to the social media first.  
Because the social media stuff that he said publicly is just like a warm-up.  
It's like a foreplay, I guess.  
So Gordon sent you, Nicky Rod, flowers for Valentine's Day.  
Posting on Instagram, quote,  
I've been fucking him in every round in competition since we met in 2018.  
The least I can do is buy him flowers.  
We didn't get the flowers.  
No, I was saying.  
Yeah, that was the question.  
Did you get the flowers?  
You never got the flowers.  
He sent it to the wrong address.  
He did?  
Yeah.

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Where do you think he sent it?

It was close, but it was wrong.

Did you appreciate the romantic gesture?

I did. I was looking forward to the flowers and potentially chocolates in there.

But it was a bit of a letdown.

Can you describe your recent match against Gordon, the EBI match?

Okay, so EBI match on UFC Fight Pouts, it was a 20-minute match.

And immediately, you know, match starts.

I pulled guard and then I stand up.

He pulls guard.

And we have this kind of like back and forth

where he's trying to dig for underhook,

trying to get on top of me and he can't really find success.

And then in the midst of me trying to work my body lock pass,

Gordon is able to underhook a leg and we end up in a leg entanglement.

And then I'm able to transfer that leg entanglement to a 50-50 position,

still in the leg entanglement. From that 50-50 position,

I'm able to separate his feet and actually get a few pops.

And he actually said I broke his foot in that exchange.

With the toehold.

The toehold, yep.

And, you know, after that, we had a bit more.

I was just being working on top position, trying to get my body lock.

Time runs out and we go to overtime.

In overtime.

Can you hold on a second, actually?

What does it mean to break a leg?

I was very confused about...

Okay, so...

Is this like an expression or what do you mean,

what do you mean you broke it?

Which part breaks in a toehold?

Okay, so on a toehold, there's a few different grades of it.

Like you could get a few pops and have some,

have some, you know, walking issues.

And people consider that a break.

And then you could break it fully and have your foot be like a limp noodle.

You know, I think what will go is the Achilles.

Will it be the front of the Achilles or something?

I mean, probably the ligaments.

I mean, it's funny, like a lot of people say they broke something.

But like to me, you break bones, you tear ligaments.

So I would imagine you probably had a grade three tear.

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Grade three?

How hard do you think is it...

I was wondering that with like a straight foot lock,

how hard is it to break the shin or like the actual bones versus to tear stuff?

Depends on how many steroids there are.

And obviously how much you're on.

You're one of the few guys that have actually broken bones in competition.

Yeah, have I?

Oh yeah, I've been.

A couple, yeah.

Which bone did you break?

Spiral fracture of the fibula.

A lot of power right there.

Is it like a twist thing?

How did you break it?

Oh, it was a heel hook.

Vinny always used to say heel hooks don't work.

Leg locks don't work.

But unfortunately, age gets the best of all of us.

I think he had some mileage on those ligaments and the bone, I guess.

So it's actually what the bone...

Yeah, his ankle like disconnected from the tibia and the fibula,  
but the fibula definitely snouts pretty bad there.

That's basically the dynamics of that.

Okay, anyway, it went until overtime.

What happened in overtime?

Okay, what happened over time?

Let's see, try to hang...

Oh, okay, I go defense first.

Whistle blows.

I'm able to escape in like 17 seconds.

And then immediately after I go on his back and he gets out in exactly 17 seconds.

I'm like, shit, all right.

I thought I had a good start.

And then he gets on my back right after that.

And he's able to ride me out for pretty much the entire round.

After that, I go back on his back.

He escapes in maybe like a minute and some change.

I think where I went wrong in the overtime is I should have been less adamant about chasing the submission and more aware of collecting time.

If I kind of diverted my tension towards acquiring time on the clock,  
it would have been more my favor.

But yeah, at the end of my overtime round,

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I'm able to lock up a renegade choke over the face,  
but there just wasn't enough time to fully finish.  
I got a few seconds of squeeze in there.  
I didn't have enough time to adjust.  
Do you think if you're on steroids, you would have finished the choke?  
I mean, for sure.  
For sure.  
That's what I thought.  
I mean, if you're on gear, you're changing the biology of your body.  
You're adjusting your DNA.  
For sure, if I adjust in my DNA, I mean, it's a finish.  
So you're implying you're a natural athlete is what you're saying?  
I'm definitely a natural athlete.  
Yeah, heavy immigration.  
So for people who don't know that the EBI rules,  
it's an interesting rule structure where the overtime,  
you put yourself in the worst possible position  
and the task is to escape and the other person gets the same thing.  
What do you guys think about that rule set?  
I like it just because, first of all, I don't like the idea of having to put  
somebody on my back, but I do like the definitive answer in the match.  
Either you escaped in time or you got ridden out.  
So you get to the final winner.  
That's great.  
I'd much rather have that than a close decision and it kind of goes the other way.  
What about you?  
I mean, honestly, there's all the different rules.  
When I look at the rules sets, I just try to think of what rules that I could beat  
that individual in and I sort of gear myself towards that.  
That's really the strategy there.  
I think there's some guys that stole a lot,  
that you would love to have EBI overtime, but at the end,  
they're stalling until they have to give us a good position.  
But then there's some guys that are so good in those positions,  
I'm like, oh, maybe we just do a regular match.  
What are the rules in the streets?  
The streets?  
No time limit.  
Yeah, that's one of it.  
There's also concrete and cars and stuff.  
Biting.  
Biting, yeah, poking.  
Yeah, so you don't like that rule set?

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Are there some people you would prefer in the street as a rule set?

Me?

Probably not.

I don't know the EBI.

I mean, it's tricky.

It depends on the opponent, which rule set I'd want to do.

Wow, what about you, Nick?

What do you think about the rule set of EBI?

Yeah, so I think EBI is very good from a spectator point of view.

People find it very entertaining to watch because people want to see submissions and you're putting the athletes in a position where you have the highest percentage submission in the sport, so obviously you're going to get a lot of submissions.

My issue with it is it is a rule set that allows somebody that's overall worse at Jiu Jitsu to win a match.

A guy can go out there and just stall and just get completely dominated for the entirety of regulation and then he gets to start on the guy's back.

So that's my one issue with it.

But also, I mean, it's interesting to see the best people in the world have to be put in a really bad position and to see how good their escapes are, for example.

It's interesting, but it doesn't feel like a realistic.

It's a fun thing to watch, but it doesn't feel like the real fight.

It feels weird.

I'll claim it.

If I start an overtime on someone and finish them, I'll claim it, but if they submit me an overtime, I'm like, awesome.

You're going to deny it.

Yeah, it's not a real submission.

It's good.

The issue is people like stalling to just win the overtime.

So where you got this guy, his whole training camp is just not get subbed and win the overtime.

It's a bit boring.

By the way, I have a rose behind you.

Somebody gave me a Valentine's flower.

So if you missed the one from Gordon, I got one for you.

Well, I'd appreciate that.

It's good to feel loved.

All right.

So what did you learn from that match?

Like a takeaway is technically speaking.

What do you need to work on?

Well, I learned that I am pretty good.

Yeah, pretty good.

I know exactly what my weakness is.

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It's the leg lock department, and I'm doing a lot to get better in that specific aspect.

Attack and defense.

I would say, yeah, attack, defense, reattacks.

Even if I wanted to offensively enter a leg, I could use some work there as well.

But I feel like once I solidify, if I become a black belt specifically in the leg lock department, I feel like I'd be unstoppable.

If you, Nicky Rod, definitively beat Gordon Ryan, how would you do it?

Buggy choke.

Buggy choke.

Buggy choke?

For the listener, I don't even know how to describe buggy choke.

What's the definitive conclusion on that choke?

Does it work?

It's a choke that you do when you're in a, what's the opposite of a dominant?

It's not submissive.

In a non-dominant position of bottom of side control.

Yeah, just an embarrassing submission to get caught with, really.

Yeah.

But does it work?

It works on certain people.

For the listener, he glanced over at Nicky.

It's embarrassing, but it's also a way to frustrate the opponent.

Well, sure.

Yeah, it's a new part of the sport.

I feel like the Rotolos brought it back into fashion, and even if you don't get it, because it's one of those movies that's so embarrassing, at the first sign of danger, the top guy abandoned ship.

And you can basically retain guard by attempting a very embarrassing submission.

So that's the right of embarrassment.

Yeah, people pull out very quick to avoid suffering the consequences.

I think some people underestimate how good of a submission is.

I mean, once you're locked in there, it's not too many defenses for a buggy joke.

Are you...

Is there an instructional on the way from you?

Jayrod, actually, the little brother has one.

Oh, yeah, for real.

You actually legit have...

Oh, wow.

That's awesome.

Well, check it out.

I mean, you're making a joke out of it, but it is a real...

Like, there's a system to it.

I mean, yeah.

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I don't know if we call it a system.

It's a good move.

I mean, you're taking a point that was just winning in a greatly dominant position, and then boom, in that same position, they're pretty much, they're losing.

You know, it's an interesting move.

What's the name of the...

What's the name of it?

It's called the Buggypedia, like Jay Rodriguez.

Okay, the Buggypedia.

I thought there'd be something like very Craig Jonesy about it.

Okay, awesome.

I know you don't want to sort of reveal the secrets of what you're working on, but in general, what does it take to beat Gordon, I guess?

Okay, so it would have to be some kind of a joke.

I think any joint lock or anything like that, he's just going to let it break and stay in the match.

So I don't even think he'd tap from like a renegade choke.

I think I would have to put him to sleep.

So putting him to sleep is a hard one.

So Gordon is somebody who really hates losing.

Yeah, like he won't even tap in the practice room.

I remember like I'd had a toehold a couple of times in practice room, and he was just comfortable like working there.

I'm like, I'm not really putting much on it.

I think he just, you know, maybe because of situations like that in practice, he kind of didn't respect my toeholds ability in competition.

You've done that to me in the practice.

I have, yeah.

Yeah, I'll give you a little.

Give me a little pop and then he let go.

And I was only 10% right there.

Hey, don't get into math.

Okay, is there some part of that you think is necessary to be a champion is to like this almost unwillingness and competition to tap?

I think it's definitely something to be said for people that are just like, you know, willing to go that extra mile or to take that damage to secure their victory.

Is there a part of you that like would hate to tap or hates to tap?

Yeah, I mean, all of me hate what he did.

The whole part of me.

Isn't there a John Legend song like that?

All of you and all of me.

Very romantic.

Yeah, we're sticking on that theme.

Okay, I'm sorry.



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Oh, one of the things Gordon asked, I forget how you put it because I think there's a lot of words that would need to be censored involved, but he said, ask them how it feels to have a zero five record against me with four submissions combined.

I mean, first of all, I wasn't sure he could count to five.

That's an impressive thing.

That's impressive.

Oh, and five.

I mean, I will say one thing.

Nobody beats me four times.

I love you so much.

Lex, I did have a question.

I did have a question for you.

There was some controversy on your Twitter about a list of books.

Yeah.

And I was wondering why Gordon's book wasn't featured amongst that literature.

Well, it was only the first 30 books or like the first 20 books and it would of course be in something interesting about Gordon.

He's the first author that's written more books than he's read.

Pretty good.

If you face him and beat him, what's your take on what it takes to be Gordon?

I mean, you guys kind of joke and they go pretty hard recently on each other, but as a fan of Jiu Jitsu, I'm all in on this rivalry.

It's just fun to watch.

I mean, first of all, I don't think I go really hard with him.

I think Gordon is, he's pretty sensitive.

You know what I mean?

He's looking for a large insult in a small insult.

And for me, like Australians, we just attack each other all day, every day.

And for me, like if I see someone that takes himself very seriously, that's like blood in the water.

That's funny to me.

To me, if I can just gently provoke and get a strong reaction, that's hilarious.

Like Aussies, we will just attack each other.

And the first person that gets upset, he kind of loses the exchange.

So I think that is very, very entertaining.

Like if you were to beat Gordon, would the mental game off the mat be part of it?

I think it would be a factor for sure.

But I mean, I'm never going to come out too crazy direct with him, you know?

Like, I don't, I find that like, if you get too upset online and you're going crazy,

I find that I'd be embarrassed to do that myself.

Obviously, each, everyone's different.

Everyone has a different style, you know?

But like, yeah, I think mental, the mental aspect would play a big factor.

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I mean, mainly because if I were to beat him, I would send him a message every day until I died. Just to gently remind him that I got the last one.

The last one, it's all that matters.

We're not giving, yeah, we're not giving, let's go here.

So like once you beat him, you're going to run for the rest of your life?

I mean, run, but look back.

Yeah, with messages, ride your horse.

Ride your horse into the sunset, okay.

Oh, by the way, you've talked very lightly.

You've talked shit very lightly against Alexander Volkanovsky's opponent, very lightly.

Have you received death threats or how are you still alive?

Like Gordon, I would say people from Dagestan take a joke very well, you know what I mean?

Do they really?

Do they really?

No.

Oh, like Gordon.

Oh, sorry, I'm slow.

Oh, way too aggressive mode on my head.

Now, honestly, Islam was pretty cool.

I wanted to stir it up a bit, you know, because like I felt like that was a massive fight and it probably should have had more attention than it was receiving.

So I wanted to just gently stir it up a bit.

I feel like Sambo guys are in the same vein as catch wrestlers, very sensitive.

You know, like obviously there's only three people in the world that do catch wrestling, Sambo, maybe 10 to 15.

So I figured we could really provoke them with that sort of jujitsu, Sambo stuff.

Islam took the jugs very well.

The Russian fans, not so much, are very serious.

There's not many smiles in Russia, you know, they didn't take it as well.

I'm trying to suppress the anger, the rage is building up inside me slowly.

So you guys mentioned steroids.

I like that you bring that up after we talk about Russia for the record.

Smooth segue there.

I did not condone the statements said by the Aussie, but I would love to travel with you to Russia.

That would be a good time.

You might get killed with me now.

No, I would be like the first to turn to back stabbing.

You're like, I got him and I got him.

All right.

Are most of the top grapplers on steroids?

I mean, it's hard to say.

You know, some people look like shit and they're on steroids.

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Some people look excellent and they're not on steroids.  
It's so, so hard to tell.  
But that seems to be the general consensus that a lot of people on steroids.  
I'm always a little bit, I don't know.  
So to be honest, I've never, I've never seen anyone take steroids.  
I've never taken steroids.  
I don't even know if that's the right term to use or like TRT, any of that.  
So I'm very careful like to not let my naïve Vitae like  
lead me to take conclusions.  
But I do feel a little bit weird about the witch hunt nature of it.  
That some people a little bit too eagerly claim that others are on steroids  
just because they're successful.  
But at the same time, it does seem that a lot of athletes  
will do whatever it takes to be successful.  
Yeah. I mean, if a sport doesn't test,  
you've got to assume most people are going to do it.  
And especially now as more money comes into the sport,  
you've got to assume more people are going to do it, you know?  
I generally like do AGCC and like just to test.  
It's actually encouraged.  
Well, it's encouraged.  
You get a pamphlet?  
Okay. They don't test.  
There's no testing.  
They test to make sure we're on steroids  
because obviously it's a big show for the UFC Fire Pass in the future.  
They don't want anyone coming in out of shape.  
Very nice.  
Do you think using steroids in that kind of context and sports is wrong?  
Like stepping away, if it's not illegal?  
I mean, from my perspective, I like to assume everyone's on steroids  
and I have to feel bad about using steroids myself.  
Yeah.  
Do you use all of the steroids?  
I'm over 30. It's DRT.  
You know, that's the medical definition.  
That's the medical.  
Okay. I'd like to meet your doctor.  
Therapeutic use, you know?  
Therapeutic, right.  
Like how do you just feel about it?  
I mean, it is cheating for sure.  
Whether they test for it or not, I think it is cheating.

