

All right.

Quick break to tell you about another podcast that we're interested in right now.

HubSpot just launched a Shark Tank rewatch podcast called Another Bite.

Every week, the hosts relive the latest and greatest pitches from Shark Tank, from Squatty Potty to the Mench on a Bench to Ring Doorbell.

And they break down why these pitches were winners or losers.

And each company's go-to-market strategy, branding, pricing, valuation, everything.

Basically all the things you want to know about how to survive the tank and scale your company on your own.

If you want to give it a listen, you can find Another Bite on whatever podcast app you listen to, like Apple or Spotify or whatever you're using right now.

All right.

Back to the show.

Why does everyone hate on getting rich quick?

Get rich quick schemes are the best.

I want to get rich quick.

I don't want to get rich slow.

I feel like I can rule the world.

I know I could be what I want to.

I put my all in it like no days off.

On a road, let's travel never looking back.

It's actually colder here than the Arctic Circle.

Why do you live there?

Well, I mostly live in Miami, IRS, if you're listening to this.

But I'm sometimes in a mountain town in the middle of nowhere.

Sam, I saw you posted today that you've got about 20 acres in Texas, but I'm staring out at 95 acres of Arctic winter land right now.

Is that cool?

Or no?

I mean, I love it out here.

I'm from here, so for me, it's slow living.

It's nice.

Yeah, I love it.

Is that why you look like a pilot right now in the cockpit or what's going on here?

I mean, Sahil makes Sahil blue, my co-host on the Where It Happens pod.

We do it together, and he always makes fun of this, but I'm a gamer, so I'm not afraid to admit it.

Be who you are, man.

Be who you are.

Greg, so you're here because I don't even know why.

We weren't even, I don't even know what we were saying.

We were talking about the Will Smith thing.

You had some hot takes.

Sam had some hot takes.

[Transcript] My First Million / 5 Big Ideas for a Business with Greg Isenberg

How can we start with anything else but the bitch slap of the century, Will Smith, bitch slaps Chris Rock for making fun of his wife.

I think we have a different opinion on each one of these things.

Sam, give me your first Where It Happened.

How did you hear about it?

What was your first take?

I was laying in bed and I hear Sarah goes, oh my gosh, you've got to come down and watch this.

This is crazy.

And I saw it and here's the thing.

Are you the type, by the way, do you just go or do you ask?

What is it?

No, I go right away.

I can tell.

All right.

That's a good guy right there.

So here's the thing.

Listen, I tweeted about this right away and people were like, well, what would you do?

The truth is, maybe the same thing, I maybe would do the same thing, but that's wrong.

And if I would have ran up there and bitch slapped Chris Rock, I would have been tackled and taken away and he should too.

That's what should have happened.

I wanted to see him tackled and taken away or at least not allowed to be on stage for five minutes to an accepted award.

That is ridiculous to me.

I could not believe that happened.

Greg, give me yours.

Where were you?

What was your initial reaction?

So my girlfriend texts me and she's like, you're not going to believe what just happened.

Will Smith just slapped Chris Rock.

And then she's like, wait, I don't know if it was a slap, maybe it was a punch.

And so there was this confusion.

There was this like five minute confusion where people didn't know what it was.

So first place I go to is on Twitter.

I'm on Twitter and I looked at the video and I was like, I couldn't believe it was happening.

It was like, you remember when Janet Jackson with the whole Super Bowl thing?

Yeah.

I feel like I remember where I was with 9-11.

I remember what happens when the Janet Jackson boob incident of the Super Bowl.

And like OJ and then Will Smith.

Yeah, now Will Smith.

So I wasn't happy with the videos that were coming out, but I found the Japanese and Australian videos.

Did you guys see those?

For sure.

The uncensored, uncut versions.

Yeah.

Yeah.

And that one where you got a better view of the punch.

You know, I needed a better view.

It was a slap though.

I don't know how good your view was.

It was a slap.

It was.

Yeah, okay.

It was a slap.

I would bug me about the whole thing and I'm glad you invited me to talk about Will Smith because, you know, that's why I'm here is I think that, okay, obviously it was a douchey thing of Will Smith to do, but I was unimpressed with how Chris Rock wasn't able to make a joke of the whole thing and he could have made comedic history and he didn't and I expected more from him.

Wow.

Disappointed with Chris Rock.

That is not the take.

I thought it was going to come.

That's why we bring Greg on for the, the, when everybody zigs, you zag with the new take.

Disappointed with Chris Rock.

What?

Dude, Chris Rock.

Crazy impressive.

He took it, man.

He took it.

He took it.

He did tear up.

He didn't like, when you get punched in the face sometimes, you're not like crying, but your eyes water.

None of that happened.

He kept smiling and he was a pro, Sam.

You know what happens if you get hit in the side of the head, what's the first thing that you feel right here?

Your ears hurt and you want to like grab your face.

Yeah.

You hear this ringing buzz and like the sound and you hear this just giant ringing and then you got to touch your face.

He didn't touch his face.

So that, you got to give him respect for the chin that he showed.

Yeah.

The round was, that was a 10, nine Chris Rock round.

But then Greg's right actually, he had, I mean, the world was his oyster with all the potential jokes that he could have gone with the one-liners.

Like I can't believe, I can't believe they had you in Ali or something like that.

Yeah, exactly.

You know, I don't even know what the joke should have been.

You know, Greg, what, what, what, what direction would you have gone with the joke?

I would have said, and the winner to the biggest bitch slap award 2022 goes to William Smith.

Yeah, exactly.

I could have given him the Oscar for bitch slap for the year.

Wait, but what was your take though?

Okay, so I'm, I'm outside of a cold stone, just gave my daughter some ice cream.

We're trying to get back to the car.

I don't know if you know how it is getting kids in the car is like, that's the battle every day.

That's, that's the battle.

In fact, there's a great Louis CK joke where he's like the greatest moment of any father's day is the like 30 seconds from when you close the door and you have them in the car seat and you walk around the car back to the driver's car seat.

It's like the 30 seconds of peace that you have in that moment.

That's everything.

So I'm trying to get in the car and my wife has stopped.

She's stunned.

She's doing the like, oh my God face looking at her phone almost to, there was like a cartoon character and I was like, what, it can't like, whatever it is, it can't be, can't be much.

And then she was like, no, Will Smith just punched Chris Rock.

I was like, what?

And so then I watched the video.

She made me pull over.

We were driving.

I pulled over to watch the Japanese uncensored version because we just had to like debrief it in the moment.

And I was team will Smith.

I thought it was awesome, frankly.

The only part that I thought was not cool.

The only part I thought was not cool was that when they first said the joke, he's laughing at the joke.

So bro, you can't laugh at the joke admit that it's funny.

And then basically two seconds later, build up this rage and then pretend it was so not cool when it was, you were laughing like we caught you on camera laughing for two seconds before that.

You don't think that he should have any consequences?

No, no, I didn't say that.

He should have consequences.

Sure.

Sure.

Lock them up.

Throw away the key.

Whatever you got to do.

No, no.

Jail times.

I don't even think I'm not.

I don't even watch.

I don't want handcuffs.

I don't want jail.

Just like a, hey, Will, you can't hit someone.

You've got to leave.

Like that would have been that would have been sufficient.

Well, the thing they showed in the, you know, the Taiwanese cut, they had the commercial break.

I don't know if you guys saw this.

Somebody comes running up to him.

I think, oh, wow, they're going to be like, dude, what the fuck when it gets you out of here?

Sorry.

It's his publicist.

He's literally giving him notes on how to play this.

And so when he goes up for his speech, what do you know?

The first line he says is, you know, Richard Williams was a fierce like protector of his family.

That's the publicist handing him the feeding him the line of how are you going to spin this to your advantage?

Who hates a guy who protects his family?

And guess what?

I think it worked.

I watched his speech.

I think he's losing it.

So in a way, I feel sorry for him.

I definitely feel a little sorry.

He looked a little off, right?

He looked a little off.

He looked like he's kind of, he's getting a little, little something's going on.

And I hope he, I hope he works through it and gets back.

And also there, dude, him and his wife, man, that's some weird stuff.

Like what's going on?

Like, did you see that thing called red table that her show where she just like did a whole show with him on there, talking about how she cheated on him and everything like that.

