It got to the point where I would go to sleep with no money in the bank,
wake up, and know that like that day I had to raise a certain dollar amount just to survive.
And some days it was 50 grand, some days it was four million dollars.
All right, today's pod is interesting. We just had Billy McFarlane in. He's famous for the
fire festival thing, which basically was this like huge Coachella type event that went viral
four years ago. And he ended up committing a ton of crimes that he admitted to and was charged and
convicted of like 25 or 30 million dollars with a fraud. We just had him on the pod. Very fascinating
guy. The thing that like makes me confused is he's very likable. He's a very likable person,
incredibly charming, very charismatic. And I want him to win, but he did a lot of really bad shit.
Yeah, yeah. I mean, he's an interesting guy. He's also complicated like most people. And
I think it was pretty interesting. We talked about a bunch of things. We talked about kind of his
origin story, how he got to the fire festival and almost like where it all went wrong. So where did
he start making mistakes and then eventually committing crimes? We talked about life in prison
and what that was like in solitary confinement and things like that. We talked about what he's
doing now, how he's trying to come back and me and Sam are a little bit hard on his new idea,
I would say. Well, to the point of if this was a normal, if this was just a normal person,
random person on the street, I would not have been as harsh. But I felt like I, I don't know,
for whatever reason, I felt like I had the license to be a little harsh on this one. We talked about
that. We talked about other ideas about what he could do or other opportunities, business opportunities
he sees. Pretty fascinating guy. It's like when you have like a star football player, a star athlete
in high school and you see them like doing bad shit off the field and you're like, dude, you
have it all, man, you've got the talent. Please don't blow this. It hurts us all to see someone
with so many gifts do such bad shit. And that's a little bit how I felt with this.
And he seems a little, a little coached in the sense that he's like, right up front, we'll say,
what I did was terrible. I deserve no sympathy. You know, I was wrong and I was an idiot,
right? And he's very quick to kind of own that, which is great. You want somebody to own it.
But it's also, that's somebody who understands, okay, this is the message. I got to stay on
this message. And yeah, I got to make it really clear where I stand on that.
I think it was a good pod. I think people will like it.
Yep. All right. Enjoy. All right. Let's just get right into this. So
it sounds like you have like staff, like you just asked somebody to get you a coffee. So are you
like, are you back? I mean, you're, you're, you're in the mix again. You're working.
Yeah. Broke his hell. Taking advantage of, you know,
anybody I can get to help me try to rebuild and start making things right.
And you have like a crazy restitution thing. So we should explain kind of, so this is Billy.
Billy created fire festival, most notably, you may have seen, I don't know, the documentaries
or whatever you just got out of prison. But one of the things that's associated with it is you
have like more than 20 million or something that you have to pay back in restitution to
some combination of investors, creditors, people like that. How does that work? Do you have to
give them like every dollar or is it a certain percentage? And how does that work? Because
that's a deep, deep hole. Yeah. And it's brutal. I'm like, I just can't think about that big number

because then, you know, I'll sort of lose track about like what's happening today and tomorrow.
So how it works is that I have to pay a percentage of all of my personal income,
you know, directly back to restitution. Like after taxes?
They calculated on just like gross income. So totally pretax income. So make like $1,000 this
week. I have a set percentage I have to pay on that $1,000. But what is it? What's a percent?
Is it like crazy or is it like 5%? It's more than five. I'm not sure like
where it's going to end up. It varies based on income. So I know what I have to pay right now,
but I think it gets readjusted every couple of months. And then in addition to that,
Pirate's giving 10% of all of its revenue back to restitution as well. So if Pirate gets 100K
sponsorship deal, like it'll pay 10K right away. And then whatever I get as my like salary or
income, I'll pay an additional percentage on top of that. So just trying to pay more than I have to.
Why are you doing this right now? Why are you, I mean, like, you know, you're in a different
situation. I firmly believe that I listened to your pot, the pods that you've done. I've watched
the documentary I've read a little bit like you made a massive mistake. So I think that
you deserve to be punished. And so I don't feel sorry for you for having to do that.
I think five years or four years, however much you serve, that's a lot. So my current
stance is like everyone deserves a second chance. And if you, if you do the crime and you have to
do the time, like there should be a point where it's like, all right, you screwed up, you get it,
you can try again. I feel that. But when I see you doing this podcast push right now, I'm like,
is he taking advantage of us? Like, why is this guy doing this right now? Why is he, what is he
going to, what's he trying to sell or, or is this therapeutic? Or are you just trying to make a
living? Which, you know, what's, what's your motivation between this recent push?