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Obviously, some people are going to say,  
oh, fuck everyone's on it.  
I should be able to get away with it.  
It makes it even playing field.  
You know, but it kind of becomes Russian Roulette  
because it's like if one guy is taking a small amount  
and the other guy is taking a huge amount,  
he's going to reap huge rewards in the short term,  
probably be dead pretty early, but die a champion, mind you.  
You know what I mean?  
So it's like, I don't know where that line is yet.  
Yeah. What do you think about that?  
Do you think it's worthy to take health risks just for the glory?  
I think if you're 40 about to die looking at a cabinet of gold medals  
for wrestling other men,  
it's probably not going to hit the same way on your death badge, you know?  
What? Sorry, in which direction?  
Like, is that a good thing or not?  
No, you're probably going to feel like, oh, fuck,  
I probably wasted a bit of health on that, you know?  
You think so?  
Isn't that like the glory of it?  
Like you said, other men.  
Yeah. Yeah.  
Yeah.  
Well, I mean, in my opinion, maybe you wrestle a woman as well.  
What'd you do with Gabby on Valentine's Day?  
What did you take her?  
Did you guys? We filmed some new stuff for OnlyFans.  
For OnlyFans.  
We never stopped working.  
So the love affair is also a work affair.  
Okay. I don't know.  
There's something too that made like,  
like Olympic gold medalists accomplishing like the heights,  
the sacrificing everything, just everything,  
the first 20, 30 years of your life for this silly little piece of metal.  
I think there's something beautiful to that  
that's that conspires a lot, a lot of people.  
And that's like the height of the human condition in a way.  
Well, if you survive, I'm just saying,  
if you're in your death bed early in life.  
Well, we all die.

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All men die, but not all men truly live.

How many use, how many use are you willing to shave off for a gold medal?

That's a good question.

How many?

How many are you willing to shave off for a gold medal?

Well, you're for silver medal.

For silver, I mean, for a silver medal, I'd shave a few off.

I think two silvers makes a gold.

That's worth five years.

Five to 10, maybe.

Shave off the bad years and haunts the good ones, you know?

Well, I mean, you've sacrificed.

You guys sacrificed a lot of your life.

You continue to sacrifice.

Well, you don't see it as sacrifice.

It's fun.

I think training is fun, being adamant about it, consistent.

It gives you, I mean, I think we have a great routine, great ritual.

Definitely enjoy the process.

All right. Well, do you guys know, this is bro science or, or I'm talking bro scientists, but do you know how long stairways stay in your system?

Forever.

Forever?

Oh, because it's like, hey, once you do it, you all want it.

Yeah.

Just the knowledge.

Yeah.

All right.

I think it's, I think it's different for each steroid, right?

I think some of them last longer than others.

It depends if it's a urine.

You would think I would do a little research before this, asking these questions.

Why do you think most athletes and coaches don't talk about stairways?

Like, why is it such a, like a secret?

Why is it so embarrassing?

I think they probably talk about it like amongst the team and whatnot.

Again, I mean, it's only, it's going to be more shady if it's like a, your, your sport is tested or not.

We're kind of in the wild west in the, in the grappling world, you know.

Yeah.

But why, why don't grapplers talk about it?

Because the scene is cheating.

I mean, it's, it's kind of insinuated as a bit of cheating, even if it's not like,

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uh, if it's not tested, I mean, still you're, you're taking a person that could, you know, maybe has good jujitsu, good mechanics and you're putting them on the leg and they're something with a heel hook versus breaking your leg with a heel hook.

You know, something as subtle as that can make, you know, big differences.

All right.

This is going to make me sound dumb, but is it possible that steroids are not a huge help in, in grappling?

I think if you're bad at jujitsu and you do steroids, you're going to continue to be bad at jujitsu, but if you're great at gear, I'm sorry, if you're great at grappling, if you're great at grappling and then you also do gear, it's going to enhance what you're already, you know, good at and make you much better.

But like, how much is the enhancement?

I guess is the question.

How much is, is muscle valued?

Right, that's the question.

If you're doing gear and you're not changing weight that much, like maybe it helps you a little bit.

But if you know, you're, you're gaining 50, 60 pounds of pure muscle and it's like, that's a huge enhancement.

That's another human.

Does, does muscle, a small human yet, uh, does, does muscle matter in jujitsu?

I guess this is the question.

Is it possible that it gets in the way?

I'd say muscle matters, but technique matters more.

I also think that it, it'll help you develop technique as well, because obviously, you know, testosterone helps with recovery rate.

So if you're on gear, you're able to train a lot more.

Now with that being said, if you're not able to learn, obviously it's not going to help in that aspect, but if you're somebody that knows how to learn and get good at jujitsu and then you add gear on top of that, you're able to do significantly more sessions throughout the week.

Okay.

And by the way, gears, steroids.

Steroids, yeah.

Okay.

I also think that you don't have to be as consistent, uh, in like your sleep and your food and stuff.

If you're, if you're on gear, you have a little bit of leeway, um, but I mean being consistent in, in your diet and your sleep definitely would, would help, you know, the process.

Since you use most steroids of any athlete I've ever met, do you think steroids help jujitsu?

Oh man.

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I think obviously it helps recovery and your ability to train more, but I think some, I've seen some guys go on steroids and then suddenly they feel like the incredible hulk. And now in the training room, they just start to rely more on strength than the techniques they had.

And actually in some respect, hinders them and makes them gas more in competition, because then they're using more of the muscle they never used to have.

So you've implied that you're a natural athlete.

You said that.

You said that skeptically.

Why are you skeptical, Lex?

Is this, is this something you do for, for social media to talk shit to Gordon to imply that he's not a natural athlete?

Well, I only, uh, pretty much recently on social media, I had this rebuttal, you know, saying that, you know, Gordon's on gear and I only said that because after, after our match in, in the, our most recent match, you know, the EBI rules match, he accused me of greasing, which is like lubing up.

So I'm slippery during our match.

So, and you did not.

I did not.

I was checked multiple times before and after our grappling event.

And he still, you know, went out and accused me of this.

So I was like, all right, as opposed to telling a lie, I'll just tell the truth about, you know, your, your steroid juice, which it shouldn't be that big of a deal in retrospect, because he kind of admitted it and whatnot, you know, previously.

So it's, uh, yeah, I just kind of felt like I had to rebuttal and I, I didn't do it immediately because I was like, all right, I know I have this podcast planned.

So I'll wait to do it on, you know, my friend, uh, Mark Bell's podcast, you know, be a little more, more, get a little bit more exposure on it.

And, uh, yeah, I knew he was going to bite the bait, but I didn't think it was going to, you know, bite the bait that hard.

I, I know he's a little stressed out about, about the comments, but, you know, and that was the origin of you guys going back and forth on, well, it wasn't so much back and forth. It was just, I went forth and then he kept going back, back, back.

Like I remember one of, one of my guys, the end me, and they were like,

Gordon's made like 68 Instagram stories and 67 of them were all about you.

I was like, all right, well, I'm in his head for sure.

Got us a few followers. We appreciate that.

We did, they did get followers. He even shouted out our, our B team wipeout program.

So thank you. Yeah. Uh, okay.

Speaking of which, uh, what's the B team? How's it run?

And why is it called the B team?

Well, I mean, Craig was the A team.

I would have been, for me, B's for best.

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Okay. Best. All right.

What does B stand for, for you?

What does it represent?

What is the ideal like the, you know, uh,

Miyamoto Masashi philosophical foundation of B team.

Aim low and achieve.

If the bars set low, you can't help but win.

Okay.

That's Nikki's philosophy with women as well.

Set the bar incredibly low over a chief.

So what, what, what is the B team? How do you guys run it?

Like what, uh, yeah, I mean, can you just talk about the school, how you found it?

What, what, what, what is it, uh, what's it like?

I mean, pretty much just a regular, uh,

jujitsu gym, we started as sort of a pros only purple belt and above, um, team.

And we have me, Nikki Rod, Nikki Ryan, Ethan, Damian, um, as coaches.

Am I missing someone?

Oh, JB, your memory is with your old age.

Unpackable memory. Yeah.

And we got JB coming on to teach white belts,

but just your stock standard, uh, jujitsu team, we focus on, uh,

more, we lean heavily towards the professional athlete side of things.

We have a lot of, uh, high level guys in that.

Yeah.

Class structure, regular instruction, positional aspiring, open rounds,

but we sort of took a, a heavy slant on marketing side of things.

We really try to blow up the YouTube channel.

Obviously we sell a lot of clothing, merchandise and stuff.

So yeah, we just sort of took a modern approach to a standard jujitsu gym.

Cause I mean, jujitsu gyms are full of some of the most boring human beings on earth.

So we try to highlight.

Strong words, guys.

Strong words.

Highlight the other side of things.

You know, keep it pretty light-hearted.

Then it can be fun.

Yeah. That jujitsu can be fun.

I guess that it can be cool too.

You know, it's not just full of,  
steroid it up autistic people.

You know?

Question from Reddit.

Quote, need to hear some of the stories about droppings that led to the making of the gem



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of a video, the do's and don'ts of training a B team.  
Any, any fun stories?  
Any ones that stand out.  
Do you guys remember any?  
Police involved ever?  
We had a guy come and we had to kick him out.  
He was stalking two of the members.  
Uh, yeah.  
Well, I mean, that's just crazy people, you know,  
like I portray a pretty insane image online.  
And I guess I am that a lot of the time,  
but at training, try to keep it while training.  
Around training, I'm insulting everyone,  
but while training, I try to keep it pretty serious.  
But obviously the image I portray lures in some of the, the crazier members.  
I mean, like the thing is about the,  
the Jimmy Guy's run is, is really professional.  
It's like friendly.  
It's like the light-hearted joking is there.  
Obviously the, you know, like shit talk and all that kind of stuff.  
But I guess it's a pretty safe environment.  
But the public persona might attract some,  
some maniacs.  
I won't say which places I've trained,  
but it's obviously some places you walk into the room  
and it's very, very serious.  
There's no smiles around.  
Obviously it's probably average training room in Russia,  
but no smiles, very serious environment.  
You know what I mean?  
And I definitely don't like that.  
I don't want to show up to training and be walking on eggshells,  
not know what the coach's mood's like that day.  
I want to go in, have a good time, keep it light-hearted.  
What was in the video?  
What, what are the do's and don'ts?  
Cause like the address is public.  
Like anyone can show up.  
Anyone can show up.  
Yeah. What were the do's and don'ts?  
Does anyone challenge you like to a fight?  
No. Yeah. No. Yeah.  
I mean, probably from other gyms in town,

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they're probably, that's probably coming down the line,  
but do's and don'ts.

I'm all in on that.

I would be excited as a fan to just watch.

The love of the drama.

Not the drama.

No, no, no.

Well, a little drama, a little drop of poison is good,  
but ultimately it's the best grapplers in the world.

Kind of going at it.

Yeah. That's fun.

Cause I may, maybe I'm wrong,

but I think there is an underlying deep camaraderie  
at the end of the day when you're like at the top of the world.

Yeah.

And you're like in the same town.

What could possibly go wrong?

It's like a shitty western, but like an epic western.

Well, like Clint Eastwood, like the good, the bad, and the ugly.

Of course I love it.

I'm here just eating popcorn like that.

Staring the pot.

I'm not staring the pot.

I'm not staring the pot.

These questions were from Reddit.

Well, that, that one for sure.

Yeah. I mean, what could possibly go wrong

if you're the world's best grappler, hates you,

and you're gently provoking him behind the scenes every day?

Well, I mean, for sure.

In Texas.

And you've stolen his brother, held it for ransom.

It is like a story of a shitty western, I think.

You now allow white belts to train with you.

What's it like to open it up to a bigger audience?

We haven't opened it up yet, but it'll be interesting to see.

I mean, I feel like your higher belts,

they really understand what the training room is.

You know what I mean?

White belts early.

They're trying to find their place in the gym.

It could be kind of awkward and stuff in that environment.

So I think obviously those white belts coming in will change the dynamic,

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but the white belts will have a separate white belt classes, obviously for them.

Because given it's such a high level gym, it'd be tough for a beginner to be able to enter the more advanced classes.

Well, obviously we're teaching more advanced techniques.

So yeah, we've separated a white belt program, I believe 6 p.m. under the Friday.

Yeah, maybe we'll have a Saturday one as well.

But it'll be interesting to see how it goes.

We're trying to do things different.

You know, like trying to do your traditional jujitsu gyms, obviously you're not going to teach beginners wrestling at all.

We're trying to split it at least 33%, top game, bottom game and wrestling.

So at least create more well-rounded athletes from day one.

Whereas I feel like most traditional jujitsu gyms might have no ghee once a week.

They don't touch wrestling.

Very IBJGF heavy techniques.

But again, the sport's changing for sure.

Just to take that on,

how does it begin to get good at jujitsu?

Like given that you're starting this white belt, what's your philosophy on that?

Obviously, buy all of my instructionals at full price.

Not during a sale.

That would go a long way.

For those of you who are Russians,

I'll give you, I'll send you instructions

or all the forms so you know how to, how to steal it.

The discount code.

I'll share, I bought them all.

So I'll just send it to you for free.

I mean, we do have the Makache 50 discount code, you know.

Yeah.

Offering discounts to help him out for the rematch.

I got the, nice.

Well, I got a 100% discount for you if you need it.

But that said, your instructionals are both hilarious and brilliant.

And it's one of the most respected instructionals out there.

Oh, thank you.

With incredibly great names.

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Yeah.

It probably loses me sales, honestly,  
due to removing the seriousness of the types of stuff.

Because they think it's going to kind of suck.

It's going to be some funny, gimmicky thing.

Oh, I mean, some people don't even know if it's a real product.

That's a big hurdle after overcome as they see it.

And they're like, is that a real thing?

That's a problem.

But how does the white belt get good?

I think they just, I mean, just have to show up.

Just have to put in the effort.

Try to focus on using techniques and training  
rather than just fighting to the death, you know?

Although that is entertaining for us to watch,  
too white belts fight to the death.

Yeah.

But what are the techniques?

You should focus on like, what's the process?

What does it mean to show up?

Like how much drilling, all that kind of stuff.

If you were to optimize the first six months of a beginner,  
there's a lot of people who would listen to this  
and haven't tried.

They've been curious.

I have a lot of friends of them who are like,  
you're just too curious.

They're constantly looking for an excuse to start.

I think it's just got to be as simple as possible.

You know, like we shouldn't be teaching  
more advanced movements.