And then she went to an award show.
But I watch everything that's trashy like that.
So yeah, I saw it.
I saw it twice.
And I feel like that's weird to me a little bit.
So there's like a, this dynamic is, was weird.
He's got a lot of pressure on him.
I think he just kind of snapped.
I think he's working through some stuff, but dude, but so I feel a little sad for him.
Everybody knows a couple that's like this where they're like kind of toxic.
They're like, toxically in love with each other.
It's like they got some weird Bonnie and Clyde shit where they're like, they kind of like, they like make the wrong decisions.
Sometimes they even like, you know, hurt each other's feelings.
But then they're like, if anybody else ever tries to encroach, they like will murder for them.
And it's like, bro, where's the balance here?
It's like us against the world.
They love this, like, there's these us against the world couples and they're definitely one of them.
Yeah.
It was messed up.
Do you want to talk about, uh, Alex Hermazi, Hermazi, Mosey?
Yeah.
What did you do?
You were like, bro, I'm going deep on Alex Hermazi.
I was like, we are, would have been nice to do before we had him on the pod.
You do it like 10 episodes later.
I had a call with him today.
Great.
I don't know who is that.
All right.
Actually, I feel bad.
I consider him a friend, but I don't, I don't know if it's pronounced Mosey or Mosey.
Alex Hermosey.
Is it?
No, Mosey.
Alex Hermazi.
It's one of those things where it's like two, like you've known him for a decade.
Yeah.
And it's like, you can't ask him now.
No, you got to be like, ah, I just call him Mose.
I just go by Mose.
Cause I don't know.

Dude, one of my best friend's name is Sieve.

I don't even know how to pronounce his last name.

So, and I've been best friends with him for 10 years.

He's in my wedding.

Um, so anyway, this guy, Alex, so basically he had this company called Jim Launch.

And it was really interesting because some people, and I wouldn't call myself totally on that side, but I understand it is that it appeared a little scammy, but actually

I don't think it's scammy at all anymore.

He ended up.

You got to describe the guy's look first.

So he's got, he looks like a straight version of the construction worker in the village, the village people, I mean, he looks like a construction worker.

So he wears flannel.

He's got this beautiful thick mustache, long, awesome hair, like a, like a Persian Samson.

And he is just yoked.

He's jacked.

He's huge.

And he's like good looking.

And he just, he's like, looks like Arnold Schwarzenegger a little bit.

And he created this business called Jim Launch.

And basically you would pay either \$4,000 for one thing or \$20,000 for another thing.

And it was for people who owned small gyms, whether that's a CrossFit gym or a personal training gym.

And he would basically teach you how to make your gym better because he owned gyms.

And he would promise you something like you'll gain at least \$75,000 in new revenue, but for a lot of people he averaged that they would improve by \$200,000 in revenue.

But the business model that he had was crazy and the results were even crazier.

So the business was, by the time the business was four years old, he bootstrapped it and had paid himself \$45,000,000 in dividends.

And then on the fifth year, I believe he sold it and he netted something like 50 or \$60,000,000.

And so he was like, yeah, I paid myself \$45,000,000, so I had about \$25,000,000 just in cash in the bank.

Then we sold and I netted like another 50.

And that story alone is crazy.

Is that right, Sean?

I don't know if those exact numbers are right, but it sounds like you talked to him, so let's go with that.

I don't really know.

But yeah, you got the product right, kind of the hook, or what's interesting is most gym memberships are like, pay \$20 a month and you get into a membership.

And it's hard to sell people that.

And what he was ended up doing was he was like, all right, well, people don't want a membership.

What do they really want?

They want to lose weight.

They want to lose weight in six weeks or less.

They want to lose weight so they look good on the beach.

All right, so I'm going to basically sell you a program that's going to make you look good on the beach in six weeks.

And he like, he got good at selling for his own gym where he's like, oh, I can get people to pay like three grand upfront for like a fitness training package with nutrition meal plans and stuff like that.

And then someone pointed out to him, I think like Russell Brunson or whatever, the Click Fundles guy pointed out to him like, hey, dude, instead of just opening gyms and doing this yourself, you should just teach other gym owners how to do this.

Like that's a better product is helping a gym like add 100 grand in revenue in 30 days is a better product than like trying to open your own gym and use that method.

So then he started doing that and then that's kind of how he went.

Now we own something called acquisitions.com where he'll like, buy your business if you're doing, I don't know, \$5 million or more revenue or something like that.

Well, so he's buying course businesses and like applying his methodology and so, but basically what he sold was, and this is where things got, I went deep on and I was like, how did this work?

This is crazy.

So he basically sold not a franchise, but like an operating system.

And so he used HubSpot as his backend and he would get people to sign up to these ads that he was running and you do an onboarding and you pay 20 grand, you get four months and then after the end of four months, you could decide to stay in part of the group and it's 45 grand a year, but you get this after you sign up, you get this checklist of things that you have to do.

So it's like, raise your price to this sign up for this software, use these emails, this shrimp campaign, get them, get this many people to sign up by doing X, Y and Z. Here's the ad campaign that you can just copy and paste and already use.

And then he had a Facebook group where all the members could talk and that was it. That was the business.

It was super simple and it was doing tens of millions a year in revenue and also tens of millions in profit.

And I thought this was crazy fascinating and I wanted to ask you guys, what other, he told me a little bit, but what other niches would you use this for?

And also, does this model leave an interest to you?

It seems pretty amazing to me.

I've never heard of it.

I think that if you did this for agencies, like digital agencies, that this is a no-brainer.

So, you know, we're, I run an agency called Late Checkout, we're about 50 people.

So we're starting to really hit some scale and as you say your revenue, I mean, I don't want to say my revenue, but we have 50 people so you can do some of the math yourself.

I will say that, yeah, we work with some of the biggest brands in the world and it's very lonely to be like the CEO of an agency.

Like I don't know if I'm overcharging or undercharging.

I don't know if I'm, you know, you know, doing the right thing.

Should I be doing more marketing, less marketing?

So like would I pay two, five, 10 grand a month to, for like something like this?

Like probably if the ROI is there.

All right, a quick message from our sponsor.

You know, I was thinking about the shortest day of the year earlier.

And while we technically have the same amount of time as every other day of the year, the lack of daylight makes it feel so much shorter, which is exactly the same kind of feeling as working with disconnected tools.

Our workday is the same length as always.

But before you know it, we spent three hours just fixing something that was supposed to be automated.

Thankfully HubSpot's all-in-one CRM platform can serve as a single source of truth for managing your customer relationships across marketing, sales, service operations with multiple hubs and over a thousand integrations and an easy-to-use interface, HubSpot lets you spend less time managing your software and more time connecting with your customers. Learn how HubSpot can help you grow your business at HubSpot.com.

Yeah, it's basically a sales machine, right?

So what he said was, if you have a business and you have whatever number of customers you have, if I could get you more customers, that's clearly of value to you.

And I think he basically tried to capture 10% to 20% of the value that he was giving.

So if I'm going to generate \$100,000 in new incremental sales for you, how do I capture 10% to 20,000?

And I'm taking the risk.

If I don't do that, then I don't earn anything.

I think that's kind of how he started it at least.

And so agency is a perfect one like that because every client you sign is cash in the bank.

And typically the agency might be good at one thing, but not necessarily good at going and getting new clients.

So you just read this guy's book, Sean, Alex's book.

I'm reading it right now.

What do you think about it?

The book is good.

The book is good.

It's basically a, it's like a marketing book, right?

So it's essentially a marketing book.

He does a good job of breaking things down and being simple.

It's not altogether new information, but who gives a shit?

It's good information, presented well.

And if you're running a business right now, it'll help you.

Now the thing I think that he over indexes on is like, he uses like the gym launch example really hard.

So it's like, yeah, this, this is clearly, he talks about basically he says, you, the

secret to sales is make somebody an offer so good, they'd be stupid to refuse you.

Okay.

How do you do that?

It's like, how do you get them to perceive that there's a lot of value and that they're going to get it in a short amount of time with a, with a, with not a lot of cost and that it's highly likely to happen.

And so his model was like, Hey, Jim owner, I on, I've worked with a hundred gyms.

On average, I could bring them each a hundred thousand and new, new sales.

I can do that for you in 30 days.

And if I don't do it, I don't, if I don't hit that mark, I don't get paid.

How's that?

And so yeah, that is what he calls a grand slam offer because it's going to work.

And if you, if you have a grand slam offer, you can win a lot of business.

You can grow very fast, but I don't think that works in a whole bunch of other product categories.

It works in the like agency consulting world, which is where he was services, I think it works in services.

All services.

You know, if I'm selling shoes online, it's very hard to create a grand slam offer for selling shoes because, uh, you know, I can't tell you how much more money this is going to make you.

Right.

It's already the offer is a lot.

I'm telling you, it looks cool, you know, that people might like your shoes.

That's just fundamentally less compelling.

So I just think it's like really, really good for a service business, especially a service business that's in the business of helping other people make money.

But like if, like for example, I wanted to send it to my accountant and be like, Hey, you're charging me like five grand or six grand a year.

You should really be charging 50 grand.

And if you did this method, I think you would have, you know, like 10 times more clients and make 10 times more money off them.

If you presented your stuff this way, because you're an accountant, you're saving people money on taxes and you could basically offer a no brainer offer like this and take more value and grow your business faster if you did it this way.

But it doesn't work for everything is kind of the takeaway.

I think the, I think the, the pitch is, is taking a consultancy from a consultancy and turning it into selling luxury.

Like that's the opportunity for a lot of these people, right?

Like I think when you look at McKinsey, McKinsey isn't a consultancy to me, McKinsey is selling like a luxury multimillion dollar contracts like that.

You're buying confidence when you're buying a luxury product.

Yeah, that's exactly right.