Yeah. So like, first of all, totally deserved what I got. And sorry, I think there's like days
where I felt like I got too much time. There's days where I felt like I didn't get enough just like
based on everything else happening in the world. So deserve it was coming and like, definitely
not looking for sympathy. I think there's two things here. One is that by doing these podcasts,
I'm getting great like inbound deal flow. So if three or four companies are listening to this,
and they're like, Oh, wait, he actually does know how to market, he can get us attention. And
they'll come and hire me. Like that's amazing. That's my entire purpose of doing this small
media run right now. 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 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.
I think it's like looking at your Twitter comments a little bit this morning before
I came on the show, a lot of people and other hosts have gotten the same feedback. It's like,
why the hell would you give a con artist like any time of day? I loved your response, but I think
the response to all those people is like... What did I say? You said, like,

maybe an interesting conversation that will get us money. So, I like your transparency. I said an interesting person that would have an interesting conversation and it will get us a lot of views. That's cool. And like other people haven't been able to say that, so I think that's great. But I think to them is that anybody who has taken life to the extreme or too far has learned like a lot of good and bad lessons from that. So, like, they can use me, right? And if there's like one entrepreneur here who's trying to raise money and he or she thinks like, shit, this is a little harder than I thought 60 days ago and they're about to send out that monthly investor update, don't fuck up your numbers. Don't go over the top to raise that cash. And like, if I can stop one person, really cool. But I think they're into the spectrum. If there's somebody who's going about it honestly and they're scared to kind of take that leap, like if I can inspire them to go and try to make their brand pop off, really cool as well. So, I think there is lessons to be learned and people could kind of use all of my mistakes to help them wherever they are in their entrepreneurial journey. You are kind of a hustler. So, you will kind of go fast through it. But you basically, when you're in middle school, started creating projects. I don't even want to say company because like, you know, I don't know how much of a company it is when you're in middle
school, but like you were building products and launching them as websites. Is that right? Like in middle school? Yeah, just basically started doing super basic HTML, CSS in like fifth and sixth grade. And so, this is what, 2021, 22 years ago. And it was pretty much like the wild wild west days of the internet. And started a couple of like web posting companies and basic social networks. And that was really my foray into the world of entrepreneurship and technology.
So, you make those sites, you end up selling them, or you sold at least one of them for like, what, like a big way and a small way? And what would you do when you were kind of like, you're probably in 12, 13. When I was in sixth and seventh grade. Yeah. Yeah. These are a couple thousands of dollars. So, like life changing to, you know, Kater just wants to buy candy, but at this point, kind of irrelevant. But I think like kind of got me into the game. Started a little bit of a bigger media site called 24 scene in high school. 24 scene. Yes. So, I went to a company called buddy TV out of Seattle when I was 16. What did that do? What was 24 scene?
It was a content network. And I love the TV show 24. So, it was basically clipping, you know, snippets of the 24 show. And this is before streaming. So, it's harder to get like, like Jack Bauer 24. Yeah, exactly. So, it's hard to get like,
actual media of the shows. This is all based on like, you know, Fox like aired it. And then, it really was very little media afterwards. So, I was taking like,
the show that aired and clipping it up and ended up doing it for a half a dozen TV shows. And I had this business partner at the time who was in his mid thirties in Michigan, but I never met. And he like orchestrated the sale. And then he paid me out on Western Union every two weeks for like the remainder of my high school. So, that was pretty crazy.
How much did you make doing that? It was like tens of thousands of dollars. Like, but at the time, it was, it was wild for me. And from there is you, you went to school and you, you graduated, but you never had a real job, did you?