I mean, obviously in the grand scheme of things,  
there's highly advanced techniques  
and then there's slightly advanced.

And I think trying to teach those guys real specific  
positions even, like real specific types of guard  
is just beyond them.

I think the best way to learn is through problem solving.

And I think if you show the technique  
before they discovered that problem,  
the learning is sort of held back.

So I like the idea of using kids style games  
to show them a problem and then use the techniques

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to fix the problems they've just discovered.

I think that's the best way to learn.

Can you give an example of a problem to show them before you give them the techniques?

Like what are we talking about?

All right, so say you wanted to teach posture and wrestling.

You could create a game where one guy, the game might be get to a leg or get to two legs.

Control the leg, like super simple.

But the rules, the constraint would be one guy is forced to keep upright posture and one guy is forced, well not forced, but he's allowed to keep a bent of the hips lower posture.

And obviously within that constraint, the guy with the better posture is going to have more success.

He's gonna have a better posture to secure a leg or secure both legs.

And therefore you've demonstrated the flaws of bad posture without having to explain it to them before they really tested that out.

Okay, and then the result of that, you would realize that the bent over posture is better.

Yeah, you have that aha moment rather than just being, having it spoken to you.

You wrote, Craig, I'm a big fan of constraint-based learning, I guess is what you're talking about.

I love presenting beginners with a problem before the solution like here.

Attempt to hold side control with no cues on how, then I see how the guy got out and address issue by issue, cross face and hip control and so on.

Okay, so what are some other examples?

Like side control?

Yeah, that would be excellent one.

Side control, like obviously we say, oh, you secure a cross face so they can't turn into you, much easier to have them try to hold someone down without explaining what a cross face is and then use that technique to address the problem they've just encountered.

So I think you could do that with a lot of areas of jiu-jitsu, like even more advanced, say 50-50, obviously a mirrored position

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where you both have access to each other's heels.  
Most people will stall out in that position  
and keep their feet crossed.  
I think a great constraint for both of them,  
you can't cross your feet.  
Now you have to learn how to slip the heel hook  
when they expose and how to safely re-attack of your own.  
So the constraint is you can't be too defensive in that position  
and I think the rate of learning increases.  
Why do you think the rate of learning increases?  
Like why do you think that works?  
Because you encounter more problems.  
Say in that situation,  
they're going to get your heel a lot more  
in whatever period of time you allocate the drill for  
than if the legs are crossed.  
I don't think the hard part is splitting the legs  
to get to the submission.  
I think the hard part is practicing control  
while they're trying to slip it at a later stage  
and then obviously trying to slip your heel  
when you're in more danger.  
It also makes you more comfortable in that bad position  
if you're used to doing it with open legs.  
Yeah, I think that probably that style of teaching  
forces people to focus on...  
This is so easy to fall into focusing  
on memorizing a particular details of a technique  
without thinking like,  
why the hell does this even work?  
If you don't have that,  
you could get to focus on from as cliché as it sounds  
from first principles like why the hell do I get out of this?  
Like why does this even work?  
Why does wrestling work?  
Why do you have a bent over posture?  
You get those like start to ask those kinds of questions  
which is kind of interesting  
because it's not obvious to me that bent over posture  
is the right posture for Jiu Jitsu, right?  
I'm confused actually about that.  
I don't know.  
About the correct posture?

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Yeah, for Jiu Jitsu.

Like what's the right answer?

I think bent over posture is still good for Jiu Jitsu.

Even with the Judo and all that.

Like why are so many Jiu Jitsu people like at a high level, the posture is higher up?

Well, I think wrestling posture is just a bit too low because it's not necessary, right?

If wrestlers are low enough to the ground where your hands could touch the mat.

But in Jiu Jitsu, it's kind of a mix between wrestling and Judo or Greco-Roman wrestling.

So I think it's just a bit more relaxed and it's bent over but it's not upright and it's also not super low.

Bit more room for error too

because obviously the Jiu Jitsu guy's shot isn't going to be as athletic or as quick as a wrestler, especially a wrestler with shoes.

So it actually comes down to the fact that Jiu Jitsu people just on average even at the top level are not good at shooting?

I think so, yeah.

I think obviously, I mean all the wrestlers in American stuff, they're starting super early, super young.

You know what I mean?

By the time they get to the same age, we are really in our sport and stuff.

They've spent much longer doing the actual sport than the average Jiu Jitsu guy.

And then there's another level of wrestling, of course, with the Soviet block.

That's just unachievable for your current.

Who knew an Australian rugby?

Yeah.

I feel my rugby player.

Rugby is that kind of like American football but much less money, is that what that is?

Much less money, much tougher, I would say.

But who knew that the cure to the Dagestani wrestling were the Aussies?

Were the Aussies?

Okay, let's go there.

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Your friend, your training partner,  
Alexander Volkanovsky, you helped them prepare  
for the Islam Makachev versus Volkanovsky fight.  
Who do you think, first of all, won that fight?  
That's a tricky one.  
How is that the tricky question?  
I will say, when I was...  
All the shit talk you've been doing,  
how is that the tricky question?  
When I was in the corner, going into the fifth,  
I personally believed live that Volkanovsky  
probably needed a finish to take the victory.  
But you had to think that way, right, in general?  
Or you legitimately...  
It's a great area because the judging, who knows?  
Plus, I was like, wait, we're in Australia.  
Where's this bias?  
We've got some Australian judges here.  
I was really hoping we'd get a bit of bias on that.  
Yeah, unfortunately not.  
Hopefully they lose their jobs.  
But again, yeah, it was a close fight.  
I think sometimes you're blinded in the moment  
because again, everyone counted Volkanovsky out.  
The crowd's behind him.  
So everything he does is going to get a huge cheer.  
You're biased towards the smaller guy.  
You're biased towards the underdog.  
So you sort of, whatever the underdog does,  
has a bigger impact in your mind.  
And sometimes they can bias as the fight goes along.  
But yeah, super, super close fight.  
I would really love them to have a rematch.  
But obviously that's going to hold up both divisions.  
So I don't know if they'll be able to do it.  
Do you think they'll do a rematch soon?  
I mean, that was an epic fight.  
I was listening to the Fight Companion during it.  
They all thought Volkanovsky.  
And so they biased strongly the opinion.  
Round two was the tricky one.  
Round two is the tricky one.  
Anyway, I'd love to see that run it back and do three, actually.



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There's an epic fight.

What was the brief conversation you had with Islam Makachev and his team?

I didn't know how we'd take the joke.

Because obviously Kabebe tried to flying Eagle Kick, Dylan Dannis in the face.

So I wasn't sure how my humor would go.

But I mean, Dylan must have said some worse things to me.

I was just playing around.

I mean, you can't really take anything I say serious.

Come across like an idiot.

But so when he was coming up to me afterwards,

I was like, oh, I don't know what he's going to say.

And again, maybe he would have been more upset if he had lost, but he'd just received the judge's decision.

But he came up.

I went to check his hand.

He gave me a big hug and then pretended to throw me.

And then I thought the interaction was over.

And then he circled back.

That's why I was so awkward.

I was like, oh, he's coming back.

He wants to say he wants something else.

But he just said, why didn't you teach your boy how to escape the body triangle?

Oh, wow.

Interesting.

What did you say to that?

I said, well, I mean, obviously, you've got to learn how to finish a reneged choke.

Is that what you said?

No, I didn't say.

I was laughing.

I was laughing. But then I should have said, they would get out of here before the Aussie crowd attacks here.

What do you think about the body triangle position they were in?

It seemed like for the first time, it seemed it was almost like Valk was dominant in that position, which is kind of weird.

I mean, damage is meant to Trump control MMA judging.

Damage is the number one factor.

Do you think the judges saw that?

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What did they score that as?

I think they all scored four towards Islam.

Three and five, two of the judges scored towards Valks.

One of the judges scored three for Islam.

One of them, it was 49, 46 for one of them,

and the other ones were 48, 47.

I think, again, the confusing round was round two.

I don't think anyone scored the body triangle round for Valks, which I wish they had.

Volkanovsky was and is still arguably pound for pound greatest fighter in the world.

How long have you known him?

I don't know the first time.

I met him before he was in the UFC when I used to live in Melbourne.

He came down to train at Absolute.

We really connected on Ultimate Fighter.

One of these guys who was going to bring Ultimate Fighter, Brad Burdell, pulled out last second.

He called me when I was in Puerto Rico,

and he's like, do you want to coach on tough for five weeks?

And like I said, Puerto Rico was apocalypse now.

I was like, yeah, get me out of here.

So I jumped on that opportunity,

and we were in Vegas five weeks together.

Because he was meant to fight Ortega,

and then he got hit with COVID real bad, got stuck in,

I think he was in hospital for maybe one to two weeks.

And then before he flew back to Australia,

they were like, all right, maybe we just do you guys as the Ultimate Fighter Coaches.

So I jumped on board with that.

And that's really when we've become close.

Obviously, I was useful in the Ortega fight, help him get out of submissions.

He fought then Korean zombie Max Holloway.

I basically just held the bucket at that point in the corner, a couple of striking fights.

And then again, yeah, we had to tackle the Islam problem.

So I did spend five to six weeks down there preparing for that.

How did you tackle the Islam problem?

How did I tackle it?

You, somebody who barely knows anything about wrestling, having to help.

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Obviously it doesn't take much, you know.  
Especially wrestling and wrestling.  
Did the beard help or like what?  
In all seriousness, what were some of the key ideas  
that you worked on with Volkanowski to prepare for it?  
I had the help of Frank Hickman.  
Hickman was down there too,  
one of the Hickman brothers wrestling coach.  
So we were sort of like problem solving.  
I mean, basically we were confident in Volk's fence wrestling,  
his cage work.  
He's super good on the cage,  
super like under respected in that position.  
And we knew that if you were able to take the scrambles to the cage,  
he would be effective against Islam.  
Because again, Islam is background in Sambo freestyle wrestling.  
But I mean, honestly,  
he's probably got the same experience on the cage as Volk's.  
Obviously some of those wrestling skills will translate very well to the cage,  
but the cage is still somewhat of a gray area in equalizer.  
And Volk's again, incredible ability to stand up,  
incredible defense on the cage, which you saw.  
We worked on strategies to get up  
and a ton of submission defense.  
Islam loves Kamuras, obviously re-naked from the back.  
Armbars, those are sort of in arm triangles,  
dominant submissions.  
But again, the guys he submitted, not grapplers.  
Apart from Charles Oliveira.  
And again, Charles Oliveira was basically knocked out at that point.  
So I was still impressed if he submitted him.  
But again, I always told people this.  
They thought it was crazy.  
I was like, Charles Oliveira versus Islam in a grappling match.  
Oliveira is going to win that match.  
Like submission grappler.  
Submission grappling, yeah.  
So in a pure grappling skill set,  
I think Oliveira is a more dangerous grappler.  
So we didn't even come into it thinking Islam was this unstoppable  
boogie man that people make him out to be.  
So we approached it from that, just focused on the techniques,  
ability to get back up, using turtle to get back up,

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using turtle to scoot to the cage to get back up  
and hand fighting from there, keeping it pretty safe.  
But what makes Vogue so special, I think is his gas tank.  
Gas tank and his willpower.  
He's just unbreakable.  
The Dagestani guys, Khabib, Islam, they are good at submissions,  
but they break guys mentally and they fatigue him  
and then they take the submission that's offered.  
Oliveira is a guy that can jump on submissions  
and have an incredible technical ability  
to finish those submissions, whether you're fresh or you're tired.  
And then you combine that with Volkanowski,  
who incredible willpower, never gets tired.  
You're never going to break him.  
And as you saw, he only attempted one submission the whole fight.  
Is that learned?  
Is that trained?  
Or are you just born with that mental toughness?  
It's a good question.  
I mean, he's like an anomaly.  
Like the entire fight camp, not nervous at all.  
Supremely confident.  
The whole fight week, completely confident.  
He just has an attitude like, oh, everyone cast me out.  
We'll see.  
You know what I mean?  
Islam, he's like, let's see.  
No doubt.  
No doubt at all.  
Super relaxed.  
Up until about five minutes before,  
and then he starts stamping himself up,  
he's like, you are not taking this belt from my family.  
He gets into that sort of mindset.  
He actually says that outlawed?  
You can't teach that survival.  
He didn't even take a fight, you know?  
Have you guys ever been pushed to the limit like that,  
or broken in a grappling match?  
I'll do it in practice.  
I'll push myself to think of my pass out or die or something.  
As far as how tired you get, you know?  
Because in a match, they try not to ever get close to that in a match.

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Yeah, you try to, because it's important to understand where your exhaustion point is.

But yeah, if you have to push to that limit in a match, you're probably doing something wrong, you know?

Like you see in matches where a guy sprints the last minute, they try to win the match the last minute, and it's like you definitely had some mistakes leading up to that if you have to, you know, gotta go balls to the wall.

Okay, but has there been ever times in competition, especially like early on, because you're like, you wrestled pretty hard and wrestling is pretty exhausting. Like not wrestling, but you know, wrestling style kind of thing. Going against the best people in the world.

Yeah, I mean, I definitely, again, I think in practice, it's important to do that hard work that where competition is much easier.

You know, I think if you redline in practice and you really pushed it like death's door, then once you're in competition and you're working with, you know, you're being fresh in a comp, I mean, it's much better.

Have you ever been to that thing where Dan Gable talks about always wanting to be to a place where you can't get off the mat?

Like when you work so hard in the training room, you can't get off the mat.

I think he says he's failed at that in his career.

He was always able to at least crawl off the mat.

Yeah, I definitely never like actually died on the mat, but I felt like I felt like I was gonna die, you know?

Sure, sure.

What about you? Do you quit all the time?

I get a lot of cramp.

I'm like, you know what? You got me, mate.

Let's do this again tomorrow.

Dude, if I'm asking Craig for a role, he's in the bathroom somewhere.

Do you see the value of pushing yourself like to that place where you're knocking on death's door?

Yeah, but within safety, you know, because obviously the most serious injuries occur when you're tired over training and stuff like that.

So I think like taking a page out of what those MMA fighters do, especially Volks with his training, like he's not necessarily pushing crazy in each round, but he's doing extra conditioning,

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assault-like stuff, crazy workouts outside.  
And he does do some crazy training workouts,  
but ooh, safe, very safe.  
But when he's redlining like that in the training room,  
it's a very controlled, safe setting.  
I think to do that in Jiu-Jitsu,  
against some of these lunatics out there  
that are trying to kill you,  
especially when you have a name, can be dangerous.  
So your approach to Jiu-Jitsu is don't warm up  
and don't try too hard.  
No, sir.  
For safety, no, for safety, though.  
Yeah, longevity, you know?  
And talk shit about Russians.  
I got it, I got it, I hear you.  
Oh, you mentioned cage work.  
What's interesting to you that you've learned  
over all this time about cage work?  
What's interesting about the dynamics of that?  
Are you talking about both the control  
in the dominant position,  
but also getting up from the bottom  
while you're against the cage, all of that?  
The added dimension of that cage, that wall being there,  
changes a lot of stuff, right?  
So obviously, in some ways,  
it's a much lower impact wrestling style  
because you can't be spoiled on.  
You can shoot.  
The cage is going to block their feet.  
You're going to be able to chase down their hips.  
It's just a completely different fight.  
And again, because of Islam's judo skills,  
that upper body control, as you see,  
he's able to use against the cage,  
like the inside trips, sort of the Uchimata style,  
Harai Goshi throws.  
So obviously, those skills do translate.  
But yeah, I think the cage is a great equalizer  
for a lot of things like athleticism and stuff.  
It takes away a huge speed advantage, aspects of the fight.  
So he's really good at standing up.