He talks about that pretty extensively in the book, but I got to say, so I am reading

this book and I have two kind of like, but two like my right hand man and my left hand man, I have, I've been and then I have this guy, Andre.

And I told him, I was like, guys, is this good stuff in this book that we should be using? And so I created like a little mini book club inside of our company to do this.

Have you guys ever done that?

Like, have you, have you basically, and I've been wanting to do this with podcasts as well. Sometimes I'll listen to a podcast.

That's like fucking amazing.

And I'm, what I want to do is just stop listening to it myself and be like, Hey guys, we're going to do a meeting, but the meeting is us listening to this podcast and every time they say something good, I'm going to pause and we're going to talk about it.

And it might take us like six hours to get through this one hour podcast, but I'm telling you it's going to be, we're going to actually apply the thing versus just, I share the link you read it.

I read it.

We each kind of move on with our day and we're busy.

Have you guys ever done anything like this to like get more juice out of the fruit?

I haven't.

I haven't.

I've done a book club that I feel like book club is like, you know, a lot of people go in the gym.

It's like you start going to the gym and then you kind of like stop like it's really hard to create a really well designed book club that keeps people engaged.

Yeah.

We did book club.

It was the same thing.

No one fucking finished the book.

So I actually think if we all just listen to a podcast together, it might be a lot easier.

It's a lot easier.

It's like when you go to school and the teacher brings in the TV, that's like how I would feel going to this meeting.

I'd be like, Oh hell yeah.

We're rolling in the TV magic school bus, baby.

The yeah, at Amazon, they do this too, where like people write all kinds of docs inside companies like memos, plans, whatever.

And then it's like, Hey, did you read my plan?

And then you're like, Oh yeah, either I kind of did or I didn't.

Very rarely is it like I read it.

I remember it.

I took notes on it and I'm ready to take action from it.

And so at Amazon, they basically hack that process, which is the rule is you have to write if you're going to make a plan, if you're going to try to do anything, you have to write your memo, but the memo gets read in the meeting itself.

So every meeting, if it's an hour, the first 10 to 20 minutes are silent reading.

[Transcript] My First Million / 5 Big Ideas for a Business with Greg Isenberg

Everybody reads it together at the same time.

And there's zero expectation for you to ever read something beforehand or afterwards.

Was that a factor for you?

Oh yeah.

It was, it was huge.

Like it also, while you're reading, you're, you know, you're taking notes because you know right after this reading period ends in 20 minutes, like it's a bit like school.

It's like, I'm going to have to have something to say, right?

Like I need to have, I need to be bringing something to the table from this.

And so, um, yeah, that was huge.

And I think, I think way more companies should do that.

It was like one of the few big company things that I was like, this is a process that is so much better than what I used to do at, at, at our startup.

Yeah.

Well, I think that podcast idea that you just had is actually fantastic.

Cool.

All right.

We lost Greg for a second, but let's, let's keep going.

Um, did you have anything more on Hermazi or you wanted it to go on?

No, that's it.

What do you got?

I was thinking about doing a, like a, kind of like a summary slash lessons learned because

I have a whole bunch of like screenshots and highlights from the book.

I might do a separate pod.

That's just that.

If you want to do that.

I'm down.

I just, I just, I just bought the book.

I've been watching a lot of his YouTube videos.

There's just something about this person.

He's very interesting to me.

He's very interesting.

He's so transparent to the point where it's weird almost like, it's like, I, I like, he reveals so much.

I don't believe you.

Uh, no, I believe him.

I believe him for sure, but he's revealing so much that I'm like, are you sure, man?

You want to be talking about this?

This is crazy.

It's just weird.

It's just weird.

Right?

I mean, he talks like, I don't think it's weird.

I think it's smart.

And that's why I say like, do I believe this?

It's not that I think he's lying about anything.

I think he's telling the truth.

It's that when somebody is that forthcoming, it's sort of like, well, what's in this for you?

And I think clearly it's, I'm trying to get you to trust me.

And so I'm going to be like, kind of like explicitly transparent about something because there's a, there's a motive behind that.

And I think that's okay.

Um, but I think a lot of people are like, wow, thanks dude for the favor.

It's like, there's no favors.

People do things because they have a motive.

They want to build their brand in a certain way.

They want to attract more, more readers or viewers or they're trying to build trust in a way so that they can get some advantage.

You know, that's okay.

I think that's a, it's a good thing.

I do it too.

I do it all the time.

Yeah.

Um, yeah, I've got, I've gotten to know him over the past few weeks.

I'm a fan, man.

I'm a fan of Alex's boat.

What do you got?

Uh, well, actually we should.

So Greg, I told you, bring three or four bullets.

I don't know if you had time to do that, but I have some, if you don't have any, but I'd like to use yours if you do, because you're here.

You're the guest of honor.

Yeah.

I mean, I always have a, a notes file with some ideas.

I can tell you, I'm not going to say they're great ideas, but let's, let's start with that.

And I'd love your feedback.

All right.

Let's do it.

Um, so once a restaurant, uh, two nights ago saw that a bunch of kids were playing these like picture like an Applebee's and picture a bunch of vending machines, um, like, you know, those games that you can play.

I'm thinking NFT vending machines.

So you have to pay like a hundred doge to get in.

You can win a board ape, um, instead of winning, you know, collectibles, you're winning digital assets.

Is there a business to be created around that?

[Transcript] My First Million / 5 Big Ideas for a Business with Greg Isenberg

You're talking about the thing where you would like the old way is, you know, you put your quarter in and there's a bunch of plastic balls.

You get one out and you got this little shitty toy and it's like, I think in Japan they call these the gotcha games.

Is that right?

Uh, like gotcha mechanic where you have this sort of variable reward.

You might win the good thing, but you almost never win the good thing.

And then you kind of keep wanting to open up these boxes and see what you get.

Exactly that.

But with doge and winning NFTs and NFTs inside Greg, do you own any NFTs or you on board with us or no?

Yeah.

I mean, I've got hundreds of NFTs.

That's crazy.

Yeah.

Hi.

I think the problem is doge.

I think not enough people own doge, um, you know, so I kind of feel like it's like you need to Apple pay to quickly like instantaneously buy doge and then use it, use it in the game basically.

Like you need some way for their phone to just buy the thing and then just keep swiping their phone.

Yeah.

I guess like what I'm particularly interested in here is like what are, you know, in real life experiences that you can create that connect with crypto.

Um, yeah, another version of this, by the way, because I don't need it at restaurants anymore.

I just deliver everything.

So it's like, um, you know, a QR code that comes with DoorDash that I just scan and I get to play the game on my phone, right?

Like why do they need to buy a screen when I carry a screen in my pocket?

So like really all you just need is a QR code to do this game.

You don't even have to build the, you don't even have to build the vending machine necessarily.

It's true.

It's true.

Um, all right.

I got another one.

So I, uh, moved out of my apartment December 15th.

It's now March 28th and my landlord hasn't returned my security deposit.

Is that in America or?

It's in Florida.

Yeah.

Miami.

Ooh.

There's a bunch of laws around that.

California.

Well, there's laws around it in Florida too, and I Googled it and there's a whole process you can go into it.

I'm sure it's probably not as intense as California, but you know, you have certain rights.

There's a whole process that you have to go and eventually you go to small claims court, et cetera, et cetera.

How much was it?

Uh, it's a few hundred dollars, but it's just like the pain to like go through it.

It's not really worth it.

My security deposit is \$5,700.

So what I really want to do is scare my landlord basically, right?

That's what I want to do.

So I want to, I need to get his attention.

That's what I really need to do.

So I Googled, um, you know, sending a lawyer letter.

I didn't want to call my lawyer because I was like at \$750 an hour or whatever.

It's going to cost like two grand for this lawyer letter.

So the idea is a \$99 lawyer letter on demand, go scare, go scare someone basically.

What do you think?

Have you, um, scary letter?

I love it.

So listen, we got to talk about this.

Sean, you know where, where I'm going to go with this, right?

Do not pay.

Go into petty court.

Oh, I like pay.

Do not pay.

But I'm going to go do not pay.

Great.

Have you not heard of do not pay?

Yeah.

So is, is do not pay that service that like, if you have a parking ticket, you like send it to them and they like, they deal with it and you get a percentage of it back or something like that.

They do a bunch of stuff, but that is one of the ways how they started.

How do you explain this company now, Sean, now that it's kind of, they have so many features.

Yeah.

I think it started basically it's just trying to save you money from shit that you shouldn't have to pay for.

You don't want to pay for it.

So it started with like subscriptions.

You're not using.

All right, cool.

Unsubscribe me from a bunch of subscriptions.

I'm not using.

And then it became, then they also added, you know, like go contest this parking ticket because like, I don't know, 20 or 30% of parking tickets are like filled out incorrectly.

You actually shouldn't have to pay.

And if we save you money, we will keep a little bit, but it's just, you do no work.

And you'll get, they just keep a portion of the savings that they get, that they earn for you.