Went to college, basically started living off of my 24 scene capital under this little suitcase under my bed, my freshman year of college. And for the first time, like started going out, like going to nightclubs, going to dinners, like exploring what every 18 year old I think

man like wants to see what's out there in the world and flew on my cash in a couple of months. So I'm like, shit, now I'm broke sitting in my college and it's like small town. I can't afford to like try to find a car to take me to New York City anymore. Like, what can I do? So got back to what I knew, which was basic programming and started a social networking website called Spling during my freshman year of college. And that introduced me to this entire world of like venture capital and angel investing and essentially dropped out of school halfway ish through my freshman year to work on Spling. And then I started this whole like run of venture capital backed startups. My wife through friends of friends somehow had some run ins with you at Penn, like like apparently she was like good run ins or someone you must have dated someone or her friends was of someone and she would tell me stories. They're like, yeah, we knew him. And he would always rent like these fat cars and drive us all and pay for everything to go to New York City from Philly. And like, we just thought like he just had some business and no one knew what it was. You know, it wasn't anything inappropriate. But it was just like he just like just we all do as this guy who must have had some money through some internet companies and he treated all of us on a regular basis. Yeah. So went to went to Philly for a company called Dreamit Ventures, which is kind of like this Accelerator incubator program. And it was dating a girl at the time who was like, I think it's a sophomore now at Penn, so I should have been a sophomore in school. So all my like peers and friends were in college. And like, so I'd be like at Dreamit trying to raise money by day and then like at the terrible like college parties by night and then obviously trying to take them to New York. So what triggered this switch from like, I'm a kid programmer who likes to make hobbyist websites like, you know, scenes from my favorite TV show 24 to like, I'm trying to be the man. Because it seems like at some point you all your business venture switched to like things that were super cool, right? You did the black card credit card thing. You did fire, obviously, which was like, you know, the next Coachella. So at some point you switched from like kind of hobbyist websites to how do I be the cool guy, you know, the big man on campus type of thing. What triggered that switch for you? Yeah, I think that's a good question. And it was almost like I was living these alternative lives and not really fitting in either one. I was a college kid, but trying to raise money from venture capitalists when, you know, at my little school, the majority of the students haven't heard of the word like venture capital in their life. And then so I'd go hang out with these venture capitalists who were titans of industry or, you know, successful angel investors and kind of go back to the college realm. So I was always kind of interested in merging the two worlds. So when I'm hanging out with the VCs, the college kids all want access to this and they would hire me to help like market or consult. So I was always kind of hustling and trying to make side income to fund a lifestyle and trying to kind of keep up with this new world that my basic programming had been giving me access to. And then at what point? So it was like your first kind of, maybe it wasn't a real win. Like you didn't exit, but you raised I think four or six million dollars. Was that the, the, is it called Magnesis? Yes. So turn 19, graduated from the dream adventures, moved to Spring to the second ever WeWork labs down on Barrack Street in New York. And I was there. We work now around, he was like 30-ish, you know, hustling entrepreneurs all trying to make it. I'm a kid. And went out to dinner with just like a group of these friends that were starting to meet in New York who are a little bit older, a little bit more established. And one of them pulls out this

black American Express Hancherion card and kind of slams it on the table to show off. And I'm like, fuck, I have $40 in my Chase account. Like, how can I do this? So I went back to my WeWork office, went online to Alibaba before Alibaba was really like a mainstream thing, particularly like in New York, in the U.S. bought these black metal cards and bought a credit card copier. They kind of came in the mail, took my Chase blue debit card, copied it under this black card, went to the pizza place across the street from the WeWork. Guy was treating me like I was royalty, went back into the office and just sold these cards to all the entrepreneurs in the WeWork office. And then Magnesis was born. And how big did that business get before it, before it went before it went south? So Magnesis did total like 11, 12-ish million in revenue over three years. And my biggest mistake was getting distracted by fire in the fire festival. And I understand this is forwarding like years in advance. But in the run up to fire festival for the four or five months, I just started trying to get money from anywhere and everywhere and basically milked the Magnesis customer base as much as I could. And then when fire crashed, Magnesis went down with it. So just not seeing it through was such a fuck up. But Magnesis was just, it was just literally like, it's not a bank account. It was just literally the physical card as well as some perks. Like you would get like discounts to certain concerts, I guess is where fire kind of got inspiration from. Discounts to certain clubs, I guess, or like a discount for like a private jet service. So you just must have negotiated the deals or probably even white labels like some other company that had found cool deals. And you for $300, you got the sick card, like literally physically just a card with your same bank account. You had access to like a townhouse. I forget what you called it, a townhouse. And you got to go to some parties and you got some perks. Is that basically the model? Exactly. Then what was really interesting though, was the members were bringing
all the perks and benefits. So initially I sold these cards. And so now let's say we sold a couple hundred cards. I'm like, wow, our member base is super interesting, whether they're entrepreneurs, they're people in all these different industries that my friends don't really have access to. Like let's get a space where they can all come and connect. So I went and rented a series of lofts in townhouse that I couldn't afford, where basically members can come and hang out anytime. And then as Magnesis grew, we just built an app where members would come to us saying, hey, I work at this brand, whether it's like this plane company, this fitness studio, this fashion brand, let's do something special for the rest of the members. And they would basically pay us to advertise and give access to cool shit to the members and the members would pay us an annual fee to get access to these perks. So it's kind of interesting where we're making money from both sides and then relying on the actual member base to create the offering.