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Is there, I assume he learned all of that from you  
and your instructional just stand up?  
I mean, we were so confident.  
I was like, you know what?  
Why don't we put this thing out a month before the fight?  
Yeah.  
Maybe the illegal download hasn't made its way to Russia yet.  
Yeah.  
But it was there for him.  
Can you explain to me what's in the instructional just stand up?  
Like what are the ideas?  
I mean, the old school way to stand up,  
people talk about the technical get up.  
You know, the old Gracie put the hand.  
But I mean, that doesn't work.  
It hasn't worked for 20 years.  
If you look at everyone that gets up in MMA,  
they're using turtle to get up.  
They're using wrestling to get up, you know what I mean?  
Which is a counter to what pure jiu-jitsu says.  
They say, don't expose the back.  
Don't ever expose your back.  
I think jiu-jitsu is a terrible way to get back to the feet.  
Because if you were to retain guard and go half guard or close guard,  
super hard positions to get up,  
you're basically putting yourself in a leg tuck for wrestling.  
So I think you need to borrow from wrestling  
to learn how to get up in an MMA fight.  
So basically how to safely expose your own back  
while not allowing them to get hooks and use that to get back up  
or at least not allow them to get two hooks.  
And that applies for MMA especially?  
For MMA especially.  
Because obviously striking is a factor.  
But if they are striking,  
they don't have locked hands around your body,  
means you are able to move.  
You are able to make an attempt to get back up.  
They have to choose between control, submission or strikes.  
Post from Reddit.  
Why does Craig Jones push so hard for a bottom is bad jiu-jitsu?  
What is so bad about playing bottom guard  
such as half guard or deli heel?

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Those are the two options.  
No one likes a bottom.  
Why would I want to get up?  
It's the question for all of you.  
Is the bottom a bad place to be?  
I mean, the bottom's bad if you don't want that gun to help you.  
That's why I look at it, you know?  
Yeah, that sounds like something a cowboy would say,  
but I don't know if that's much meaning.  
I think the point of jiu-jitsu is both are dangerous,  
being on bottom and on top.  
I think the longer the match is probably  
favorites the top guy more,  
just because every movement the bottom guy makes  
is probably carrying your weight,  
carrying that gravity on top of you.  
So I think it's a bit more efficient passing from the top,  
I suppose, of sweeping from bottom.  
Bottom's reactive.  
Top is active.  
The top player decides how to engage,  
how to approach the guard.  
They can use angles.  
They can use footwork.  
They can throw the legs by.  
So it's an active position.  
Bottom's reactive.  
Reactive, you're going to get fatigued.  
Yeah, I think it's very difficult to gas somebody out  
while playing guard,  
but I think it's very easy to gas somebody out  
when attempting to pass it.  
Well, you guys are talking about gassing people out,  
but is there more dangers from the bottom,  
like in terms of submissions and all that kind of stuff or no?  
I'm back and forth because I'm a top player,  
but I understand the value of being on bottom.  
Like when I do play guard,  
bottom, I feel like the submissions come much easier.  
And when I'm on top, they come also pretty easy,  
but maybe I just take a different route.  
Top on the straight, bottom in the shade.  
What was the hardest part of the training



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for the training camp for Volkanowski?

Like you're just experiencing world-class MMA fighters training and giving your approach to jiu-jitsu of not trying too hard no matter what.

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

I mean, from my perspective, there's a lot of pressure for that.

That's a lot of pressure for me to go in and think that I could possibly figure out a way to help this guy address this guy that's basically never been beaten.

I think you're going to knock that once, but basically not really even been put in bad positions.

You know what I mean?

That's a lot of pressure on me, especially because Volkanowski is such a great guy.

Jiu-jitsu is different.

You know, like you coach a guy who loses, he has time to tap, but in America, you get severely hurt.

Yeah.

There's a lot more weight in what you need to do as a coach.

You have a greater sense of responsibility to their health and well-being.

You know, like obviously, I know Volk's kids,

I know his wife, you know what I mean?

They're putting faith in you to not just win the fight, but keep this man safe, you know?

So from my perspective,

I have a hell of a lot more pressure coaching him as an MMA fighter.

So almost like the psychological aspect of like, of doing the best you can for him.

Exactly, yep, yep.

What was hardest about the actual training?

Was it the technical aspect of trying to figure out the puzzle of Islam,

or was it like being a good training partner in figuring out how the grappling would work, basically playing your best impression of Makhachev?

Were you trying to actually impersonate him?

Like, not just visually, but like in style.

Yeah, definitely, definitely visually.

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You're not as good looking, but go ahead.  
A little taller, but in terms of the training,  
yeah, I mean, Islam is known as incredibly strong guys.  
So obviously, I'm heavier than Islam.  
So theoretically, I should be able to replicate  
that strength difference.  
And then in terms of grappling,  
targeting those submissions that Islam does,  
like focusing on those in the training room,  
focusing on the way he holds half guard.  
And really, in the grappling sense,  
trying to replicate him on the ground.  
And then, yeah, I wrestled with him on the wall a ton,  
trying to replicate, obviously, to the best of my ability.  
A lot of the stuff he does on the wall,  
body lock heavy, inside trip, Uchi Matas.  
And just constantly put in the work on Vox,  
you know what I mean?  
Like constantly chaining attacks against him,  
really replicating that.  
As he's trying to get up and escape  
and all that kind of stuff.  
So all the submissions, like both judo and submissions,  
just attacking and attacking.  
Exactly.  
And there's only so much you can do, really,  
because obviously, he's been,  
I think he's been fighting a long time.  
So it's like, you're trying to polish  
what he already is good at.  
You can't just completely create  
an entirely new game for him in the space of six weeks.  
So you're trying to take what he's already effective at,  
add to it.  
And luckily, a lot of the stuff he's already very good at  
was easy to add to for the fight.  
Question from Reddit.  
I'm very curious why other MMA fighters  
don't employ high-profile grapplers from B Team  
and New Wave to improve their grappling.  
That's from the subreddit.  
By now, it's clear that they are levels above almost everyone  
in MMA simply because fighters there

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don't specialize in grappling.  
But it doesn't seem like fighters, even champions,  
get training partners from the most successful teams.  
Why is that the case?  
From your experience, why doesn't it could be, call you?  
You might now.  
Put in a good word for me.  
Oh, I will.  
That's all right.  
He takes a joke pretty well.  
No, no, you'll be walking with open arms.  
I think your average judizzi coach,  
MMA fighters have bad experience with judizzi guys.  
Jujitsu doesn't have a massive place in MMA.  
Obviously rounds, stand-ups.  
It's hard to submit people.  
Your average Brazilian judizzi black belt  
doesn't know anything about holding a guy down.  
It doesn't know anything about how to stand up.  
So I think if you overly utilize that judizzi guy  
that hasn't had experience in more modern no-gi  
or training MMA fighters previously,  
it's going to be a complete waste of time to him.  
I think they're smart enough to realize that.  
Do you have and do you guys,  
do you have interest in MMA at all?  
Just not even like, certainly just competing yourself,  
but just understanding the puzzle of MMA.  
Yeah, I mean, I've been a fan of mixed martial arts  
for a very long time before I trained jits.  
Personally, I'm much rather coached in fight,  
but I fight somebody for a good check  
and I get to pick the opponent and have a proper camp.  
Okay.  
I could think of a good opponent.  
Who's that?  
All right, who do you think is the greatest MMA fighter  
of all time?  
Craig, I'm going to start with you.  
Just as a fan of the sport,  
has somebody's been deep in it?  
I mean, from my perspective, after that performance,  
I'm going to say Volkanovsky,

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because he was able to decisively outstrike Max Holloway,  
one of the greatest strikers in the sport,  
and he was able to hang with the wrestling of Islam,  
Makachev, and in terms of Ortega,  
he was able to survive Ortega,  
who has some of the most dangerous submissions in jiu-jitsu.  
So I think, in my opinion, technically, he's the best.  
So even though he technically lost,  
he still has the crown.

I believe so, given the size difference,  
given he's moving up and weight,  
I think all those factors, really.  
The underdog, everything, the pressure.  
Did you think he would be able to hang  
in any of the wrestling exchanges of Islam?  
No, no, no.

I was really surprised.  
That's why in my eyes, it's kind of funny,  
winning at the end of the day,  
I feel like judges influenced that.  
Although I did think Australian judges  
would rob the other way, but I was assuming  
they kind of, somebody paid somebody,  
and not enough maybe.  
But in general, I just thought he won,  
sort of in the eyes of what martial art stands for,  
like sort of going to the fire and survive and thrive  
and finish the last round strong,  
which is kind of, it's like spiritually  
is what a victory is.

So I wish we kept going.  
One ball around.

Yeah, exactly, that kind of thing.

What about you?

What do you think, who are the fighters you admire?

Like who do you think is the greatest of all time?

I think the fighter I paid most attention to  
was John Jones.

He has a great ability,  
just to mix the high level of striking,  
high level grappling.

Although his jujitsu by itself,  
isn't, you know, probably isn't like,

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you know, super high level,  
but his ability to mix everything together,  
I would say he's the best.

And he's a fellow, you know, heavier guy,  
heavyweight now.

So it's nice to see, you know,  
how those guys move at that weight.

And a fellow natural athlete.

See what I did there?

All right.

What about you, Nicky?

Yeah, if I had to pick a goat,

I would probably have to say Khabib,

just because he was undefeated,

and he had a very, you know,

high finishing rate, you know,

very few of his fights actually went to a decision.

So he just overall,

he dominated almost every single opponent

he won against.

The dominance.

I mean, we've been joking about it,

but Craig, what do you think

makes the Dagestani fighter so good?

Like, from the small region of the world,

so much dominance has come.

I mean, obviously, the amount of freestyle wrestling champions

from that region probably puts their wrestling

above and beyond the best in all of MMA.

And obviously, a lot of,

even in the Olympics,

a lot of champions out of there, right?

So I think that skill set combines

with them adding effective pin controls

on the ground and Jiu-Jitsu submissions.

But again, I think it's that hard training.

Those guys, like Khabib,

would maintain that pressure

throughout the entire fight

and break guys down.

Their ability to fatigue guys to a breaking point,

I think it's something they do best.

I wonder what that is.

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What is that technique?

What is that?

What is it about their upbringing?

Because is that just that part of the world?

What were the Satie brothers on the freestyle wrestling side to all the mixed martial arts people?

It must be part of the culture also.

They must be doing something.

I don't think I've never,

I haven't seen a convincing explanation of why yet, of what's specific about their training, what's specific about their culture.

That creates that.

Okay.

What do you think about the flip side?

Do you admire somebody like Conor McGregor, who knows how to create a spectacle?

You, Greg, who likes spectacles?

Spectacles.

Yeah.

I mean, I really admire early Conor McGregor because I found him absolutely hilarious.

I felt like that was peak banter.

I felt like he just took the American world by storm.

All these British, Irish, Kiwis,

I believe we have a way better level of banter and attacking each other.

And it's almost too easy to pick on Americans that take themselves very seriously.

I mean, arguably even other parts of the world too, the fire east of Europe, you know?

Well, that's the tricky thing with Conor.

I think he was,

I feel like you could have gotten in the same kind of trouble because the Russians really took everything very seriously.

They weren't joking around.

Yeah, that's the problem.

It's like, it's a bit of,

I mean, some things he definitely takes too far, you know, but I felt like early on,

he had the right balance

where he wouldn't really cross the line,

but he would do, he would do enough.

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He just took it to another level,  
obviously later in his career.  
But I think early on, a bit of innocent banter.  
It gets a lot of eyes on the sport though.  
It's probably by far the most popular  
combat athlete of all time because of that.  
Yeah.  
I feel like you have to cross the line.  
I don't think enough people appreciate,  
like the values he's brought by crossing the line.  
He's making a sacrifice crossing the line.  
That's going to affect him for the rest of his life, you know?  
I see, I don't think so.  
I think you can always walk back  
because I think unlike people who might disagree with this,  
I, well, yeah, I thought he always radiated a respect  
for the opponent, like afterwards and underneath it.  
It felt like the same way you do.  
When I hear you shit talking,  
I don't see a person who really means it.  
I see a person who's having fun with it.  
I always saw kind of McGregor the same way.  
I don't know, but people took it like extremely seriously.  
But I saw the respect, like the common respect  
the martial artists have for each other  
that felt like it was always there.  
If you don't like that individual,  
you're going to perceive what they say more negatively  
than if you obviously were.  
So I feel like if you like someone,  
you're going to never think they really cross the line.  
That's true.  
So you're saying I like you.  
That's why I'm perceiving you're bullshit in a positive light.  
Is there, are there people that hate you?  
I mean, some of the family members are stable.  
People that really get to know you all hate you.  
The fans love me.  
The friends hate me.  
It's a good place to be.  
Keep your enemies close.  
All right.  
Well, what do you think is the most important muscle

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for just as a biceps?

Oh, I think a strong,

I think a strong back.

I think back one core second and then biceps.

Okay, biceps.

Do you legitimately think like weightlifting helps Jitsu?

It's kind of the discussion on the steroids.

It's like the muscle mass and strength and power and explosiveness, all of that.

I think sometimes when we're at that upper echelon of competition, there's only, there's like little minute battles that you have to win.

And if you're, if you're relatively close in technique, then a lot of times a stronger opponent pulls it out.

But it could be also just the limitation, right?

You hold position too long.

What about for hobbyists?

Do you recommend weightlifting?

Like when you see people in the gym?

I always recommend weightlifting.

I almost see muscle as the body's armor, right?

The more armor you have, the more damage you can kind of take and maybe recovery is a little bit better.

And I've always seen weightlifting as a means to stick to my routine.

Like if there's no point in lifting if you're not eating right and you're not sleeping, right?

So if you kind of put it all together, then it's beneficial.

What about you guys?

Do you go, do you go to the gym?

I go to the gym, yeah.

Do you go to the hotel gym to use an elliptical and that butt machine or?

Yeah, I focus on the glutes heavily.

All right.

What about like, what about the injury prevention and so on?

How do you train to minimize the risk of injury?

You guys have all been pretty beautiful.

You've gotten a major injury with the ACL.

So how do you train to minimize injury?

Probably how the right guy to ask, hey.

Definitely.

Can you talk through your injury?

Like what happened?