And then they expanded into like 83 B election, like, Hey, we'll do that for you for your startup.

So they're just like trying to do, they're basically just trying to eliminate the busy paperwork that nobody wants to do.

And they're like, we'll just take care of that shit for you.

How would that feel?

And a bunch of like people like us who are like millennials who are like, I just don't know how to do it.

I don't want to do it.

I don't like printing things or going to the post office and like doing all this shit.

Yeah.

Please take care of this for me.

So it's a time saver company.

That's how I think about it.

And Greg, I had a landlord, I had a \$16,000 deposit.

This was for our office when COVID, our office lease just so happened to end right around when COVID was happening.

So we got really lucky and we just canceled it.

And this guy would not give me the 16 grand.

I found out, dude, I got crazy on him.

I found out where he lived and I showed up at his house and he wasn't there.

I found out where he worked and I showed up there and he wasn't there.

And I use do not pay to send him like a, like a letter.

And finally he got back to me and was like, Oh yeah, you know, just slipped my mind.

Like he was like, no big deal about it.

And I was like, dude, I've been hiding you for six weeks, man.

Where's this money?

And so they, they have that feature where you can just send a scary letter.

You send a scary letter and it worked.

And so we, I got my 16 grand, but legally you're supposed to get 16 grand plus interest, which I did not get.

And I, I thought about like fighting over this just out of principle because I love petty shit.

So I feel like the idea is really, you know, do not pay obviously is getting really big.

It's like the unbundling of do not pay and it's taking this idea and it's like, okay,

[Transcript] My First Million / 5 Big Ideas for a Business with Greg Isenberg

I'm going to run a bunch of Google ads against like getting security deposit back Florida, getting security deposit back California.

And I think there's a big business to be created here because then that's a, that's a good wedge to sort of expand a bunch of different services.

And I think there's the other version I think we once said, which was like, call my politician. There's all these things where it's like, ah, this bill could get passed.

That's bad for crypto holders.

Make sure you call your politician and let them know you don't want this.

And it's like, ah, I don't want to call my politician and like, what, what if they pick up?

What am I going to say?

You know, like, there's like, there's all kinds of problems with this idea of calling. Don't like calling.

What happens if they pick up, you know, I really want to go down that road.

But I would happily, you know, sort of tip, you know, 10 bucks to just have someone annoy the shit out of my politician about this issue that I care about.

Like if my donation funded like 18 annoying calls, like if there was just a website that I said, would you like to donate \$10 to the cause?

And that will fund 18 annoying phone calls from Sri Lanka to this politician.

I'd be like, fuck yeah, put me down for 20.

And so I think that's the other version of do not do not pay is like, go hassle for me.

That's awesome.

I'm on board with that.

Can you?

What else you got, Greg?

My other one, it relates to law actually a little bit.

So, you know, we've been and Sean, I know you're into crypto.

So I've been spending a lot of money on, you know, crypto accounting and crypto law firms.

And I think that there's an opportunity to create a Web three crypto accounting firm and a Web three crypto law firm.

But all you have to do is basically you find an existing law firm that understands securities law and you're like, Hey, you know, you, you're your shop of 10 lawyers and you're like, you know, you understand securities law.

Maybe there's some, you know, upleveling in terms of learning specifics about NFTs, etc.

I'm going to be the like marketing engine for you.

You know, use things like the milk road and use things like late checkout.

And I'm going to send you leads.

So the customer is happy because they're like, wow, this is like a Web three related, you know, law firm and I want to work with someone who's.

What does that mean?

I don't know what you're using.

You're using words that I don't have no idea what they mean.

What is a Web three related law for me?

Okay.

So let's just say you're creating an NFT project, but you want to make sure that you don't go to jail.

So let you don't do any SEC violations.

Do you feel comfortable calling up your regular lawyer who's might not even know what an NFT is?

Or would you specifically want to talk to a law firm that lives in Breeze Web three?

It depends if they have, um, what's like, for example, if I, what's the term, if I follow something my lawyer says and they're supposed to be the expert and I get in trouble, sometimes I can like blame them.

What's that called?

God, I can't remember that.

I can't remember.

But no, it's like, um, it's like, uh, it's like when you hire a C time, it's like, you know, it's like when you hire a C, if you hire a CPA and your CPA screws you like blatantly, sometimes you're not always, you can, you know, that goes, that you're taken to account.

Like, ah, dude, I thought he was doing it right and he's a CPA.

So like your CPA can actually get in trouble, not necessarily you.

So it depends if that lawyer has that.

But I don't know.

I'd rather just go to a legal for a lawyer that special, yeah, that specializes in this thing.

But I don't know why you'd call it a web three.

That's what he's describing.

But he said a Web three law firm.

Yeah.

Like they specialize and they, they know the laws around, they specialize in advising around this web three digital law firm.

Yeah.

Okay.

Yeah.

All this is, is like, I mean, this is a marketing challenge more than anything.

And, you know, one of the hardest problems about running a law firm is, you know, or an accounting firm is getting clients and, and we talked about this with agencies.

The same thing is true with, you know, law firms and accountancy firms.

I think, you know, I don't know the, like, I don't know the margins of some of these businesses, but I imagine they're quite big.

So I think there's something there.

So I considered doing this with my, before I did the milk road, I was like, all right, what do I want to do?

Like, I got this audience that's growing, right?

It's like Twitter's, Twitter's pretty big now.

So I got a quarter million followers, newsletters growing.

I could just like, you know, make no money off this.

That's fine.

How big was your newsletter?

I could put some ads in the newsletter.

That's, what's that?

How big was the newsletter?

It was like at 30, 40 K something at the time.

Oh, I can put something in there.

Oh, yeah, before milk road.

And, and I was like, I could teach a course.

So I did that.

I taught a course.

I was like, all right, that's cool.

It makes way more money than ads, but it's more effort.

And then I was like, you know, what's like the highest value business?

What's like the best fucking business?

And I was like, so I started making a list of like places where I spent a lot of money that I feel like they're just kind of like rinse and repeating the same stuff for me.

And so I narrowed it down to two, I'll give you the second best one was accounting.

And I was like, I could just start a bookkeeping firm for startups, entrepreneurs, just in my own portfolio.

If I invested in 45 companies last year, just within that, I bet I could get 14 clients of just companies that don't have a bookkeeper, because most companies don't have bookkeepers right off the bat.

You were considering starting a bookkeeping service.

That's like the worst idea thing I could do for you.

That's a horrible idea.

It's great.

Because I was just going to be the marketing front end.

I wasn't going to operate it.

I was just going to buy or hire like a good bookkeeper and be like, cool.

You're going to do the books and I'm just going to send you clients and you just close the clients and we split this 50, 50 or whatever.

And so that was one idea.

The better idea is insurance, because insurance is like the best business of all time.

And because for insurance, you don't even really do insurance, you just broker the insurance with another carrier basically.

And most businesses don't have, especially like e-commerce businesses, you need business insurance and you don't know, I didn't know exactly which insurance I needed, how much, how much coverage I wanted.

Most traditional insurance firms don't cover e-commerce, which is insane to me.

And so I was like, all right, well, I could just do that.

And so that was another one, which is startup slash e-commerce insurance was another one.

And I basically did the math and I was like, I could make so much more money doing that than if I ever did like ads in my newsletter.

If all I did, my ad was saying, hey, by the way, don't go to jail.

[Transcript] My First Million / 5 Big Ideas for a Business with Greg Isenberg

You should have a bookkeeper.

You know, like, hey, don't lose your business because somebody, you know, whatever chokes on the button.

What was your math for the insurance?

What was your math?

First of all, I think that's, I think you made 100% the right move doing what you did because those businesses do not fit your skillset or mine at all of like, insured, like, like being on top of things, like crazy amounts, sweating the details.

You're assuming we're going to run it.

I'm not going to run it.

I'm just going to find a good person.

You and I are going to run it.

I'm just going to send them leads.

But all right.

So what was your math behind it?

Oh, I don't know.

I have to pull up all the spreadsheets, but basically just with my existing audience size, I think that net it out where it's like, I could be easily clearing, you know, three to \$5 million a year in profit if I like kind of like hit all my marks.

Tell me more about this.

This is actually really a full capacity.

This is actually really interesting.

So what are we going to call it?

Like Sean churns.

What was the name?

It's going to be something.

I don't know.

The name was the last thing on my mind.

Okay.

So I even talked to the, I had this one lawyer, one accountant who I really love.

There's this like Ukrainian woman who is like this like amazing account.

She was the first accountant I talked to that felt like they work for me and not like as if they weren't just like a narc.

And so they were like, she was like, have you thought about this?

You know, like, does your business need a vehicle?

Because I think right now, just last week of the year, if you just bought a vehicle, we can actually like depreciate that and use that against your books here.

Like she was giving me ideas that were completely legal, but she wasn't just sitting there and saying, yeah, if you give me all your paperwork and your receipts, I'll, I'll file your taxes for you.

It was the first person who was saying, wow, you're paying a lot in taxes over here and over here.

Um, let me just make sure I'm, you know, saving you money.