Was it profitable? So I was just so bad with financial management that we raised a few million bucks for Magnesis, but we never had more than two months of runway in the entire history of the company. So I'd raised around and like 80% of that round was already spent in terms of like bills owed to employees, contractors, agencies, whatever. So it was like always a kiss of death, like, okay, raise a million bucks, but fuck, I owe a hundred grand and now we have two months of runway left. I think my biggest inability was to communicate like that problem to investors. I just kept saying like, things are great, you know, it'll raise a million bucks and we're off for the races. I couldn't just like really explain how much we needed and why we needed it. And that caused us to have to basically become profitable super early on. So just started monetizing the

user base way more than I should have, which I think diminished the value of the brand. And for like the last year and a half to years of Magnesis, like, we weren't profitable, but we were paying all of our bills just based on revenue, just like try to monetize too quickly and too fast to keep up with my like crazy expenses. But even Magnesis had issues, like there's like stories of like, you know, the members saying we thought we were buying tickets to blank, but turns out like we didn't actually have them or maybe like Hamilton tickets, I think there's a story around that. Like you even had issues then. What were those issues? So when the fire festival came and I started going down this terrible rabbit hole, I needed money from everywhere and anywhere. And that included overselling and trying to overpromise things to Magnesis members to get that capital. And it just like took everything down. And like, I was wrong. And I was like lying everywhere thinking I could make these miracles happen. And sometimes we did, but more often than not, we crashed and burned at the end. So it just like totally just like lost track of all the good that was happening. And I know you feel bad and you probably feel, you know, some shame and all these negative things. Do you ever just laugh at like, wow, what the hell? Like, what did I do? Where did this go? How great? How far did this thing go? Like, there's a reason there's documentaries about it. So it's literally like a movie. Is there any part of you that just sort of looks at this and says, I can't believe how far I let this thing go and how far it went. Totally. And like, I was like looking and trying to think through the SPF scenario, you know, for the past couple of weeks. And I think at the end of the day, like he's obviously in a completely different stratosphere, but it's really in his position. It's really hard to say no to someone with $10 billion, right? I don't care like how smart or how wealthy you are. So much of our decision making process is based on social proof. And when you meet someone with that kind of capital, it immediately checks off all these like subconscious boxes that create this phenomenon of social proof. And I think that like to a much larger scale, that's what happened to him. But it's also happened to me where I had thousands of customers or thousands of members and all these talent and artists who are promoting the brand. That was the position where I was just like way too young, way too immature. And people who should have helped me were almost scared to say no. And I kind of like relished and thrived off of that. And this led me down this terrible, terrible rabbit hole. And when they started saying no, I was too like in my own head where, oh, you know, I pulled, pulled us off and proved you wrong before. I just like didn't know how to press that red button to stop. And that was like one of my biggest issues. I think the reason you're interesting, because every entrepreneur, we have a lot of, I mean, people who like listen to this pot are like entrepreneurial. And everyone like most internet entrepreneurs, when they get into starting businesses, they do things that are either black hat or gray hat. And then they realize they realize like, okay, this is sick. I know how to make money. Like I'm proficient at this skill set. But like, I got to do things legit because I'm going to make way more money if I and I do the same thing. I used to do these like, I mean, I've done criminal shit as well. And I'm like, what the hell am I thinking? I should do things the right way because I don't want to go to jail and I can make more money doing things ethically and not breaking the law. Like you just like make so much more money being legit. How on earth did you not learn that lesson earlier? I think just craziest thing is I

didn't know really what failure was until I failed on such a massive scale. I think part of what let me go so far is I obviously had as many losses, if not more than every other entrepreneur along the journey. But I was really good or I guess really bad at blocking out that noise. I was so focused on like this angle of nothing else matters. Like let me put my blinders on and just like keep running forward. And I just kept getting jaded to failures until the failure became so big that I'm locked in solitary confinement. And what was the end goal? Like for me, it's like I want to make a certain amount of money so I could have a certain house so I don't have to worry anymore so I could spend my monthly however much I want. And then there's there's I mean, I mean, all of us have some