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Yeah, so about one week prior to this last ADCC,  
I was wrestling with this guy named Kenta  
who was also competing.  
And I went to go lift him from like a rear body lock  
and he hooked the outside of my leg.  
And we just felt something pop.  
He felt a shift with his leg and when it first happened,  
it hurt for like the first 30 seconds.  
And then I honestly debated.  
I was like, maybe it was just some freak thing.  
I was like, I literally thought about continuing the session.  
Then the next day I woke up and it was like super sore.  
I was limping around, couldn't do a full squat.  
So it pretty much killed all of my training  
for the entire week leading up to the event.  
So I couldn't train or anything, messed up the cut.  
Obviously there's added nerves with that too  
when you're not in the gym every day  
leading up to the competition.  
I went out there.  
I wasn't really able to pull guard  
because I couldn't get full heel to buck connection,  
which is inevitable with playing guard.  
And I was very hesitant to shoot as well.  
So I came out with the idea of just trying to use  
hand fighting to tire my first opponent out  
and then mainly look to get to under hooks or over hooks  
and do mostly upper body wrestling.  
In the beginning of the match, I successfully got to an under hook.  
I got to rear body lock.  
He tried to roll and I ended up in top position inside control.  
But it was during the no points period.  
And then as the match went on, I gasped out  
and eventually he ended up taking me down  
and then scoring with two hooks on the back.  
So what's the injury?  
Yeah, so I got an MRI actually after the event.  
I didn't know...  
You waited...  
Wait, wait, you waited until after the event?  
Yeah, I waited until after the event.  
Because like knowledge or ignorance is bliss?  
Yeah, exactly.

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I was like, honestly, I don't even want to know what's wrong.  
I was like, I just go out there, compete.  
You know, I knew it was like the biggest event to date.  
And I really wanted to do it.  
Think about not doing it?  
It definitely was a thought in my head,  
especially that the day after,  
you know, it's always the worst day  
whenever you have like a serious injuries the day after.  
And I was like, man, I really can't do a full squat.  
And I was like, I don't even know  
how I'm going to be able to do this.  
It got a bit better over as the week went on.  
But I was like, man, I have to go out there and compete.  
I was like, it'll always be in the back of my mind.  
Like, what if, if I ended up pulling out?  
What did you think about this whole...  
I thought he was just being a pussy.  
Yeah, just slap him around, just yell at him.  
I didn't think we pressured you.  
We just say you make your own decision, right?  
We're just like...  
Is that a tricky thing to do?  
Like with a heavily, like a serious injury like this?  
Yeah, well, we didn't know.  
That was the thing we didn't know.  
Honestly, initially I thought it was...  
I tore my lateral meniscus,  
but that ended up not being the case.  
It ended up being a full ACL tear.  
I was actually super surprised when I got the MRI results.  
So yeah, we didn't know how bad it actually was.  
What do you think about that situation?  
I think Nikki's a tough kid.  
And I mean, when you're so close to that competition,  
there's not many...  
You don't get many opportunities like that  
to compete in front of 15,000 people.  
It's like props to you for pushing through it and getting it.  
And man, he had a close match with one of the best grapplers  
in his weight class.  
And it's like a few adjustments here and there.  
And especially if he was able to train previously,

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leading up to that match, I think Nikki pulls it out.  
So some of the things you mentioned is nerves.  
So there's extra nerves just because you're underprepared.  
Yeah, I mean, you know.  
Or feeling underprepared.  
You want to go into a competition with the confidence.  
I did everything that I could leading up to this event.  
I trained as much as I could.  
And then when an injury prevents that,  
you start to doubt yourself more.  
How do you guys think about injury?  
How do you train, you know,  
training with the best in the world,  
training to be the best in the world and avoiding injury?  
Has you got...  
You tore your bicep?  
Yeah, yeah, I tore bicep.  
Dude, girls are...  
Dude, honestly, I was a bodybuilding, you know,  
for like seven years.  
And no lie, I trained biceps like most days,  
like almost every day in those seven years.  
Pretty much, I injured myself.  
That's so jersey, man.  
Anything else?  
Or just the biceps?  
Just, I mean...  
Yeah, I injured the bicep.  
Pretty much, the day before a wrestling practice,  
I had like a killer arm day.  
And by arm day, I just mean training biceps,  
very rigorously getting a sick pump.  
And I go to wrestling practice the next day,  
you know, pretty late.  
I should have been there.  
I didn't get a proper warm-up in.  
And the first thing I do is I shake hands  
and I go to shoot a single leg.  
And boom, I just blew my arm out.  
The first movement I did.  
So just not being warmed up properly  
in addition to, you know,  
having of every vigorous arm day,

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a few hours prior.

You hear that about warm-up?

So what are some lessons about avoiding injury and training at home?

I would say number one is warming up properly.

Making sure your body is hot before you do hot stuff.

Okay.

And what does warm-up look like for you?

Is it jujitsu or non-jujitsu stuff?

Yeah, just for a warm-up in general.

I'll do something like a, if I'm talking competition, something like a jog walk back and forth a few times, then a sprint and jog a few times

to get that heart rate, you know, up and down.

And then I'll grab a partner.

I actually just filmed a DVD or instructional, specifically on the pre-match ritual.

In addition to that, I'll, you know, grab a partner.

I'll drill some movements.

Typically, I'll drill some bad things.

Like I'll start from bottom, bottom out, bottom side control workout from there.

And then pretty much like 20 minutes in,

I'm hot and I'm ready to go for, you know, rounds.

Well, what about you, Greg?

So what's the way to avoid injury?

What's the worst injury you've had?

What's the worst injury?

I don't even know.

I'm pretty good.

Pretty healthy, yeah.

Whenever you quit practice, I'll add some mentally.

Has your heart ever been broken?

Many times.

Many times.

But there's a thing I notice.

People that spend the most time warming up offer the most injured.

It's a strong correlation.

I can't, you can't argue with science.

I remember training with Oliver Taza.

Oliver Taza would have a 60 minute warm-up.

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Surprise, surprise, always injured.

Very common.

I find that very common in the training room.

No, I think people, it's how they train.

Like if you, like me, first sign of discomfort,  
back pedal, you know, push through that stuff,

go too hard, go when you're too tired, you know what I mean?

Get too emotional in the role.

I feel like those are the times that I've been hurt,  
where I just like, oh, I can't let this guy get me.

When I have that attitude and try,

I believe it's how you train and sort of, obviously.

What has this come from?

Positionally too?

Like, because you're training against some killers.

I mean, you're training, you're training with him  
and going probably pretty hard.

Once a month.

If Craig gets a little tired, he's like,  
yeah, I'm good for today.

We could.

Once a month, I think, that's it.

And then you quit like 30 seconds in.

Just so I can.

Yeah, you know, you got to be safe.

I like it.

What about you?

What have you learned from the ACL?

Oh, Tara.

Do rehab, yeah.

Yeah, rehab definitely would help.

Oh, so you haven't been like.

I didn't get surgery.

I didn't do essentially any rehab.

I just have no ACL in my left leg.

So what's it like having no.

Surgery, guys, you've got two options.

Surgery, rehab only.

Nikki goes, I'll do nothing.

Yeah.

Definitely should pick up on the rehab.

What's rehab for that look like?

Like twice a day of doing some wheel.

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Like bands or something.

It's good he's learned from.

He's learned some valuable lessons from about taking care of his body.

Yeah.

What's it like just training with the ACL?

So at the beginning, it was definitely a little iffy.

You know, I would have an occasional buckle.

Like I'd just be wrestling with somebody and go to step back and it buckled backwards a bit.

But honestly, now, like I haven't had a single buckle instance in a while.

It feels 100% normal when I train.

It feels better than my other knee, to be honest.

Like I had my meniscus taken out in my right leg and that one gets sore more often than the no ACL leg.

Okay.

All right.

So putting that aside, is there wisdom you've learned from that experience?

Yeah.

Definitely should be doing rehab and rehab.

You know, I think that, you know, especially if you're a hobbyist or a professional athlete, you should be lifting, you know, whether you're rehabbing an injury or just for injury prevention.

So I'm actually closer to correct, because I've trained my whole life, like pretty hard, obviously just the hobbyist, but like twice a day, did judo, wrestling, all that, never broke anything, never injured, kind of like similar philosophy, except like last year, I guess, a year and a half ago, I got a tiny like groin pull injury and it still hasn't healed.

And I've been using your approach of not giving a shit.

Yeah.

And like, all right, surely this is going to heal.

It'll be fine, but it hasn't.

Of course, if I was like an actual athlete, I would like, probably still train through it and just fuck it, figure it out.

But when you have other stuff going on, you just kind of wait it out.

Yeah.

But no, I think probably rehab, especially as you get older, you have to do that kind of stuff.

I think it's important for people to, you know, determine whether they're, whether they're going through is an injury

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or they're just hurt a little bit.

Because injury, you know, for sure, take time, rehab it and get better.

But a lot of people like those stubble toe or something, like you're out for a few weeks, you know, so.

Well, that's the problem with the injury I have.

It feels like a stubbed toe.

So I was like, I'll just wait a couple of days, it'll be fine.

And then a couple of days later, it's not fine and you wait.

And then I never got an MRI, never got any of that.

It's like, I'm sure I'll be fine.

Yeah.

So it's hard to know sometimes, like what, it's hard to know.

It's hard to know. I feel like a lot of people will just not check it, I'll be fine.

Because there's several failure cases.

There is a failure case of where everything is a stubbed toe.

You're like, fuck it.

Like, like you're bleeding everywhere.

You know, that's fine, whatever.

So you have to be careful.

A lot of, a lot of, a lot of people can fall into that too.

I think I'm in that category.

Go to the doctor.

Why do you go to the doctor?

Yeah.

Your best approach is typically wait until something else gets hurt, so that you will forget about the grind.

That's, yeah, exactly.

That's what I was hoping.

I was hoping to get hurt.

Waiting for the, for the broken heart, maybe.

Okay.

That was very helpful.

Oh, you mentioned you're doing a whole thing on the pre-match ritual.

Can you kind of preview like what kind of, what's involved in your pre-match ritual?

It's pretty big in the wrestling culture and the fighting culture, like kind of what, what to do before your competition.

But I think a few of our, a few people are just kind of missing out exactly, you know, what to do.

So I break it down for them.

I break it down to people like four weeks in advance.

How, how you're, you should prep, you know, your trading and your nutrition and your sleep for competition.

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In addition to that, I break it down even like to a smaller scale of like what's, how, how early you should get to the event.

When you're, when you should be visualizing, you know, your competition, what to do, like, you know, 30 minutes before 20 minutes, 10 minutes, five minutes and the kind of mentality you should have throughout those, those times before you actually step onto the mat.

When are you visualizing?

Like how much are you visualizing the actual, when you say competition, you talking about the tournament or the actual people you might be competing against?

A little bit of both.

I'll spend time just visualizing the crowd.

Like if it's going to be, you know, an arena with 15,000 people, I'll spend time in practice and whatnot, like putting myself inside that arena and visualizing, you know, stepping on the mat and hearing the, hearing the crowd screaming and whatnot, that way, you know, when competition time comes, it's kind of the, the same deal.

I'm accustomed to it.

In addition, when I get to the arena, I'll step on the mat.

I'll, I'll kind of look at everything.

I'll expose my senses to, to what it's going to be.

And then I'll kind of shut everything off.

Like a lot of some people, you know, scroll through their phone and can treat, treat it like normal, have this normal conversations.

For me, I like to limit my sensory input, my sensory intake before I go out and compete.

I just feel like sometimes, I feel like sometimes we only have so many decisions.

You can make it a day.

And I want all of my best decisions to be made when it matters, when it counts.

Oh, what about you?

What's, do you limit your sensory input?

On game day, honestly, no routine, nothing.

Hey, I don't, yeah, I don't do anything.

My sky's a double silver.

You should get it.

You should buy as a structural.

I'll help you.

I'll get another silver.

No, honestly, nothing.

Hey, I just try to relax, treat it like it's before training.

Have a good, try.

Visualizations or no?

No, no, no visualization.

So the opposite of visualization.

You just avoid it before thinking about it.



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Yeah, I don't even think about it.

I'm just like, yeah, we'll have a good time.

You know, try to appreciate it, but I can do it.

By the way, when you visualize, are you visualizing tough positions or are you visualized winning mostly?

Definitely visualize winning.

I visualize how I can get, how I'm going to get to my most dominant positions because, you know, in comp, I want to do what I'm best at.

And I'm also see, I see my opponent in his best positions and how I'm going to escape those if necessary.

But most of the time I'm just visualizing exactly what I'm going to do in that match and I go out there and do it.

Okay, so when your teammate, Craig, is, you know, another like world class athlete has a fundamentally different philosophy than you.

Do you visualize being frustrated at him?

No, no, not frustrated, but I'll definitely come into practice with like solutions to problems that Craig gives me, you know, like if Craig's, Craig's, you know, catching me or something or giving me issues, like, you know, I'll go home.

I'll, I'll watch a match that he lost for motivation and I'll come back and I'll put it on.

Just DM him like a highlight reel of him losing.

Oh, what about you?

Like, does it, does it affect you that you're a bit of an outlier?

Usually before I compete, right before I go out there, I go,

oh, why am I doing this?

Do I still need to do this?

And I think if I hopefully don't embarrass myself, affects my instructional sales, that's the last thought.

But I didn't even put too much thought into the whole competing thing.

I'm just like, you know what, train hard, hopefully have a good time out there.

What about the motivation aspect?

Like that, that voice that says like, why am I doing this?

That voice can break a lot of people.

Like in the weight cut, it can break a lot of people.

Like, why am I doing this stupid silly sport?

Like you said, a bunch of dudes just rolling around like, what's the point?

I'll cool someone with a nine to five job and I'll be like, yeah, that's why I'm doing this.

Avoid that.

Sell those DVDs, man.

Yeah, I didn't get too deep on competing.

Yeah.

We're so polar opposite.

It's like almost uncomfortable to be around you.

Obviously, one of us is a clean athlete.

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You should do a DVD on that.

What about you in terms of preparing for competition, Mickey?

The day before, the day of, are there rituals that you follow?

Honestly, like the few days leading up to it, it's different for me every time.

Sometimes I'll warm up before I compete.

Sometimes I won't.

Sometimes I'll fast.

Sometimes I'll eat.

So it literally is just completely random.

I don't follow any specific thing.

But in the training room leading up to the competition, I'll definitely,

like Nicky Rod, visualize that I'm walking out onto the competition mats.

I'll pick somebody that's a similar body type to the person that I'm competing against.

And then we'll start out with some distance between us.

We'll come out, smack hands, and act like everything's a real competition.

I'll even sometimes have corners that will yell out times and things like that

just to replicate it as much as possible.

That's funny, because I've talked to a lot of Olympic gold medalists

they used to do a podcast with athletes, and they all sound like Nicky Rod.

Two of you are outliers.

I don't know.

Sometimes I'll do this.

Sometimes, so anyway.

But that's also just a culture, I think.

Maybe the chaos of not taking things too seriously is actually really, really helpful.

Sometimes the pressure of taking everything way too seriously can break you.

I mean, it's just, I think it's the biggest sport, really.

I think if I compete every day in practice, it just makes competition much easier.

So I just put the pressure on there.

On the competition, yeah, yeah.

Sorry, on the training, on competing in the training.

I don't know, Olympic sports aren't that big either financially,

and people take it extremely, extremely seriously.

Like, you don't really get that much money from judo.

I mean, I just don't take jujitsu that seriously,

because I was just partying and having a good time until 21,

and then I was like, oh, fuck, do I get a job?