And so that was the first person.

So I was going to basically talk to her and be like, Hey, should you do this?
Uh, like, do you want to do this?
Do you want to like leave?
Start your own firm?
I'm sure you're scared of all that.
But guess what?
Uh, you would just do the things you're really good at, which is doing people's, you know, like tax strategy and accounting and I will get you all the clients.
That was, you know, the core premise.
But of course I went down, I said I created a free crypto newsletter, uh, cause I just figured it'd be more fun.
Dude, I think these are great ideas, by the way.
I think you made the right decision, but these are actually, this is crazy interesting.
I wish you would have told me that you're a fucking genius idea that came out of that.
So, um, have you, I don't know if you've ever like onboarded, well, like you've probably done some onboarding with some, some software that you're trying to use or some company you're trying to use.
So for example, with this, with this bookkeeping company, right, the one I hired, I eventually hired for my e-commerce thing, they sent me this like super long checklist.
It was like, all right, um, great, excited to work with you.
Do these 54 things and then we'll get started.
Like that will be the start of your journey.
That will get you to the starting line.
It's like, go to Shopify, give us access to do that.
You need to go to view accounts, permissions, add us there.
Add us as a bookkeeper, blah, blah, blah.
Now go to QuickBooks.
Do the same thing.
Now go to Stripe.
Do the same thing.
Now go to Bank of America.
Do the same thing.
Like there was just all these fucking steps.
Then send us this, then send us this and it just felt, and it was all done in Excel, right?
So I discovered this story that basically takes that process and just wraps beautiful user experience around it.
And I saw it and I was like, this is so smart.
I invested it instantaneously, didn't have a meeting with the founder.
I was like, I totally buy it.
In fact, any word you say is only going to make me less bullish on this idea because I am already convinced this is one of the best ideas I've ever seen.
So it's called doc.
So it's doc.us.
I don't know if you guys have checked this out.

[Transcript] My First Million / 5 Big Ideas for a Business with Greg Isenberg

And Julian Shapiro sent this to me after I was seeing this problem and then coincidentally he sent me the same idea.

So here's how it works.

So basically, it just creates kind of like a notion space.

So the company who's trying to onboard you, they just create this thing that's like, it's like this is just a beautiful experience.

So it's like, hey, Sean, so glad to have you on board.

First three things we need to do are these three.

Click the checkbox when you're done with them.

So I'll know that you did it.

If you have any questions, just put it in the comment thing here or click this to watch our tutorial from our library that we have about how to do it.

And so it just turns that like back and forth email or like Excel spreadsheet, like janky thing into like workflow for a client and a service to like onboard each other.

And I was like, dude, that's a problem that like, I don't know, like two million businesses a year have with every one of their clients, this is going to work.

I think this is going to work.

What do you guys think of this idea?

Brilliant.

Well, I love it.

I just, I just got a mortgage after my landlord stiffened me and, you know, I go into Chase's website and I don't know if you've done this, but you go and chase website, you go to the mortgage and there's like a thousand things to do.

Plus you're like transported back to 1996 because you're in this like weird thing.

There's like JavaScript breaking everywhere.

There's like, you like forgot about flash and like flash is somehow in there.

My, my, my banker calls me and just like, you didn't finish this one thing.

And I was like, what?

She's like, I added it to your client portal.

It's like, dude, I don't get a notification.

I don't go check that.

I hate that place.

I fucking hate that place.

Yeah.

So, yes, yes, this is one of those no brainer ideas.

I, I hope that they, they actually embed, like create an SDK.

They do.

Okay.

I think they don't know if they already do or they're going to, but that was like a big part of, yeah, I was like, this can live inside of your app or whatever.

So, you know, you, uh, you could just kind of like onboard people right there inside their experience.

This landing page is beautiful.

This is a beautiful website.

Yeah.

So it is absolutely beautiful, but I have a question for you, for you guys, um, because it relates actually to, to this and also Jim shark and even the lawyer stuff, which is, you know, sometimes when we're creating businesses, you can do one of two things. You can either like create something brand new, which is like this, um, or create like a new gym, like a new way of, you know, doing something, or you could like help existing people, you know, do some marketing, make some money that way.

Do you guys, you know, and the Silicon Valley way is, is very much like go raise a bunch of money and then something new.

Um, and it's really frowned upon to do, you know, the marketing piece of it and sort of positioning on top of it.

Um, what are your thoughts and, you know, do you think about that a lot, you know, because I've been thinking about it a lot.

Say it again.

Give us two examples.

I'll give you an example.

Give us two examples.

Um, you know, my last company, the founder of 24 hour fitness invested in my company and he told me that before the 1980s, there weren't membership based gyms.

Like it was a new thing, um, and he invented the first one and it became 25 hour fitness.

I think they sold for three or \$4 billion.

It was a major success.

And then there's a lot of people who copied membership based gyms.

That's an idea of going zero to one, creating an absolutely new product.

Whereas what he could have done was created a gym shark of that era or whatever and consulted gym.

Yeah.

Exactly.

Gym launch.

Sorry.

Um, and consulted to, you know, add additional revenue to existing, you know, trainers, etc.

Um, so the question is, do you, you know, how often you are thinking about creating something brand new versus, you know, just kind of a money making additional marketing layer on top of Sam, what do you think about that?

I don't think I think of anything that I think of.

I don't think any of it's brand new.

I think zero is close to zero.

I think about that.

Do you agree, Sean?

Um, no, I think there's sometimes new things, but it's extremely rare.

Extremely rare.

Extremely, extremely rare.

But I would even argue that most anything that's new, you could probably actually say, oh, well, it's just like a different version of blank.

You could trace back, right?

So like, let's take a Airbnb, for example, Airbnb was clearly like kind of like this breakthrough product became this huge success.

It's like the category killer, the category leader for sharing economy or whatever.

And now it's like bigger than hotels, like than all hotels or whatever.

So it started off as this fringe thing, but there was like couch surfing before that.

And like that was like a product that did a very similar thing.

Um, you know, and VRBO and there's other stuff that's like around it.

So I think you're right that it's very hard to do something completely original, but let me frame it slightly differently, which is it seems like what Greg is almost saying is like, do you want to go for, uh, try to, try to have either a new behavior or an existing behavior or another way of looking at it would be, um, do you want to create a product or do you want to have a service company?

Right?

Like it's kind of, to me that in those examples, it's like 24 hour fitness was a new, it was like a new product you needed customers to go by versus servicing, you know, trainers and, and, and whatever, whoever else, um, that was, that's like a service business that's going to have great cash flow and doesn't require you to have this like winning brand and new product and new customers from scratch.

Is that, is that kind of, is it more about the services versus product?

Is that the, yeah, exactly.

Yeah.

I think, um, you know, Sean and, and, um, Sam, like, you know, having spent time in SF, I feel like when I got to SF, I was all about new behaviors.

Um, that was really important to me and Sean, I know that was true for you too.

Because like blab, you're always pushing, you know, the envelope with like, you know, and Bebo is like new, you know, user interfaces and like new friend finding and new, just like new ways of doing things versus now that we're in our thirties, it feels like we're doing less.

And this is just an observation and correct me if I'm wrong, but it feels like we're doing less of like the new behavior type stuff and more of like, Hey, let's just like iterate on this thing and like focus it on this niche and, and do that.

There's this guy named Roger Dickey.

I don't know him.

I think Sean knows him.

Right.

I never met him.

I think Greg actually knows him.

Oh, right.

So I don't entirely know his full background, but he used to do like a bunch of high tech stuff.

He, I know that he had the, uh, what's the startup that helps you code stuff?

It's like a new age, new agency.

What's it called?

Those are the G.

Geekster.

Geekster.

Okay.

What was he doing?

He was doing something like very traditional Silicon Valley, right?

I just know him from Twitter, but yes, he was doing, uh, he was the co-founder and CEO of Geekster, which was, which was huge, but he did it through a really interesting way.

I think he did it through a search lab.

Do you guys know what a search lab is?

Yeah.

And, but I think before that, like he maybe was at Zynga or something like, like a, like a, he played, he made like a mafia game or something like that.

Yeah.

Like something.

Right.

That's what it was.

Of course.

Which at, which at the time was cutting edge.

Now his latest business, I think it's called revolution.

Is it called revolution?

Made.

Made.

Made.

And they are renovating bathrooms.

And as a recent homeowner who needs a new bathroom, I went to the website and I was like, this is sick.

I love this.

I've, and it looks from the outside, like the company is just crushing it.

I saw another guy, the guy who started Casper, his name's Luke, uh, one of the four founders of his names, Luke, I think he has a new business.

That's also renovating bathrooms or maybe kitchens.

And I thought it was interesting that these guys, Casper, not exactly like cutting edge, but kind of like kind of new behavior, buying a mattress online, uh, Roger Dickey, you know, the definitely new behaviors, they're going to like these like older businesses and they're definitely using technology, but at the end of the day, they're not like re they're not inventing anything new.

They're just inventing maybe, uh, a more efficient process.