ego thing of like, I want to prove to people that I'm legit. What's your motivating factor in all this? Like you say I want to have a hundred million dollars a net worth by a certain age or I want girls to have sex with me, which is like we all obviously do. Like what's like the motivating factor I want to fit in? I think I had two big like insecurities and drives. One is those initial investors who backed me when I was 18. I wanted to prove to them that they were right and fire was seven years later from that 70 years later after that. So when I want to prove they were right, I was too insecure to show any kinks in my armor to them. And two is I want to be the guy that just like took you to wild crazy experiences. And I'm like, wow, like this whole programming thing is taking me into this world of entertainment. I'm hanging out with like rappers and models and comedians and my friends don't believe me. Like I want to be that guy who can take you from your shitty college or from your like shitty desk job to this private island where the who's who the world is letting in their guards and having a blast. So it was partly like proving myself to investors and to partly prove myself to friends that like I'm the guy that made this life experience happen that you just can't get anywhere else. And we should explain the origin. So you you go from meganesis, I don't know what's in between, but at some point you create this app called the fire app. And the fire app was meant to like, let you book an artist, right? So you could be like, oh, I want you know, whatever, Timbaland to perform at a party, I can send a booking request, and he can accept or reject and there's no middleman or minimal, you know, less middlemen in the middle. And so, you know, sort of create a marketplace for, you know, people to book these artists. That was the core idea. And fire festival was a marketing stunt to promote the app, right? But at some point, the two kind of almost flipped in importance and fire festival became the overarching thing. Fire festival starts from what I understand because you meet a guy who's like, you know, I have this little plane and I fly to these random Caribbean islands. And you used to go on your weekends, you know, in this like four person plane, hang out, come back. And you were like, wow, this is so dope. People are like, wow, that sounds so dope. You're like, yeah, you should come do this too. And somehow your experience of like flying to these remote islands and having a having a good time became, what if we fly 3000 people down to this island? And we do this like festival, this Coachella like festival. Did I get that right so far? I think you told the story better than me. Okay, perfect. But but somewhere along the way, you get something wrong. Fast forwarding this because I think, you know, it's documented in other places, but I do want to explain it for somebody who's listening. So somewhere along the way, you're like, all right, we're doing this, we're doing fire festival. And you start promoting this thing. And your method of promoting was what? What was the marketing game plan to promote fire festival? So like, it all kind of stems down to I was for all my terrible flaws, I was really good at taking a tangible asset that most

people didn't have and using that to launch a business. So Magnesis had this physical card
that would cost me like $2 to make per card, and then a crazy townhouse. So my entire target
demographic didn't have access to a black card. They didn't have access to a multimillion dollar
townhouse in downtown Manhattan when they're 23 years old. So I took these two like inaccessible
things, gave it to my customers and use that to launch a business on top of fast forward to fire.
Now I'm trying to cater to these, you know, B list rappers and comedians who need small bookings.
These people aren't JZ. They aren't Drake. They don't have their own private island.
So here's where I come in. Okay, now guys, we have our own private island.
You want to be involved with me. And I use that to hopefully build the fire booking app.
So all of my marketing strategy came down to taking a tangible good or service that wasn't
available to a certain audience, giving it to them, making them feel like it's theirs and they
own it and using that to build a business. So that was the entire logic behind like the fire app
and fire festival component. And as you perfectly said, the importance quickly flipped as we
launched
the marketing for fire festival and fire festival became it and fire app became, you know, a second
thought for that period of time. It's not like a bad plan. It's not a bad idea, I guess.
On the pod, I think when the documentaries came out, we were like, honestly,
it was a dope idea. And somebody like if it had just been done, like, and it wasn't even like,
it's not like Theranos where you're like, that was a dope idea. If somebody had just done it
right, it's like, well, maybe it's technically impossible. Your shit, your thing was possible.
You just had shitty like logistics and operations and poor planning. You just threw
you just threw like the idea of the event and then the actual event did not live up to the hype.
But your thing was totally possible. What went wrong there? Why were you not able to
pull off what you had sold? The dream that you had sold where you had Bella Hadid and you had
fucking Kendall Jenner and all these people promoting that, hey, we're going to this thing.
It's going to be, you know, whatever, the party of the century.
You sold the tickets. So you got that part right. It's just you didn't deliver the party.