Or do I pursue professional sports?

And I feel like if I could make a career in jujitsu with a decision at that point.

And now you just stumbled your way somehow into being at the top of the world.

Yeah, that's what I feel like.

I just walked into it.

I feel like I couldn't just do that in wrestling, boxing.

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I couldn't do that in other sports.

What was the toughest match you ever had that pushed you mentally, physically, technically?

This doesn't have to be the best person you face,

but was there a moment in your career that was really defining for you?

Yeah, I mean, I would say like the toughest mentally was just this last ADCC.

You know, I just had a big injury leading into it that kind of screwed the whole camp and weight cutting everything up.

Yeah, I would say the last ADCC.

Are you proud of your performance there?

Like you stepped on the mat that you pushed through all of it?

Like I said, I'm a very competitive person and I hate losing, so definitely not.

Yeah.

You had a collapse lung.

He was so physically exhausted afterwards, couldn't breathe.

We had to get medical intervention.

He thought he had a collapse lung.

I was the most tired that I've ever been in my life in that match.

I actually popped a blood vessel in my eye.

I was trying so hard.

He comes out, he walks off of the ADCC mat backstage and I'm like,

I'm kind of getting warmed up for my match and Nicky Ryan, he walks over, huffing and puffing.

His mom's right next to me.

He looks at her, he's like, I think I need help.

I think I was a lung collapse.

That's not true, dude.

No, it's not true.

My mom's the one that called for medical help.

I was just laying on the warm-up mat fucking dying.

Well, we're happy you're fine.

Layed it all on the line.

What about you, Craig?

Defining or toughest matches?

I mean, they're all pretty tough, you know?

I don't know.

I can't really pinpoint one.

I mean, probably the most annoying one was obviously the one where I had Gordon Anbar.

I was like, tap, bro.

And he wouldn't tap.

So I let him out.

Mentally, I was like, I shouldn't have done that.

Do you ever have a thing in your brain where it says, should I talk now or not?

And you say, no, I'm going to be respectful.

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I just can't be serious about some of these things.  
I don't know. It's just silly.  
All of it, the whole thing.  
What about you, Nicky?  
Dude, honestly, most of my toughest matches are in the training room, right?  
Because I started with these guys.  
I started training under them.  
Started training at DDS when I didn't have any knowledge.  
I knew wrestling.  
I knew a knee cut in Jiu-Jitsu.  
But I started training with them when I knew almost no Jiu-Jitsu.  
And then I had to really work my way up.  
So definitely in the training room,  
like having one of these guys on my back,  
or like there's a stretch of a few weeks or months  
when COVID first hit.  
And it was just like four of the best grapplers in the world.  
And we just did drilling and live rounds with these four guys.  
And it was just, it was hard.  
It was very hard.  
You know, every round, doing six rounds, seven days a week  
with the best grapplers in the world.  
And it's like, you get no break and you're forced to learn on the go.  
So I think for me in the training room,  
that was definitely my toughest matches.  
And that's where I built, you know, those mental calluses.  
There was a period where I drew with Nicky Rod,  
probably what, nine months, 12 months.  
And typically speaking, like I said, no warm-ups.  
The first round, we should take it pretty easy.  
First round, you start to mount.  
The whole room, the rest of the training room,  
they take mount very lightly.  
Me and Nicky Rod would be fighting to the death every day.  
I felt like we did an extra round every day.  
It was very grueling.  
I'm very mean when I'm in the midst of drilling or live.  
Like we would do, we would drill wrestling, you know, quite a bit,  
like stand up.  
And in the drilling, like I just wouldn't like crack, take me down.  
Like we're not going live, we're just drilling,  
but I just wouldn't like it and put me on the floor.

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So things like that, you know.

I knew it would escalate.

Yeah.

So you mentioned mount, like, so you do positional training.

So is that, would that be the hardest versus like live training, open, like starting from guard?

I would say mount and turtle definitely, definitely made me very tough.

Because you spent all this effort getting off of bottom mount.

And then you got to get on top of a guy in the, at the time, I'm not that good at holding guys down.

So it escaped quick.

And I'm like, fuck, I just tried to hold them down.

Got to go back down.

Same thing with a turtle.

It's like you, you start bottom turtle, you try to explode, get out, get away.

And then, you know, you switch and this guy gets up pretty quick.

And you're like, damn, I got to go right back down.

It was that constant circle, man.

It's, it's very tough, but definitely, you know, build some character on the map.

What do you think is the value of positional training in general in jujitsu?

Actually, it's one just interacting with you guys.

It's not commonly done in just like regular jujitsu gyms.

What do you see?

Because probably it's not commonly done because it's so, most of the experience is just frustrating.

Like if you're evenly matched, you're basically frustrated the whole time.

If you, if you're doing it right.

It's a psychological battle that happens in like the mountain turtle rounds.

It's like, you know, because you, maybe you get close to subbing a guy and, or maybe you do sub them, you know, when you start on turtle and you're on their back, you finish them and then you get this high point and then immediately you got to go back down to defensive posture.

It's very like, it's emotionally like up and down.

So it's hard to deal with.

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Super important if you're one of the better people in the gym because it just puts you in positions you don't find yourself in, in regular training. So I think like a lot of, if you're a big fish in a small pond or you don't do positional spying, you're probably going to get exposed in competition. You might even look silly in those positions. So you really have to force yourself to do it. Despite the fact that you're given someone worse than you, a position where they might catch you. So you have to sort of put the ego aside. Yeah. That's one of the things when I was training regularly, of course, training with you guys, it's like trivial, but I didn't work on putting myself in bad positions when you get better and you regret it. Because the big negative thing it has, consequence it has on competition is you don't take as many risks because you're kind of afraid for your back to get taken, all that kind of stuff. That was me before I went to DDS. I remember I showed up there in that old position. I was like, fuck this. You better earn this position. Yeah, exactly. So I didn't really have escapes. That was a learning curve for me for sure. Do you see the value in positional training or is it just the source of tremendous frustration? Yeah, I definitely think it plays a big part in your confidence when you step out onto the competition mats, being confident that even if you get put in the worst possible situations, you know what to do and know how to work out of them. I had a long argument with Watajir Gracie when he visited and he thinks Mount is the most dominant position, even Nogi versus Beck. Is there a case to be made for that or no? I think all of your opponents utensils, their tools are in front of them. So if you're on Mount, there's a few ways to get out of Mount. I think if you're on somebody's back, I'd personally much rather be on somebody's back then. Flattened out.

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I'd rather have someone's back and then flattened out.  
Boots in, flattened out, yeah.  
Boots in, flattened out.  
So not even body triangle, but just flattened.  
Just completely flat.  
Almost like the position in MMA where you see guys get finished because they can't get out.  
I think that position is probably the hardest position to escape.  
Can you see what Hadjir's talking about with Mount or is he just that good at Mount that he says that?  
He might mean the G, cross collar, you know?  
I don't know.  
Or did he mean that?  
Well, he says controlling wise.  
He just believes that you can complete, that there's, he actually thinks there's more ways to get out from the back than there is from the Mount.  
Getting up, including like physically.  
Prior to the keeping escape, I would probably agree with him, but that keeping escape is so difficult to manage.  
It's the funny looking escape where your legs are wiggling.  
People have a lot of trouble.  
It's like super hard to learn how to do, but then once you learn how to do it, the effectiveness is just huge.  
Yeah, that's a weird one.  
When did that come to be a thing?  
Is that pretty recent?  
I mean, I saw a TDS guy using it first, I think.  
Yeah.  
Who's the first guy to discover something like that?  
This seems like a ridiculous thing to discover.  
Yeah, like what if I just wiggle?  
I thought it was a joke at first.  
Obviously, you guys really doing this?  
Yeah.  
All right.  
I remember somebody showing me like a technique where like if you just like walk your hand on a mat or something like that.  
Like an arm triangle or something?  
Yeah, yeah, yeah.  
Try to walk the arm high.  
Yeah, on the arm high.

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And it's just like a funny discovery,  
like as opposed to like trying to like shove it in, just like walk it.  
I like doing that to people, but with things that aren't true.  
You know what I mean?  
I'll just tell him this is a technique and watch him  
try to work out if I'm being serious or not.  
Yeah, that's what you do when you achieve guru status.  
They'll just listen to you like you're Steven Seagal.  
See what they'll believe.  
Speaking of which, how do you balance,  
you have to travel all across the world.  
How do you balance that with running a school  
or being a world-class Jiu-Jitsu athlete?  
Or maybe, I mean, the secrets of travel for me are two drugs, Xanax and Madafino.  
That's how we time adjust and we hit the ground running.  
But what does Madafino do?  
Xanax puts you to sleep.  
Yeah, I mean, I have narcolepsy since it's a narcolepsy medication.  
How does that work with the steroids?  
I mean, they work well together, you know.  
Focus and physical recovery.  
But in terms of traveling and training and stuff,  
it is, I mean, we're lucky because we've got so many high-level guys,  
so we can travel and they're still in good hands.  
I mean, there will be a problem if me,  
Nicky Roder, Nicky Ryan left and the gym had Ethan, that would be a problem.  
Yeah, but we've got to make sure it's not just him.  
Although everyone says they're happy when you're gone,  
so that's the moment I heard.  
Happy when I'm gone, but they do miss me.  
For sure, until I get back.  
All right, what about you?  
Just like balancing?  
Do you try to stay completely focused on competing?  
Like for some of the big matches you have coming up,  
are you able to kind of diversify?  
Well, I like to diversify my training to where, you know,  
if I don't have a competition scheduled, I'm more focused on skill development  
and, you know, getting better and broadening my toolshed.  
But, you know, if I'm like six weeks before a comp,  
I really start amping up the intensity that I bring into the mats  
against bringing some of that visualization towards practice.  
And maybe I train less-volume pre-competition,



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but higher output per session.

Yeah, what's the perfect week of training look like?

If I'm not in competition mode, I would say

Monday, Wednesday, Friday, twice every other day, just once.

If I'm pre-comp, just Monday to Sunday once a day.

So that's on the mat.

You're doing the full, like, positional training, live training.

Bicep curls.

Oh, yeah, I do a lot of bicep curls.

Yeah, I lift a few times a week now.

Yeah, cardio or no.

Cardio is all mat stuff.

Cardio is all mat stuff.

I do do some CrossFit workouts.

CrossFit, I'll do some E-moms or some AMRAPs or CrossFit terms.

That's for Instagram?

Yeah.

But yeah, CrossFit is a good way to push that threshold sometimes on the mat because I'm so good.

I can't always get that full red line.

So I'll hop in across the gym and I'll do some workouts that bring me closer to death.

What about you, Craig?

What is the perfect week in training look like?

Like, when you're back home, training?

I try to be at the gym twice a day every day when I'm back, just because I travel a bit more than these guys.

So I try to be there eight and 12 every day, hang out in between.

Usually, definitely, usually train both of those sessions, depending on how my body feels.

So doing positional, doing everything, technique, positional, live.

I should probably do more positional,

but because I'm just trying to work on wrestling and stuff,

and especially leading up to the Volkonowski's last fight,

I was trying to wrestle more and focus on those areas,

even before I traveled over there,

just some experimentation with some stuff.

But yeah.

Yeah, how do you experiment with stuff?

Like, how do you...

So there's like regular positional stuff,

but when you have ideas, like where do you do it

in during the training sessions?

Or do you do it outside of that to get together with somebody?

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Usually, every session, I show up with something I'm thinking of, usually something from top, maybe something from bottom, but, and then I just try to maybe pick the right people. Some people, obviously, I'm just fighting to the death with. It's not a good time to experiment. And then others, obviously, you can play around with ideas on. Okay. What about you? What's the perfect week look like? Maybe... Well, you said you're 100% now. Yeah. So yeah, honestly, I have pretty much the same schedule as Nicky Rod. So Monday, Wednesday, Friday, I do twice a day, every other day, once a day. And then normally noon practice is like our biggest class. That's where, you know, all the pros go in. So I tend to do more open rounds there. And then we have a 7 p.m. class as well, which is more hobbyist. And that's where I'll do my positional rounds and, you know, force myself to be put in bad positions. So you have what, you do 8 a.m. 12, like in terms of what BTM has, 8 a.m. 12, 7 p.m. and the hobbyists are more 7 p.m.? Yes. Okay. Do you believe in overtraining? Do you think you can overtrain? I used to not believe in it. But then I got hurt. Oh, you attribute that to overtraining? I think, dude, I'm telling you, I train, I lifted like a bodybuilder for like 7 years. And by lifting, I mean, I was lifting 7 days a week. And I train arms most days. Like almost every day I would do like, you know, 4 or 5 sets and get a pretty good bicep pump in addition to my lift. And I think I had to contribute somewhat towards my training. What about on the actual mat overtraining? Like explaining too much time in the mat? Well, I think you can definitely overtrain, but it's more of a, like as your body's healthy, you have to make sure your mind is sharp. Like sometimes maybe taking a day away or even diverting your attention in a different aspect of training can help you be a little bit sharper overall. Sometimes it can be like, it can get a little like stagnant because you're doing the same stuff over and over. But I think if you just keep like, you know, overtraining, then your overall baseline just gets higher and you become accustomed to that. What about you? You don't seem like a guy that overd...

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I've heard of him. Never been close to it.  
No, I think controlling how hard you train is definitely protect you from injury.  
You know what I mean? Like if you're redlining yourself  
and then you're fighting to the death in the gym,  
that's 100% when you're going to get injured, going to get sick.  
So I try to make sure I've had enough sleep.  
I've had obviously enough food post-training  
and that sort of helps me to train a bit harder,  
but still try to avoid redlining myself too much.  
What do you think is going to be your peak days?  
Because throughout the week, if you're training seven days a week,  
you're going to have ups and downs.  
Like for me personally, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday,  
usually my best days.  
And besides that, I'll also have other great days.  
All my days are great.  
But Monday, Wednesday, Friday are also great.  
You're like unable to admit that some days are often than others.  
I love it.  
You're always on, bro.  
Okay.  
What advice would you give to people who are not always on hobbyists?  
How to get better?  
Like people that are already there, I don't know,  
purplebells, brownbells, blackbells,  
they're just doing like a couple of times a week or something like that.  
Like how to get better?  
I think being consistent,  
like find a schedule that you can consistently train.  
Maybe it's like three, four times a week  
or even a little bit less.  
Just be consistent over the years.  
I think too often people are like,  
oh, I want to get really good, really fast.  
And it's like, definitely takes a long time to get to where you want to be.  
What about what you're doing?  
Like, be consistent.  
What kind of stuff you're working on?  
So honestly, I think one big thing for me,  
which is something I actually started doing once B-Team was formed,  
was filming all of your rounds  
and then watching it every day.  
Because then you can see what specific problems you're having

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and then you can base your positional rounds around those problems.  
That's really interesting.  
It's kind of depressing though.  
Like sometimes I have to...  
I edited this podcast for a long time.  
I still do in part.  
And I hate the sound of my voice and what I look like and stuff.  
But it does make you better.  
And I also hate the sound of Craig's voice.  
What he looks like.  
So editing this podcast would be especially difficult.  
This would be doubly difficult.  
But I'm glad the rest of you are here.  
I don't know.  
Do you watch competition footage of yourself in it?  
To analyze?  
Oh, yes.  
That's my confidence.  
That's fucking good.  
I'm trying not to watch it to miss my confidence.  
Is there advice you would give for hobbyists to get better?  
I mean, just...  
Not every round has to be a fight to the death.  
I feel like you're going to get injured.  
But it's out of that way.  
You don't have to learn as much.  
I would say just as a black belt who took just very seriously for a very long time.  
Basically, when you become a hobbyist,  
your skill is basically slipping.  
Your age and your skill.  
And so not taking stuff seriously is actually its own psychological skill.  
Of like...  
It's tough.  
It's tough in a way that is different when you're like a blue belt or something.  
That if you work hard and you train correctly,  
you're going to get much better.  
Here, you're kind of...  
You're looking downhill.  
You're like, yeah, I guess I'm going to enjoy the art of it.  
Reframe the victory.  
Like if it's a young, upcoming guy and he can't submit you,  
you're like, well, that's a moral victory.  
Yeah, but then that has to happen.