And in my opinion, those things are far more interesting and it's kind of intriguing to me that they're, these guys are doing that as opposed to some new cutting edge thing.

So so I'll give you my, my take on your, on your question, Greg, which is, uh, in my 20s, it's like the way I traveled was I'd be like, Oh, you know, fuck it.

I'll go tomorrow.

They'll spin the globe, put my finger down.

All right.

I'm going to go backpacking through, you know, Eastern Europe or I'm going to go to Australia and I'll be, you know, sleeping in a van type of thing.

And I wanted the adventure.

It was actually the right move to do at that time because it's like, how do you get max adventure max sort of like discomfort and like out of your comfort zone, you know, max spontaneity, all that stuff.

And um, and then like now it's like, where's like a sandals resort that I could take my kids and like, you know, I just want to sit down.

I just want a place I can go sit.

That's not my house.

And this is basically the extent of my adventure right now.

And so similarly, like that's my hope, my business career was the same.

It was like, at the beginning is like, yo, I'm going to build the next social network.

I'm going to build a dating app where you, you know, you might die or whatever.

This is like these crazy ideas.

It's like every idea was like trying to be crazier than the last.

It's like, you know, and it all appealed to me that way.

And now I'm like, cool, I could sell a product that I should, you know, import a product from China and sell it through a Facebook ad.

I click three buttons.

I could just sit in my chair and do that.

I don't really need a staff.

I don't really, you know, I'll just kind of outsource this and that.

I'm just going to write a newsletter and I'll just write it in my browser and then that's it.

Like, I don't have to like become the next Mark Zuckerberg.

I just need to get to like enough people where I'm making a few million dollars a year and living a sweet lifestyle, like that's, that's a win, you know, and that's, and I don't have to manage anybody.

And I don't have to like stress out about this thing and I don't have to know how to code.

I don't have to know any of these things.

Oh yeah.

Great.

So now I'm in the sort of sandals resort part of my career and I mean that in the best way possible, which was back then I was like almost like intrigued by the degree of difficulty and now I'm completely put off by the degree of difficulty and instead I just do the thing that sounds like what's going to be easy, simple, fun for me and, and you know, I'm just going to go that route.

And so I am much less interested in like inventing the next big thing as I am like crafting a dope lifestyle, doing something I enjoy.

Do you think that would change like, but do you think that's going to change when your kids get older?

So when your kids become eight, nine, 10, maybe eight to like 16, they think that you are the coolest guy ever.

Or if they don't think that maybe it's on the other end of you wanting to think that you're cool and you want to impress them.

And I've been thinking a lot about that lately.

I'm like, do I think that my attitude will change when my kids become five, six, seven, eight and I want to impress them?

Do I think like instead of just like having a sick lifestyle, I'm like, oh man, I want to do something like that they are proud of.

You think that's going to change?

Not because of that reason.

I do think it's going to change, but not because of that.

Like, I don't think your kids think you're cool based on like your business success necessarily. I don't, I don't really think that that's the main, the main way that kids think you're cool.

And even if it was, that's not why I would do something.

I would just have more free time, right?

Like when my kids go to school, that's going to be like a fucking game changer.

It's like I'm going to get a third of my day back that I don't have today.

And so when they go to school, I have a lot more bandwidth.

If I want to do something more intense, I can ratchet up the intensity and the difficulty level if I so choose at that time.

Right now, like, dude, before I do this podcast, like I'm not, I'm not like, you know, researching every detail for the 20 minutes before this podcast, typically, I'm like reading this book called Goofy's Adventure to my daughter, putting her down for the nap.

You know, like, that's how I prep for the spot like 20 minutes before is like, I'm literally reading Disney books, putting my daughter to bed in time to come back out here.

Right.

So it's like, there's a lifestyle I like right now that's doing this.

And so I'm optimizing for that.

I think in five years, I'm going to be picking a very different challenge than I'm picking today, just because it'll be time for another chapter.

And I'll probably be like, oh, that lifestyle shit's boring.

I want to go do something big or I'm going to be like, fuck business.

This is stupid.

I'm going to go like try to write a comedy show and I'm going to like try to sell a show for TV.

Like, I don't know.

I'm going to do something else with my life.

Every five years, I want to kind of reinvent myself in terms of what I'm doing.

So you've come a long way, Sean.

So one of the first times I met you, you invited me to the Bebo launch party.

And I was like, could I bring a plus one?

You're like, sure.

I bring this friend who is visiting.

And we walk into this warehouse or something in San Francisco.

I remember we had to like walk upstairs and like, where was the Sean?

It was in a, you know, like a car manufacturer, a car repair, yeah, like a garage just like for car repairs, whatever.

I don't know.

I forgot how to speak English, but like basically Michael had bought one of those, like got rid of all the car maintenance stuff and just turned it into like his man cave.

So he hadn't filled it up yet with his, his like fancy cars and cool shit yet.

So it's just an empty warehouse in the middle of San Francisco, downtown San Francisco.

And we threw our launch party there before he filled it up.

So I'm there with one of my buddies from this small town in Quebec.

The guy has never left his town basically in his entire life.

So he had landed San Francisco.

He's staying with me.

He gets into this, you know, car shop or whatever.

And it's like dark and there's smoke and there's lights everywhere.

And then you walk in and there's all these people and there's lights everywhere.

And he like literally whispered to me and he said, is Kanye West coming to this?

Did he say, yeah, I said, yeah, and it was like one of those moments, like I'm sure a bunch of people have like watched the social network when it's like Justin Timberlake is like talking to, I guess it's Mark Zuckerberg in the club and it's just like, it's intense and it's like larger than life.

And you were kind of like living that lifestyle in San Francisco, not like, I mean, I'm painting you as very playboy and I won't say you're 100% playboy, but in the sense of like you were living that lifestyle, you were doing that like Zuckerberg thing.

And now you're kind of doing the complete opposite.

And my question to actually both of you, but particularly for Sean, is if you could redo it, would you have done more of these product bets that are, it's really less risk, like for example, Milk Road, like there wasn't that much risk there.

Right, so like I feel like people like worse now that we're in our thirties, we're focusing on different niches and we're taking things that are working different communities.

And we're just pushing that out there with, you know, low product risk.

Would you have done that?

Or do you think that you needed to do these crazy bets in your twenties to, to, to be where you are today?

I have a very easy answer, but I'll let Sean go first.

No, no, go.

No, I want you to go first.

I want to hear what you're going to say.

Well, as played by Sean, by the way, for that, I flew in this painter that I had met and he did it.

I don't remember this.

He did a live painting where he, he's painting this like abstract thing.

He's breakdancing while he's doing it.

And this is a guy I had seen at a, at a fair in Greeley, Colorado, many years before that.

And I was like, Hey, dude, I have like a, like I have a company that has like a bunch of funding.

Like you want to just like fly out for this party and do something dope, do that thing you did at that little town fair, do it in front of like hundreds of people at this thing.

And he's doing it.

And then at the end, he spins the canvas and what looked like this crazy abstract thing was he had painted like a fucking Bob Marley upside down.

And it's like, he does this like whatever he flips the thing.

And then he's like, done.

And he slaps it with his hand.

It's full of paint.

And it was like, that was the moment.

And I was just like, that party was dope.

That was a dope party.

Actually, now that I remember it.

So do I regret it?

Well, now that I'm thinking about that party, no, I don't regret it.

That's, that was pretty awesome.

I'm glad I did it because I'm happy with where I am now.

Having said that, there were so many things that I did foolishly during that time.

And I'm not just talking about like, you know, oh, you know, I wasn't as good at this thing as I am now.

It's like, no, like there was so much opportunity right under my nose and I was blind to it.

And like one of the biggest, like scary things for me now is like, what are those things today that are right in front of me that I'm too stupid to see?

Just like I was too stupid to see it seven years ago when I was doing that other thing.

For example, Greg, you were in our early mastermind groups and the founders of calm were there and they were talking about how hard it was and how they're just, you know, it's just Alex.

It was just kind of like, yeah, it's hard to raise money right now.

I'm trying and, and we were just like, dude, it's cool app, man.

You should stick with it.

He's like, yeah, I'm going to just keep going.

And like that's a \$2 billion plus company now.

And we were helping him like, dude, why didn't we cut the check?

You were there too.

I don't know.

You didn't cut a check either, did you?

I remember at the time, like if I'm being honest, like I felt that it was too niche.

Like I was like, we were like, Sean, you and I were focusing on like, we were doing big stuff.

Big stuff.

Stuff that was going to be big.

Yeah.

Exactly.

One aqua hire later.

Exactly.

He's got the huge company.

Exactly.

There was so many of those.

So in our masterminds itself, I think Loom was in there.

That's a billion dollar company.

And I remember kind of like trying to mentor shy and being like, bro, like, you know, don't worry, you'll figure it.

I mean, maybe it's not this one, but like when you get to your real game, you're going to be like good because of this experience.

You were friends with him too.

Like did you invest in that?

I missed it was called, what was it called?