Do what the craziest thing is. I think lying and unable to show weaknesses made the festival fail.
And I truly believe that my backers at the time were well connected and smart enough
where I came to them and said, hey, look guys, we did this great marketing campaign,
but I have no idea what the fuck I'm doing. They would have found like the best
festival people in the world to come and actually execute this. But I was so scared to show that
I couldn't handle it that I kept saying everything is great and everything is perfect.
And that pushed away the people that would have helped me. It's like literally lying.
I think doomed the festival from day one post announcement.
Who are the big backers? Was it VCs or family offices or what?
Handful of venture funds, then, you know, 25 individuals everywhere from like larger
family offices down to just smaller angels. Who is the biggest fund or most well known fund?
I just don't want to throw anybody into the bus. So yeah.
Oh, OK. I was sure it was public. I think that some of the investor list was
a good portion of the investor list, I believe, was sealed in the court files.
And I didn't ask for it to be sealed. I think other people did. So don't want to do that.
And so you you're like, OK, I could have asked for help from organized people.

And this is where I think things get a little tricky. So you brought up SBF.
I brought up Theranos. We're talking about Fire Festival.
I think there's always a question of like, was this intentionally supposed to be a fraud?
Like, oh, I'm just going to trick people and run away.
And, you know, like with FTX right now, that's a question like,
did something happen that you weren't really paying attention to?
And then things got out of hand or from the beginning.
Oh, you were like, I'm just going to trick people and take their money.
For you, where did it where did it start?
It like, was it well intentioned at the beginning and where did it turn?
At what point did you realize, oh, I'm I got to just say this because I got to get to the next dollar. I got to get to the next the next milestone.
So truly tried to execute the event.
And literally up until people were arriving to the festival,
I thought it was going to work. And obviously that's so stupid looking back.
Yeah. How can you say that? You knew you had like fucking,
you know, tents and like grilled cheese sandwiches for people who ordered villas.
Like what how could you how could you still believe that right up to the event?
Are you sober this entire time, by the way?
Never did drugs, but was like drinking a lot.
But no drugs.
Never. Like I've smoked weed maybe six times in my life.
But I think it's like a common, you know,
people are saying I was on Coke or whatever, never tried Coke in my life.
So they could have a hard time.
OK, so yeah, back to so you're you're in a sober ish mindset.
And you actually think it's going to work the day of or the day before.
And I'm like, here's my thought process.
The island is so beautiful.
We have this like a local team who you couldn't script these characters.
They have the boats to have the jet skis.
They're going to take people out like we know how to do these experiences.
We have some crazy pilots like it's just going to be like a wild weekend
that you've never had before.
And we have 30 artists who are paid.
So you're going to have like A-list talent.
One of the most beautiful places in my opinion, like in the Atlantic Ocean
and amazing group of these like movie scripted local characters
who have toys for you to play on.
So I thought that like, OK, they'll go back and they'll have a shitty ticket.
We don't have food and shelter and bathrooms, but we got nature.
Yeah, yeah, yeah, who needs food when you have too big?
But actually, I think the craziest thing is if we marketed it like that,

it would have been amazing.
It would have been better.
Like, hey, guys, I can't figure out the logistics.
I can't afford to build like 500 houses.
But I somehow came up with the five million bucks for the artists.
We have these great people.
We have this great island like bring a sleeping bag and figure this shit out.
I think if that mindset shift was marketed, people would have been a more excited
and they would have been like felt like they're owning the adventure.
And it would have been almost like how many man years were.
And like the marketing like killed me at the end.
Like the marketing sold tickets, but it also made it fail.
What would the ideal outcome had been?
Let's say that like it just so happened to work.
How much revenue and profit would it have made?
And like, what would the ideal situation had had been?
So I have no idea.
And like my entire.
Are you fucking kidding me?
How do you not know this?
So like we had a budget for $10 million for the festival.
I didn't have $10 million.
I'm like, okay, I can reasonably raise $10 million just off of this brand
that we're building right now for the festival.
I ended up spending way more than that.
And it got to the point where I would go to sleep with no money in the bank,
wake up and know that like that day I had to raise a certain dollar amount just to survive.
And some days it was 50 grand.
Some days it was $4 million.
So I'd wake up at 9am and know that I have until 2pm to get X dollars in the bank
to then rewire it out before the day ended.
So my life was fucking hell.
And like just couldn't like zoom out.