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You have to be able to not do that to avoid the injury sometimes.  
Like if you want...  
So yeah, it's a different thing.  
Plus with me, just because some people recognize me,  
you have that probably.  
You guys definitely obviously have that.  
I've solved that problem.  
How did you solve that problem?  
Travel around, you do a seminar or anything like that.  
It's believable that you could get submitted once.  
But if they catch you, give them a few.  
If people tell their friends they submitted me to a seminar one time, believable.  
They got me four or five times.  
You've robbed them of that.  
That's pretty funny, but it's also...  
They have this energy.  
Like they think, you know, they're coming in hot.  
I usually like to just basically get submitted quickly twice.  
And just it changes everything.  
It makes it more fun.  
Let them submit you twice?  
Yeah, just like very quickly.  
Like what are the options?  
They get lasts longer.  
Hold off.  
But then it's like, it's very hard to like...  
Yeah, if you're a very serious competitor and so on, you take it seriously, then yes.  
Then people go...  
People, what they try to do, this is probably what happens to you guys,  
they try to impress you by going super hard.  
I have people every day come to my gym and try to take me out.  
I just stay sharp.  
Come to practice, let's get it on.  
Do you feel that energy?  
I feel like I need to talk to Craig here for a second.  
Like a seminar.  
Like somebody is coming in like really hard.  
Like a brown belt will come in like and they really want to impress you with like their technical side,  
their big fan, they've been watching your DVDs.  
Like what do you do with a guy like that?  
I make a complete joke out of the row.  
You know, give them the pass, mess with them, do stupid shit.  
Like rub them of the realness of it.

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Because it's stupid.

I'm not going to roll hard with strangers.

You know, I feel like you should roll with a circle of people you trust.

Injuries happen rolling hard with strangers

because that's the same way you get injured in competition

because you don't have that relationship with them.

And I should also mention that's probably not a good way to impress somebody's big, just going ape shit, going 100%.

Oh yeah, that's not at all.

I think the beauty of Jiu Jitsu is like the camaraderie of it.

Like as you get to know each other, it's like technical,

like different ideas you have and all that.

Yeah.

Okay.

Do you think Jiu Jitsu is dying of popularity, Craig?

Yeah, it's long dead.

I think it's just shows like, I mean,

I have heard some numbers on the viewership for the G Worlds finals

and they don't even compare to the undercard of like who's number one events.

So I think like when I was coming up and competing in the G all the time,

you looked at those guys that won Black Belt World Championships

and you were like in awe of them.

It almost had that ADCC champion feel.

But now that's not the case.

You know, I just feel like that.

The younger generation aren't looking at who's winning Black Belt, G Worlds.

I personally don't think and I don't think they're like, they want to be that guy.

They want to be like a Ritolo, Gordon.

You know, those are the people they want to emulate.

So you think like the G, like APJJF G tournaments will just keep declining popularity?

I think people will still do.

I mean, it's easier, I think as you're over 30,

because the G is a bit of a slower thing and the master's participation is bigger in the G

because obviously you know G is now heading in a wrestling direction.

Wrestling in heel hooks, you're over 30.

That's a terrifying prospect, you know?

What's terrifying about the G less?

So I think in the participation rate, the APJJF will still be good,

but I just don't think people are as interested as they used to be.

Well, why is wrestling in heel hooks terrifying?

Like heel hooks, I can vaguely understand if you don't understand heel hooks.

If you work a desk job and you've never wrestled and a guy double likes you,

that's going to probably break you back.

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You know, I think the older guys are scared of wrestling.  
It's hard to wrestle at 40.  
To learn wrestling at 40.  
Yeah, I mean, I think it's even just hard in general to do wrestling at 40,  
but it's easy to pull half guard in the G at 40.  
I think it's hard to do judo at 40 and people still do it at 40.  
Judo hurts more.  
Judo is scarier than all of them.  
Yeah, I think does wrestling really hurt at 40?  
I don't know.  
I don't know why I'm looking at you.  
It does, interesting.  
I agree with you saying that judo looks like the most dangerous.  
Like even their practice partners, they're just getting slammed flat.  
Yeah, I mean, I did judo for a really long time.  
There's a lot of people that are 40, 50, 60, do judo and they get...  
They're the ones that are still alive though.  
That's true.  
Survivor buys.  
You do a little bit of judo, right?  
I mean, I'm a yellow belt.  
You're a yellow belt and judo?  
I should be an instructor.  
Promote you to orange.  
I got a yellow belt in the sixth grade.  
I believe it was the sixth grade.  
I did it for about, I don't know, six months.  
But you're also using judo in competition, basically.  
Aren't you doing like a Harai-type throw like you're doing a...  
Yeah, I don't know where I learned that.  
I just started doing it.  
You just started lifting your leg in various ways until the war.  
Just figuring it out, yeah.  
Okay, doing different kinds of trips.  
I looked at the sandbook guys doing it.  
I was like, can't be that hard.  
Yeah, gave it a crack.  
Well, they looked at your foot locks and they said,  
that can't be that hard.  
Bannet from the tournaments.  
What do you think is the best takedown in Nogi, Jiu-Jitsu?  
Like what?  
Like if people were trying to train for competition and so on,

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where do you see the trend heading?

I think those foot sweeps are catching fire nowadays.

A lot of foot sweeps, foot sweeps and arm drags,

I would say pretty popular in our sport.

Arm drag.

She's just got arm drags, okay.

Arm drag either to get behind them or even just to cause reactions.

Make them pull away and we can start reattacking.

Are you talking about it in a context of what's the best takedown to score?

What's the safest takedown to mitigate the risk of guillotine submission?

Or most effective in general?

Yeah, most effective combined.

Yeah, yeah.

I mean, what's the best about scoring?

I think any sort of body lock.

You know what I mean?

Locking your hands around the body,

you've been able to put them to the floor that way.

I feel like that's most effective safe.

This might even have arisen out of a leg attack, a leg entry.

Upgrade to the body.

What about like foot sweeps like outside foot sweeps?

What are we?

I would say, yeah, you know, foot sweeps from outside foot sweeps

or even like something like you're tossing an important body

and you're sweeping the foot.

Yeah, those are all pretty safe.

See, why is that scary?

I don't understand.

It's not scary at all.

I think it's the lifts that are scary.

The lifts, yeah.

Who's lifting people?

Everybody else?

Like a good lifter?

No, not you.

I mean, a master, like we're talking about older guys doing no geeks.

Some of those old bosses take it very serious.

They just start lifting.

TRT Worlds.

TRT Worlds.

They're coming.

They're coming to impress.



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Grab and lift.

All right.

Just for the gram.

Okay.

What about submission?

What's your favorite submission?

And what do you think is the most effective submission?

Except the buggy joke?

I would have to say the rear naked.

It's definitely the one that's hit the most and the highest level of competition.

Was that, that was pretty interesting to see you escape all that and to put it on.

That's the cool thing about EBI to see like the world class athletes.

I was surprised that it's possible to escape with you on his back.

You're going to try some B cream.

Oh yeah.

B cream.

That helps.

What's in the, what's the formula or is that secret?

That is a proprietary blend for sure.

But that's what you use for greasing.

Allegedly.

That's what you used before.

Allegedly.

Allegedly.

Does it have other application outside of grappling or?

I'm sure you can get creative.

All right.

Thanks.

Asking for a friend.

Is that RNC for you as well?

Rear naked.

Rear naked choke.

I mean, overall favorite for like solidifying a finish because like you can push, you can put somebody asleep, right?

Yeah.

Even if they don't want to attack, put them to sleep.

But as far as like something I've been working on now that I'm now starting to implement in competition, Yoko Senkaku side triangle is like, it's a beautiful thing.

You have multiple options.

You have the triangle to finish.

If that fails, you have the Komori.

You could break the arm.

You could also just transfer and take the back.

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So Yoko Senkaku, I'm a big fan of and I continue to progress and get better at it.

Have you ever broken anyone's arm?

Oh yeah.

I mean, the first few competitions because I was like, you know, pretty athletic grappler or athletic wrestler going against like local black belts and brown belts.

Like one of my first matches, I broke somebody a Komora.

Pretty much every time I've got a heel hook, which is only twice I've broken an opponent.

If I have a joint lock, it's probably going to break like a lot of times it breaks before they tap.

Yeah.

You seem like a really friendly fellow.

How hard is it to break an arm or break a joint?

Well, I don't think it's that hard.

I think, like if you're talking like about an arm bar, we have this position to where like people are kind of holding on, holding on, and then it slips and their arm starts going and then it just breaks before they even, you know, get a chance to tap.

I love the sport.

I knew about a guy and he didn't tap one time and it was actually, it was surprising.

I had to put a lot of force into that.

I suppose the arms, shoulders and the ligaments and the knees and ankles, but to a fully, nice kid, Sambo kid, fully let it go and he tapped it.

I think the angle is like up here.

They're built different.

Hopefully he can be reconstructed different.

He's rebuilt different.

Yeah.

All right.

What about a straight foot lock?

You've ever, do you guys do straight foot locks at all?

I don't know.

Yeah.

I mean, I'm learning them now.

I'm coming to practice one day and like, all of us do a straight foot lock.

Straight foot lock, just this little like Polish kid.

No, I don't think he did.

He footlocked everyone, but he told the inside, well, he's getting out of like an email, cool his friends and family.

We practically put a hit out on him in practice and he just stopped everybody.

Yeah.

It's always interesting when you get like, yeah, people that specialize can surprise you that this could be effective stuff.

Do you think there's other stuff that could be still discovered in Jiu Jitsu?

Like what areas do you think are ripe with techniques to discover?

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Like wrestling is really interesting now.

There's a lot of innovation happening in wrestling.

I think there'll be more innovation when we get people that are more adamant about standing up from bottom position.

I think if we get more of the community, they're like, all right, I want to get off the bottom.

I think just stand up.

Just stand up.

How Jiu Jitsu doesn't work.

I guess you changed the name.

How Samba doesn't work if you just stand up.

Did you really?

Yeah.

All right.

I'll change it to Jiu Jitsu when I pirate it and send it for free to the entirety of the Soviet block.

Hey, Nicky Rod, do you think ego is useful for martial arts or does it get in the way?

Okay.

I think you need to use it in both ways.

For sure, I have an ego like if you're training competition mode, but also it can prevent you from learning and progressing if your ego is too high.

You really have to shut the ego down when you're in the mode of learning and trying to develop skills because you're going to put yourself in these bad positions.

You're going to have issues with training partners that aren't necessarily up to your skill level, but because you're in these bad positions, you have to make these certain sacrifices.

For sure, ego can be a good or bad thing, but if you're able to shut the ego off and learn, then that'll have huge progression when it's time to put the ego into use during competition.

It's not the time you shut the ego off.

It's been a long time.

What about you, Craig?

You seem to be super easy going, is the ego just not part of it?

Oh, for sure.

I just don't want anyone to know they've damaged my ego.

You have to suppress it deep down.

There's a child underneath all of it crying always.

For sure.

I think ego is good for a bit of perseverance, like it'll help you stick it out against a tough battle with a training partner for sure, if a bit of ego is on the line.

Plus, the band's back and forth, we're trying to stir each other up a bit.

Tough as shit.

I think that helps hone, sharpen the ego a bit.

What about you?

Do you seem like a super homo guy?

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Is there a monster underneath?

It's a total act.

Who's in the basement?

I think ego is a big motivator.

I think it's very good to have in the aspect that it will drive you to want to be one of the best in the world.

But like Nicky Rod said, you need to be able to turn it off in the training room and force yourself into bad positions where you may not be winning.

Are there like, Don Hurst mentioned Boris, are there like grapplers?

This is a question from Reddit, actually.

Boris-like characters, anybody you've trained with in the past who doesn't compete but is just an absolute beast in training.

People you've met, they're just like...

Well, somebody that I think has the best submission grappling in MMA, I think like Gilbert Burns is his submission grappling, I train with him early on in my grappling career and I was really impressed by his ability to move, hold down opponents that are trying to stand up and as a whole, he can get submissions and put people away.

When's the last time you've trained him recently or not?

No, it's been a few years.

There's just some impressive ability to submit, you're saying?

Yeah, I mean, you would see Gilbert go against a few pretty decent black belts in the room and farewell and maybe he gets to their back, puts a chokun and it's like Gilbert's super high level grappler or submission grappling.

Yeah, but he's pretty widely recognized as a monster, so I don't know, you didn't really answer the question.

I think you're not even listening anymore.

I don't remember, what was the question?

All right, well, is there people, like you've done all these seminars, are there just, especially in the Eastern Bloc, you see, like you went to Kazakhstan, is there killers out there?

Oh yeah, there's tough guys out there, obviously I don't remember the names nor could I pronounce it if I did, but definitely some tough guys out there, obviously carrying skill sets over from wrestling for sure, not Sambo, but wrestling.

But yeah, they're just people that surprise you, they just don't compete, they're really good.

Have you met those?

I feel like it's less so today, because there's so many more athletes in the sport, but definitely when I was coming up back in Australia and stuff, there were guys I'd train with that wouldn't compete and that would be like super tough rounds for me.

And there's so many more avenues for competing in general, so, what about you, have you met some monsters?

Yeah, one guy I could think of in particular is Jason Rao, he trains up in Long Island

I think, right?

Opened up his own gym out there.

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Vanguard.

Yeah, Vanguard, he used to compete, but he would never be able to compete at the same level he would train at, so now he's just focused on mainly opening up a gym and teaching his students, but he was a guy that was extremely good in the training room, world class. I still think to this day, he's legitimately one of the best in the world, but just doesn't compete anymore.

Who wins in a fight, a lion or a bear?

Polo Bear?

This is for you, Reddit.

No, not a Polo, well, yes, it's a good question, you're all, yeah, Polo Bear is pretty impressive.

No, Grizzly Bear.

No, Grizzly Bear.

I think Grizzly Bear wins.

Well, who was the most threatening predator in Australia?

Can't rule.

Well, I mean, it's a tricky question here, because everyone's scared of the animals in Australia, but I mean, you get bitten by a snake, you get bitten by a spider, that's not that bad.