OpenTest.co and that's what Loom was originally and it felt like, you know, when you're doing your first startup and it just feels so shaky because it's your first time doing all this stuff.

Like that's what it felt like.

And so it was, you know, and then also the narrative at the time was, don't invest in other people's startups.

You got, if you want to make it in Silicon Valley, you got to give laser focus.

So, you know, my mistake in my twenties was I came to San Francisco and, you know, I listened to all these VCs with all their narratives and I did it.

And if I were to redo it, I would frankly just be doing what I now, which is doing like what I'm doing now, which is like focused on communities doing agency services, you know, focusing on niches and web, you know, yeah, just build an experiment and not have the biggest exits in the world.

There was like 10 examples like that.

Like I remember Alex McCall came over one day and we were catching up and then he went on to start clear.

I remember thinking, this guy's fucking amazing.

I should invest in this clear bit thing and I like went over to his office and we like hung out.

I was like, we have to meet the guys.

I was like, I love the energy of this office, man.

Like if I just couldn't do anything besides feel this office, I would be like, they're building a winner in here.

That's also like, I don't know, I don't know if it's a billion, it's a multi-hundred million dollar company.

He told me at the end, he goes, oh, by the way, I'm buying up, I was like, what else are you doing?

Finally, I started to ask Mark question.

I was like, what else are you doing?

He's like, oh, I bought up some stripe shares, just stripe shares available for like two billion dollars.

So I'm buying a bunch of stripe shares.

I think it was him.

Maybe it's Josh Buckley.

He's one of them.

And he's like, I'm buying up stripe shares for two billion.

Let me know if you want in.

And I was like, two billion.

To me, I was like, well, that's like the most a startup is worth is like a billion is like the top of the mountain.

Like to me, it was like, oh, there's no upside left, you know, I didn't like think from first principles about like, every new stripe was fucking amazing.

It was like the best startup in the whole like, you know, in Silicon Valley.

And I had this opportunity to go buy stripe shares at two billion.

And I thought how late I was and I was like, man, I wish I could have gotten in earlier.

And now like, you know, the things I would give for stripe shares at two billion now, like, it's like, that's already like a hundred X, you know, from there.

And that was proven.

Right.

Forget that.

Then there was all the services we were using.

Like Furcon, who's my CTO, he would be like, oh, this is a cool, cool product.

Let's use this in our tech stack.

If I had just invested in all the bills we were paying for like software we were using like pager duty and elastic search and stuff, you know, like one after another, those were all huge winners that were pre IPO.

So first was investing.

The second was like project selection.

So like you were talking about Greg, I did the same thing.

I was playing by the rules of like, I was playing by other people's rules, meaning like what was considered cool at Silicon Valley was to be like a product guy who was building, who had like cool product taste and was building like, you know, like new markets and like going for the big billion dollar prizes.

And then I met Sam who was like, I'm writing this newsletter.

It's free.

I'm gonna have like newsletter ads.

And I was like, yeah, but like, are you going to do a startup someday?

Like that's how I felt about it.

Right.

Like it sells for more than more than my company sold for in the end.

He goes, he goes, look, you're good.

But basically like, you're showing up to a knife fight with a knife and I wish you would show up with a magic wand that would just murder the competition.

I'm like, sounded cool.

Right.

I was like, that's a great analogy.

That's a cool story.

But like, I don't know, man, I think the math kind of, I think it might achieve the desired outcome, which I'm trying to do here, which when I started, I was just trying to be financially dependent by the age of 30.

That was the only goal.

And so, so like, if I could go back and just whisper three things about like just strategy, just strategy, like forget life advice, just strategy advice, I would have said, invest in all the smart people you know, like it'll, it'll work out.

If you don't have the money, go convince somebody that you have a bunch of really smart friends that they should give you money to invest in that.

That would be the first thing.

The second is invest in all of the expenses on your P and L. So go find all the places you're spending money and go try to invest in all those companies.

That will also do fantastically well.

You'll make more on that than your own company.

Okay.

If you really want to do your own company beyond that, fantastic, that's great.

You're going to build up skills and you got a lottery ticket there that might work.

I would have just said, like, don't try to be Mark Zuckerberg from the social network.

Like think about what like, like basically just open your eyes to the problems and the opportunities that exist today.

And so like, you know, whether it was like e-commerce or Shopify apps or like these sounded small at the time, but they sounded small because that's where they were early.

And like at that time, I needed a VC to like stamp their approval that this was a good market or good opportunity, which by that time is pretty late because what's the VC doing?

They're looking at what companies are raising huge rounds, which means like four years ago, those were great opportunities.

Three years ago, those were great opportunities.

And so I wish I had just kind of been more eyes wide open on like what projects are available to you and like the things that sound kind of nation funny.

Those are actually better signals for you than the thing that the VC is saying is going to be huge or is already huge because it's often, you know, those companies to start or like you're in an absolute dogfight and it's just like one winner out of a hundred is going to emerge versus other things where like you could basically take no product risks, no market risks.

So I had a friend Vishal tell me this once he goes, I invest in companies with no product market fit risk.

I had never heard somebody say that.

It didn't even make sense to me.

I go, what do you mean?

Like every startup is product market fit risk.

He goes, no, it's not like what?

And he goes, he was the one who convinced me to buy Bitcoin initially as well.

He was like, Bitcoin is going to be the, you know, the biggest thing in the world.

He's like, I just put up basically all the money I have into Bitcoin.

I was like, what the fuck?

This is like back in 2016, 15.

Nobody was really saying that back then.

So for the product market fit thing, he goes, he goes, for example, I just invested in a company that's making a robot that makes pizzas and it makes pizzas.

It makes a perfect pizza every time 24 seven at a lower cost than a human being can do it.

He goes, I don't know if they can, because there's a ton of engineering risk.

Like they may not be able to technically do it, but if they can do it, there's zero market risk.

Every pizza shop will want this over paying an employee to make imperfect pizzas only in certain hours, call in sick and blah, blah, blah, like for a higher cost.

And I was like, oh, shit, that's true.

There are things that have zero market risk.

And I was taking like maximum market risk before.

So like that's the other strategy is like, you don't have to take as much market risk.

The thing you're doing now, Greg, is like way less market risk.

The thing I'm doing with milk road had like zero market risk basically.

And there's just a like, there's a lot of money.

There's life changing money that could be made and a lot of fun that could be had without taking on unnecessary.

What happened to that pizza company?

I think they're still in engineering risk mode.

They got like a big contract from Domino's, but then their CEO got in trouble for some things that they hired a new CEO, something, something, something, you know, like again, these are legit engineering risks.

So I'm not like, that doesn't mean they'll all work, but like what I'm doing with the newsletter is like neither technical risk nor market risk.

Yeah.

Operational risk.

It's just, are you going to, are you going to be able or wanting to do it for a long time?

Which is pretty good.

It's a pretty good thing to try to overcome.

Right.

Yeah.

It's really tough.

You know, I remember coming to San Francisco and, and hearing all these narratives and these

BCs telling me this and also entrepreneurs sort of repeating a lot of this stuff.

And I will say it, it's tough to go against what these stamps of approvals say to do, you know, like you have to tell yourself every day, like, and I have to do that too.

Like when I started a services business, all my, most of my Silicon Valley friends were like a services business, like an agency.

That's what you're going to do after, you know, like, and you just kind of have to push forward and really just remember that, you know, just because, you know, certain people on Twitter say a certain thing or, or, or Sequoia or Andreessen say a certain thing doesn't mean you can't have a great look.

Like I would say you can have a better lifestyle, not being Mark Zuckerberg than being Mark Zuckerberg.

Yeah.

Exactly.

The Pope Catholic, bro, a brown bear shits in the woods, right?

Obviously.

Yeah.

Well, what's that?

A brown bear shits in the woods.

Yeah.

That's a Sam Parr special.

That's a Sam Parr special.

Is that the number seven Sam Parr special?

I just ordered because I think I got it.

Does it brown bear shit in the woods?

Yeah.

That's why people listen to this podcast, though, for a couple of Sam's parts and Sam Parr specials.

What did you say?

Did I?

Did I just order a Sam Parr special number seven because I think I just got it.

Yeah.

That's good.

By the way, there, I made a joke recently where Sean, you go, yeah, so there's these short traders and I said, oh yeah, how tall is he?

And you just like totally skipped by it and the people that comments on YouTube are like, I think the joke was funny, but it was definitely funny that Sean just ignored him.

No, people were like, dude, how did you not acknowledge that absolute gem on time on target?

You were you were quick with that one.

Yeah.

It got no love and the commenters pointed it out.

You're the new Chris Rock, man.

You're the new Chris Rock.

You're a better version of Chris Rock.

Thank God this is digital.