So I was stuck.
Okay, today's $2 million.
I can call this guy.
I can call this guy.
And like at the end of the day, things keep getting bigger.
The brand is going to be so big.
If this festival works, everybody's going to get paid.
And I just didn't like know how to really run the numbers at that point.
So how much did you end up spending?
We raised 26 or 27, but we were making money from other sources.

Like we were selling tickets on top of that.
We were getting sponsors.
Magnesis was making money.
I was doing consulting jobs.
So it's like literally like every day, which is a different angle for money.
So you spent maybe like 30 million plus.
I would say in this six month period, it was probably closer to 40.
Oh my God.
And the tickets, so you sold 7,000 tickets.
Is that right?
I think it was probably just under 6,000.
It was just like around 3,000 people per weekend.
Some were given away for free and some were sold.
So we sold a little under 6,000.
Let's call it 5,000.
What was that revenue?
5,000 times what was the average ticket?
What were you selling these for?
So the average, the median ticket price was like 12 to 1,500.
However, we sold like a handful of outlier tickets
for like a couple hundred thousand dollars plus per ticket.
So then it was in 5,000 times 2,000.
You're at what's that?
10 million.
You're at 10 million in sales.
And then did you have another couple million from sponsors
or anything like that?
Yeah.
And like the issue is that some of the ticket money was held in escrow.
Some of it was for like these yachts and boats.
So it wasn't like pure 10 million dollars of free cash flow.
It was like everything was held up or not held up in certain ways.
I think like my strength account got frozen with like 700 grand
and the day the festival got canceled.
So it's like, you know, money was held in a bunch of different sources and areas.
So the event itself didn't make any sense, right?
It was like, we're going to make 10 million and we're going to spend 40.
But the brand, the brand baby, the brand is going to carry the way.
But you could have gotten so much more profit
just by running a 10 million or 40 million dollars of Facebook ads.
You know what I mean?
Like this is just like a better or a slightly different version of Cameo
or something like that.

Like these marketplaces are tried and true.
An event would have been cool if it were like a break even or a slight loss.
But that.
Yeah.
But put it this way, like for as wrong as things
are and like I can't do this tomorrow.
But if I did fire festival again in three years,
I think almost all the first group as well as the rest of like pop culture would buy tickets
just to be there to see how bad it is.
Right.
Like the brand, the brand value is there.
It's just like, how can I do it appropriately and pick the right time to go?
Are you tempted?
I mean, I have to do it again.
I just can't do it while I'm on probation.
I can't do it this year or next year, but you know, it has to be done again.
And I think no matter what success or failures I find along the way in tech,
like until I execute.
Well, sure.
1.5.
Have you seen his new company, Pirate?
Go to the website.
So I haven't gone to the website.
Let's let's do it.
Dude, trust me.
Go to it.
It's pyrt.com.
Billy, like this is the same shit that you're doing a little bit.
Like it's like when I see what you're doing and you did the met gal thing
where you got in trouble for scamming people out of that.
I'm like, A, just do a fucking course, dude.
Just create a course and make two million.
Like me and Sean make seven figures a year from this stupid stuff.
It's not stupid.
It provides value.
But I mean, it's like insignificant compared to an event.
Or like you said you like the program and you like content sites.
Like just do something like boring and straight.
Why are you doing this pirate thing?
It's like the same shit.
There's so many things that's going to go that could potentially go wrong.
It's just the stakes are so much higher than just creating some boring ass software.
I hear you.

I think pirate is actually.
Is that what you suggested all the time?
No, Billy, we have 3000 people coming tomorrow.
I hear you.
No, you might very well be right.
And I think the thing that we're getting back to with pirate is like,
I'm not trying to host a thousand people on an island.
That's not going to work.
I want to get back to those trips on the small planes with a dozen people
or two dozen people that did work well for a couple of years.
And if I have to be like a tour guide for a few years of my life and like each
shit, like I'm going to go do that.
But I can give a couple of dozen people this amazing adventurous experience.
And then while I'm doing that, I'd like to find interesting ways to broadcast those
experiences to all their followers and then give their followers a way to get involved.
So I'm not trying to figure out the logistics to host thousands of people.
I know it can host two dozen people.
And if I can take five years to build like really interesting like virtual reality tech
that allows anybody to like watch and actually influence what's happening.
I think that's like a really cool win and way to kind of get back to what I'm good at.
This is a horrible idea.