Bear, America, Bear will just hold you down to eat you.

That's a much more terrifying prospect for me.

Even sharks, sharks are going to be quick.

No one sees the shark coming, the shark's just going to bite you in half to get you.

Bear will take a bite and chew.

A bear just holds you down and eats you, so that's frightening for me.

Australia's a bunch of just weird shit that can kill you.

Did you see Cocaine Bear, the movie that's coming out?

I saw the trailer.

It looks good.

Yeah.

Yeah.

So there's not every bear.

There's like black bulls and there's black bulls, there's bears and there's bears.

So I think that's what they often don't talk about.

Everybody puts lions and bears in the same category.

I think there's just some weak bears.

A lion would kill a black bear, I think.

Not every black.

Again, I'm trying to tell you, there's difference.

Like Grizzly and Polo Bear are betting on those.

Yeah.

Well, I think Grizzlies have the size, but actually every video I've seen of Grizzlies, they tie out within like 20 seconds.

They get bored.

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That's the gas thing?

Yeah, that's the gas thing.

That's the Nicky Ryan gas thing right there.

Yeah.

That's all they got.

Dream old.

And they try to just take a breather.

Like there's these crazy fights between bears and they last like 20 seconds.

I heard this story about a Russian family was attacked by a bear in Russia and killed the dad and it took so long to eat the daughter, she made three phone calls to her mom while I was eating her.

And the first cook, the one thought she was pranking her.

That's crazy.

That's way scarier than what we've got there.

Yeah, that's terrifying.

Give me a snake bite any day.

Yeah.

You know what?

Let me change the question is like if you had to fight a bear or a lion, how would you try to defeat it?

Do you think you have a chance at all?

Well, I think I'd attack a lion a little bit differently than I attack a bear.

Will be the difference.

Okay.

Well, I've seen this video where lions are eating and you have three like skinny guys walk up behind them and kind of scare the cat off of their food.

I think maybe I produce some props, scare the lion away, right?

But if I have to fight it, if I have to fight it straight on, I mean, the thing is that you can, even if you take the back, like you can't like bite it or choke it, the main is too big to lock your hands around, you know?

Are you sure about that?

It's just hair.

Yeah.

It's thick hair.

It's like, it's like matted hair.

Right?

I don't know.

So I think.

You think you can back a draw on a lion?

Maintain.

Yeah.

Yeah.

But getting there, getting there, I think I fake how I go low, right?

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Makeup thing.

I'm going for the foot or something, a little paw sweep and I take the bear.

What about, what about a bear?

I feel like they're easier.

That might be easier to take, to hold back control.

Yeah.

Maybe the thing is if the bear falls on its back, it's just going to crush it.

So, so big, substantially bigger than a lion, right?

Like a full gun.

And they're also like terrifyingly like loud with their roars and stuff.

Yeah.

I think, I think so.

First of all, if I saw Grizzly, I'm like, all right, he's going to attack me.

I try to yell a little bit louder than them.

Maybe the term a little bit, like give them a, you know, and then yeah, for sure, I try to get behind it.

I'll probably go like something weird, maybe like pull the eyes out or something, you know?

For sure.

I mean, I'm going for the vital organs, you know, I'm like play dead, play dead and then

I will check it.

There's no, there's no pride in that.

Wow.

Pride even matters.

See the ego, the same advice you gave, you got to put the ego aside with a bear.

Even then, even then, would you, how would you fight a bear or a lion?

Just play dead?

Like that.

Like, could you beat a kangaroo?

I was talking about that joke.

A kangaroo.

Yeah.

Kangaroo?

I'd beat the shit out of a kangaroo.

You second?

Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah.

I mean, are we boxing gloves?

We just like...

How would a kangaroo attack a human?

Try to kick them with the claws.

Knock them down and then they choke them.

Stand on that tail.

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The kangaroos do?

They choke each other.

Yeah.

They don't choke each other.

You don't believe me?

You want to watch a video?

They choke each other out.

I've seen this, yeah.

Yeah.

That's real?

Yeah.

Yeah.

With which?

They knock them and just grip like this and hold them.

What's the grip?

With just the gavel?

That's like a little pause.

How are they gripping?

I promise you.

I'm not lying to you.

I'm pretty sure I've seen them.

They also do strange shit.

Like, if there's a predator around, they'll wait in a pool of water and then if it comes to a tiger, they drown it.

They're pretty smart.

Okay.

Speaking of which, what's the most effective martial art for winning a street fight?

You talked about rulesets and streets.

I think you've talked about being a street...

Have you ever been in a street fight?

Yeah, just one.

Yeah.

Nothing special.

Nothing crazy.

Hey.

Yeah.

You don't talk about that time.

Like, for self-defense purposes, who will be a strategy on the street?

What's advice?

I feel like whoever wins the street fights, whoever's willing to take it the furthest, the fastest.

You know what I mean?

If you're thinking you're going to box and he's biting you, bugging your eyes, that guy's going to win.



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He wants them all.

You know what I mean?

That's why the crackheads fight.

They go for the kill straight away, you know?

That's why I feel like it's more about who's willing to do the most that's going to win that fight.

Fastest.

The most fastest.

Who's got the least to lose, you know?

Okay.

We could also define winning differently, because you could also run away.

But in terms of technique-wise, wrestling, Judo...

I think if it's a one-on-one, I'd go wrestler wins, but if it's like a, you know, it's like a multiple people, you got to go Muay Thai, stay on your feet, can't go down to the ground if it's more than one person.

Yeah, big double leg maybe.

Yeah, double leg, put him on the sleep on the impact, right?

Forehead to the ground.

Yeah, what's the goal here?

Is to win the fight and not go to prison?

I haven't thought of it through that way.

Yeah, certainly, yeah.

Yeah, not go, not to kill the person.

You got mutual combat here in Texas.

We're good.

Is that in Texas?

Mm-hmm.

Do you know what the paperwork for that looks like?

Do you have to actually sign something?

I hope I don't need to find out.

I did hear a story where guys were on 6th Street and they looked at a cop, they were like mutual combat, mutual combat, and just got like the cops to say yes and just duke it out.

It could be false though.

That sounds crazy.

I'm just saying.

I kind of admire that, but I've also been playing Red Dead Redemption recently, so I've internalized the cowboy a little too much just to return to gym stuff.

Because it's a business, because you're running a business, there's money involved, but you're also friends, but you're also training partners.

Is there a tension that money creates that can threaten to destroy friendships?

That's something I always worry about with money.

I try not to go do any kind of business with friends or family.

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I think if we're all very clear and honest and open at the start, it makes it much easier. I think people have issues when things are written in fine print and nobody knows the exact answers.

And a lot of jujitsu guys can't read.

That makes it challenging.

We're learning that today.

Yeah.

No.

It's definitely complicated though.

Yeah.

I mean, it's not always obvious how to be transparent and stuff about everything.

Have you felt that tension?

Because in jujitsu world, money's not really unlimited.

Just running a school.

What's that like?

Because it's the first time you're running a school, running a gym.

Yeah.

I mean, it's just constantly updating people about what's going on, what your expectations are.

You know what I mean?

We've had some problems with coaches who I feel like think the pie is bigger than it is.

You know what I mean?

They feel like maybe we're getting rich out of this and they're missing out on things.

So it's like even amongst managing staff, that can be challenging too.

So yeah, I mean, it's a constant work in progress to make, not only to make sure everyone's happy, but to make sure they're comfortable enough to reach out and tell you they're unhappy.

But I feel like those challenges are common amongst any small business.

Still it sucks.

Just to mention, I'm clueless to this, but I'm just not learning this.

Somebody I met and talked to and I really like is Isaac, and he just learned.

Because you're also active on Reddit.

What's your name on Reddit?

Oh, John Belushi.

John Belushi's mom.

As undercover as possible, you know?

Oh, it's not you.

It's actually John Belushi's mom, right?

So I've done my research, I guess.

And I guess you guys had a falling out and have split.

I just want to say that, I don't know, the few interactions I've had with him, he's a beautiful human being.

So that just shows to me.

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Visually, maybe not internally.

And sexually.

Just the experience.

No.

He's just a kind person.

I don't know.

I liked him a lot.

Like to me, in a business setting, yeah, tensions are created and it sucks.

I don't know.

I mean, I suppose money, all the stuff that happened in the jungle aside, probably money had a role to play to create extra tension.

Money and egos about like who is the leader, who is not the leader.

It's tough.

It's tough to manage that kind of stuff.

I've seen it happen with jujitsu schools a lot.

I don't know exactly what.

Because it's like, there is also a hierarchy inside grappling jujitsu schools, like people that are better or not.

There's literally ranks, Black Belt and Brown Belt.

There's like competitors that are better.

I mean, it's a weird dynamic in which to operate.

Because usually, there's more politeness and humanity layered into the way a company works. But here, there's just a bunch of, I mean, it's like violence laid on display plus money.

It's crazy.

Is there something you could say to that, like how you try to minimize or something you want to comment on, Isaac?

Yeah.

I mean, it was unfortunate situation, but it just didn't work out.

It's going to be personality clashes.

Some people...

I can't imagine anyone having a personality clash with you.

With me?

Yeah.

It's hard to imagine.

Yeah.

Surprising.

You know, I mean, I didn't even know what to say on that.

I don't want to touch on it too much.

But obviously, his expectations about his role in the gym, obviously different from ours, led to some personality clashes that was sort of unresolved.

Well, you know, some things happen that can't be resolved.

He can't fix those things.

Yeah.

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You know?

Obviously, a lesson, I hope for both of us, definitely a lesson for me from a management role to try to address these things sooner.

But also, sometimes I came up in a different time where there was no money, no opportunities.

I had to pave that way totally for myself, especially coming from Australia.

Like being a professional athlete introduced it was not, I think, so I had to pave a lot of opportunities for myself.

And I feel like sometimes, I don't know what the right word is, sometimes people don't appreciate some of the ways you help them.

And they just think, feel like almost they deserve or are entitled to certain things.

And that is very difficult to manage.

But I think, again, like we both see the situation different.

I do hope he finds a better, a more comfortable place to train.

But yeah, obviously, I've known him for a long time, sort of like a brotherly relationship.

So that's going to really make personal problems a lot worse when you're that close to someone, you know?

I just hated that, like, I've seen in jujitsu especially, but in other places where like close friendships were destroyed because of like gym stuff, like people running gyms.

And just as a person who is, in this case, just a fan.

But in general, just like a student, it's like sucks.

But again, in my position, sometimes I wonder if there really was a friendship or mere opportunity.

I have to be careful about it with some people in the sport.

Is it a sincere relationship or like, I mean, it's difficult for me to tell or am I a means to an end?

Sure.

But I think it's actually a trade off because I think a lot of close friendships would have, like even relationships would have, like when tested, like can break if they're not properly communicated.

Like some of it could be just misunderstanding of like for a long period of time.

It's not explained through just like a lack of integrity.

It's just like you have to like talk through that shit, like just be honest with each other.

Take some MDMA and really get down to it.

You have to solve everything.

You've already eaten from this conversation.

I've actually haven't done MDMA yet.

People say that that's something I would enjoy a lot because my brain is, I think, natural on MDMA.

I'd recommend it for sure.

For sure.

All right.

Is that what you do with Gabby and Altay?

Okay.

Nevermind.

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She drugs me.

In general, why does there seem to always seem to be drama in the Jiu Jitsu world?

Like outside of, outside of what's going on here?

Or is that just?

It's universal to anything.

Drama is everywhere.

And then drama rises to the surface.

Drama makes the money.

Yeah.

I wish there was a little bit less.

You have a bunch of, like we mentioned some of them, you have a bunch of instructionals out.

What are some interesting things that you're looking forward to like exploring in terms of teaching?

So just stand up as your most recent one, right?

Yeah.

You also have one called Power Bottom, an inclusive modern approach to the guard.

Yeah.

What are some other, what are some other ones?

False Reap allegations.

False Reap allegations.

Yeah.

By the way, people talk about Power Bottom, again, hilarious title, but they say it's a really good instructional unlike the guard.

Yeah.

I try to, I try to at least be innovative, you know, like everyone else, I feel like ripping off John and Gordon, putting some sort of slant on that.

So I'm trying to take sort of a different approach.

I think you can actively influence the sport with what you release because people are going to try to emulate that.

So I think that's those type of instructionals just stand up Power Bottom, like approaching the sport differently.

I think definitely has a positive impact on the, how people play the game.

Yeah.

Are you working on something now?

Probably a fundamentals course just because we're bringing out, we've got the Y-Bell program coming in.

So I'm trying to develop a fundamentals course along the line of the constraint based learning stuff we were talking about today, like a way to approach learning as a beginner to sort of speed up the process a bit and not make it as so technique dense, at least have it a bit more fun.

And focusing in on just like examples of problems to solve.

Exactly.

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Yeah.

Approaching judizu learning that way.

Like, I mean, kids learn quick through games.

I think adults are capable of that to a certain extent as well.

You're releasing that instructional on pre-match preparation.

Yes.

What, what are the stuff?

Do you have a thing on a body, on body lock pass?

Yeah.

Do you have a body lock or body lock DVD or instructional, yeah, the pre-match ritual coming out.

I also have, I'm filming how to build athleticism for grappling, just really trying to capture different angles, kind of like the same, you know, what Craig's doing, trying not to do the same thing that everybody else does, you know.

There's a ton of wrestling, ton of jujitsu instructional, so.

And the steroid results are coming in.

Oh, yeah, yeah.

More plates, more dates, you know, there, that runs that, hit me up for a blood panel test, like an imprompting, and I did it a few days ago, and I believe the results will come out shortly.

Oh, yeah.

I, do you know the results?

What are you betting on, Lex?

We think, it's hard, it's hard to believe.

Yeah, it's, it's, yeah, it's very, very impressive.

You're putting me in awkward position here.

Do you think you'll face Gordon soon?

I'm open to it.

I don't know, I don't know how soon, maybe in the next six months, I could see me facing him before ADCC Worlds.

I think that's a great rivalry.

I think it's a really interesting one.

It's fun for me.

Is there any chance that the, the two, the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany get back together, that DDS under whatever name gets back together?

No, absolutely not.

Really unlikely.

I mean, we kind of did this to, you know, to back up Nikki Ryan, and we're sticking with our guy.

So what, what do you think?

Yeah, I think there's just too many personality conflicts for it to, to really ever work again.

Do you think there will always be war in the world?

War?

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Yeah.

Oh yeah, I think from the, from the beginning of time, it's, it's been, you know, some kind of war, some kind of battle.

Controversy, it's what helps people evolve.

Until AI, super intelligent AI, becomes way more powerful than humans and humbles all of us with its power before it destroys us.

Until it runs out of batteries.

It has a screw.

It's unplugged.

I can add that.

That's awesome.

I'm really fortunate to be able to hang out with you, to train with you, and thank you so much for talking today.

All right.

That's the best ending.

Thanks for listening to this conversation with Craig Jones, Nikki Rod and Nikki Ryan.

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And now let me leave you with some words for Miyamoto Masashi.

You must understand that there's more than one path to the top of the mountain.

Thank you for listening and hope to see you next time.