He's going to bitch slap me right in the face.
Dude, I can't believe that happened.
I'm going to, like right after this, I'm going to go see.
I can't wait to see Will Smith apologize.
Oh yeah.
He's for sure going to come out with something.
By the way, the form on his slap, if you look at the photo, full extension, cross body.
I mean, like do you, I've never slapped anyone.
If I tried to slap someone once, I'm not going to have perfect form.
That guy has to have slapped before because you don't just wake up with perfect form on a slap like that.
Like the, just look at the extension and tell me that's not a, that's not his 12,000 slap.
Smith is a habitual slapper, man.
He's a perpetual slapper.
This guy has slapped before and we got to, we got to stop this guy before he gets out of control.
I wonder.
He's definitely slapped before.
I wonder as he was walking up the catwalk, there was like five seconds there.
So I wonder what he was thinking.
Like was he like, you know what?
Am I going to punch him?
Am I going to slap him?
Like, I wonder what was going through his mind.
I think he's off his rocker a little right now.
I've done that before to my sister where like, I knew I was mad and I started to charge.
She's five years older than me.
So I was like, you know, a kid at the time and I knew I was mad and I had, I had a, I have to do something, but I had no plan.
And so I had like three steps to improvise the plan.
I remember this and she'll, she always tells the story.
We were in the kitchen and I was pissed because she made fun of me and I'm five, six years old and I was walking and I am in the kitchen, I just grab a butter knife and I go, Nisha, this is the end.
And like, she was like the end of why I was like, nobody knows what happened after that.
We both just blacked out.
She thought it was hilarious that I had said like a movie line, like a loser and I was holding this butter knife.
I don't know what I was going to try to do, but it wasn't going to work.
She's, she could overpower me at pretty handily at that time.
Sean Puri special, all right.
That's the episode.
By the way, great.

You said something.

Don't, don't edit yet.

I want to, I want to leave with, with, with Greg got my wheels turning.

Even while we're joking, my wheels are still turning about what you've just said about the narrative.

Here's my challenge.

Each of us, what's one narrative that you think actually you should be going counter to that narrative?

Like there's a narrative that we hear as entrepreneurs, as people and kind of tech.

And like, what do you think is the like?

I don't know.

Maybe it's this other thing instead.

So if anyone has one, do it, but otherwise I'll give you one.

Yeah, go for it.

So mine would be, I'll give you two.

There's the inside crypto.

There's a narrative that's basically like, oh, there's all this innovation happening.

It's like the next protocol, the next token, the next whatever.

I'm pretty sure that if you just buy three or four things, like if you buy Bitcoin,

ETH, I put Luna in there now, just buy those three and you just chill.

Either all of crypto is going to work and those will work amazingly or crypto is not going to work.

And no matter what you did, like if those fail, if those don't go up dramatically in value, crypto just didn't work and none of the shit will work.

And so I think actually a basically like for a while, the best strategy was Bitcoin and chill and now it's ETH and chill.

I basically think it's still the same.

I think it's like buying two or three tokens and not even needing to know anything more, just chilling on those is probably the best investment of the next like 10 to 15 years.

It's going to outperform everything during that time.

So I think like going deeper down the rabbit hole and like learning more is actually going to fuck up your returns versus just buying the main ones and just holding for like 10 years and not thinking about it.

That's one.

And then the other is I think that angel investing doesn't make much sense anymore.

And I say this as somebody who angel invests like the valuations are so high that like if I think about like that same money going into like one of these sort of boring cash flow businesses is so much better for your life.

So if you're like an individual angel investor and you have let's say a hundred thousand dollars, you know, or three hundred thousand dollars that you want to go put into like a basket of 20 startups, it's like, are you sure you shouldn't just buy like, like get an SBA loan and go buy like some random website that's already producing profit and that'll pay itself off in two years or less.

And and now you own this cash flowing asset, like I'm pretty sure that's just going to

do better.

Did I agree that a basket of angel investments, the the the our friends who have all crushed it on angel investing, you know, that means they made their investments five or eight years ago.

And it was different.

It is.

It's outlandish at the moment.

So I agree with that.

I think for mine that I think that it's actually I think that I think that you only have a few swings in your career.

And a lot of people are like, oh, you should be patient and you've got a lot of time to do certain stuff.

I actually think you should try.

You should dedicate your 20s to getting your first significant win because after that life gets a lot harder.

You get a lot less energy.

You're a lot smarter, which is actually bad.

Actually, it's kind of good to be kind of ignorant.

And not enough people.

I think oftentimes people go the other route where they go, we'll just go join something for a little while and learn.

In my opinion, F that your 20s dedicated to getting a win and getting it even if it's relatively small and do it as fast as possible because after that life is a lot easier.

I'll give my wife, Sean, I was going to say, give the moist quote about getting rich quick.

He goes, why does everyone hate on getting rich quick?

Get rich quick schemes are the best.

I want to get rich quick.

I don't want to get rich slow.

I got, I got to real quick.

So I got off the phone with a friend of mine who works at Facebook.

He told me this morning, he told me that he works roughly 90 90 to 120 minutes per day on average, I thought you're going to say 90 to 120 hours a week.

He, yeah, it's the best when you measure your work in minutes.

He texted me, he texted me today, he said, it was 912 a.m.

He said, 912 a.m. finish work for the day, 12 12 minutes.

And so put us in a group chat.

I want him to text us every day.

Just the timestamp of when that's what I told him to do.

I said, you need to create like a Twitter and non account Twitter.

And so I'm going to stay tuned.

Do that.

But I think that in your 20s, like potentially go work at Facebook, go work at Google, get those high paying jobs, I think that by the way, I think, I think that's a good way to get a win.

[Transcript] My First Million / 5 Big Ideas for a Business with Greg Isenberg

Get, get, you know, do that for a few years while you're, you know, do you're doing your you're learning on the side, like join a DAO, build a community, build a newsletter, do whatever you want to do, it would really speaks to you while you're, you're not, you know, yeah.

So you're making money and you're learning.

One more could you ask for.

And then my, you know, just because you gave a crypto one, Sean, I think that, and I spent a lot of time in NFT land and Web three land too.

I think that NFTs are going to 99% freedom.

It's going to be a free, freedom in thing.

I think the, the idea of selling NFTs will be a very small thing.

Okay.

So what, what happens, why, why would I give away something for free or what's my incentive?

So what happens after it's free to me?

So yeah, I mean, you know, okay.

So the idea right now, it's like people are selling NFTs and projects for 0.05 to 0.2.

Let's say on average for some of these, you know, 10,000 PFP projects.

I think that, um, that's going to burn out at some point.

And I think we're starting to see it burn out a little bit.

And I think that, you know, did you see the hundred thieves drop?

Yeah.

They, they, uh, what did they do exactly?

They did a much smaller amount.

So they basically, first of all, it was in gaming and gamers hate NFTs.

So the fact that they did a successful gaming NFT launch, like obviously kudos to them, but basically they won this championship and they were like, okay, in order to get this like collectible, you can go grab it.

It's free.

We're not saying it's going to be worth anything.

And they got 700,000 people to collect this collectible and it's a trophy.

And then they make money on if there's value, right?

So if it grows in value, they get royalties.

And I think that's what you're going to see a lot of is like creators and big communities basically doing free demands.

Even though people seem, you know, people today think that selling NFTs is the future.

I don't think so.

Right.

By the way, I'm going to change mine to just simplify it instead of starting a company by existing business.

I think that is the most overlooked obvious thing for a smart person to do is how do you take your market risk to essentially zero?

You buy a business that's already working and profitable and you just say, cool, I'm a better operator than this person.

Or I know about a different form of operation than they do.

[Transcript] My First Million / 5 Big Ideas for a Business with Greg Isenberg

And so I can grow this using Facebook ads or I can grow this using outsourcing or I can grow this using, you know, code or whatever it is.

So you hear almost no narrative.

You hear tons of narrative around the genius visionary start up, start a new thing, building a new project, launching a new thing and like you hear like one or two examples of people buying businesses and I think that for most smart people buying a business is a far better idea than starting.

Yeah.

But when you're in your 20s, my perspective that is like when you're in your, let's say early 20s, like do you know, like you're saying that now, but I think like you do need like that operational experience and that's where my point is you got to like it's worthwhile to just potentially take a high paying job and then on the side kind of like experiment and do stuff.

Yeah.

That's true.

I'm not really limiting mine to the 20s.

I think I'm still making mistakes in my 30s.

So I'm assuming other people are too and I guess it's more like, what narrative do I hear now that's easy to float along with that I'm like, you know what, actually, I don't actually think this is true and like that's the one for me, which is like for most people who want to be entrepreneurial, they default to starting a business and I think actually maybe it should be the opposite.

Maybe you should default to taking on an existing business and growing it and only create a new thing if you like actually have a new invention in mind, a new idea that really you can't shake in your head versus like just starting a new start.

I like that because because you want to be an entrepreneur, right?

All right.

I think we lost Sam.

We got to go.

All right.

Greg, thanks for coming man.

Where should people find you?

In Hamburg or on our pod where it happens or in the mountains of Canada or the mountains of Canada.

Unless you're the IRS, in which case he's in Miami, at least 180 days at least.

All right.

See you.

I feel like I can rule the world.

I know I could be what I want to put my all in it like no days off on a road let's travel looking back.