Yeah, dude.
It's a horrible idea.
I actually don't think it's a horrible idea.
If like, I think you potentially are you rank so high in capability and so high in ignorance.
Like, and that's like a perfect combination.
I think of starting a business, which is like this like confidence of like,
I think I could pull this off and I'm capable of some things.
That's actually a beautiful combination.
But you also have this third part of the of the pie chart where it's just like
reputation and like past and owing money.
I just don't understand why you're doing this.
It just you can you you are brilliant at a lot of things.
That just seems like such a starting just a boring ass agency that makes 20 million a year
and 10 million in profit.
Yeah.
If you just did like an event like a stunt marketing agency or something like that.
We have that.
We're not to get today actually.
It's all the pirate collective.
And that's how we're trying to fund.
I guess our tech is.
So so let's walk through this.

OK, so I'm on the pirate website and it says there's a picture of a private island.
So we're we're already getting flashbacks of fire.
And then it says join the crew.
A pirate is somebody who turns the impossible into adventure.
It says give me your phone number and then it says join the treasure hunt virtual reality.
So what you're saying from what what I just gathered of what you just described
is that you're going to take, you know, six to 15 people at a time on those like little planes
to the islands like you used to do where it's not such a heavy logistical lift.
Those people are going to have a great time.
They'll pay five grand or 10 grand or something.
I'm just guessing here.
They'll pay a lot of money to have this really cool adventurous experience.
And then you're going to use, you know, video plus maybe virtual reality to broadcast that
experience to other people who can't afford to go and or maybe their friends and their social media.
And they get to maybe buy a virtual ticket to kind of attend the party that way.
And you're going to do that a bunch of times.
Did I describe it right?
Or did I I'm just guessing based on what you said?
Absolutely.
So the last thing that you're missing is that the people who are basically,
so essentially we're going to partner with this little hotel.
They'll handle all the hospitality and logistics.
We'll host artists there on a regular basis.
We'll rig the hotel with these 360 cameras, live stream everything that's happening.
Then give the people who are watching the live stream the ability to buy in and
affect what's happening on the island.
So they could like have one of the artists go to the recording studio and impact the
creative process when they're making their song, or they can buy the talent like a drink,
you know, and make them take a tequila shot.
Dude, you should just have gone for being Mr. Beast.
Like we hung out with Mr. Beast and your wire just like that nut.
And I feel like if you just channeled your energy towards how do I do the craziest thing
that's going to make the craziest video that 20 million people are going to watch and then
continually one up yourself.
I feel like that would work.
That's my suggestion to you.
And you absolutely have the you have the charisma and you have the storytelling ability.
I'm like, yeah, just do just do just just make you and like a small team doing the crazy
shit and do add dollars.
But it sounds like you're sharing you want to share your screen.
You could share your screen.
I don't know.
I'm not supposed to share this, but okay, but I want to get back to what you just said.

I like that attitude.
I like that.
So this was an island we were working with.
Unfortunately, I'm not allowed to go to the Bahamas.
So this is just pure like demo purpose.
But the idea is to take like a one to one virtual representation of a property.
Track where all the talent is in real time track where all the toys are in real time.
And then people can click into various live streams.
And once they're watching a live stream, hopefully watching their favorite talent, hopefully watching their favorite talent, they could actually choose these actions to affect what's really happening there.
So it could be as crazy as me swimming in the reef and the users are starting to chum the water.
And given the sharks in the area, I think a lot of people want to see that happen.
Or as simple as buying somebody a drink.
But and what what what would the financials of this be like?
I mean, I'm sure you've now thought about that more.
You're like, what would the P&L what would the P&L they're thinking?
No, surely has it looks like one day one day it could do this.
What's that one day?
So a million people paying 20 cents to ask a talent to do something or to contribute an action towards like the real world.
So if everybody pays 20 cents to chum the water and a million people are chumming the water, then that's kind of where the financials come in.
That's all right.
I can't do that math.
Just tell me like in five years, are you in your head?
You're like, I think we could do like a hundred million dollars in eight years.
Like what's the.
Do not get me arrested, Sam.
I don't want to promise any revenue.
But no, no, sorry.
Don't promise.
I'm just saying like when you're laying in bed, you're like, I think this could become like a hundred million dollar company by doing this.
I think what's the way I think about this and my logic could be wrong is that once again, I we're not confusing the Bahamas.
But for example, the Bahamas gets around four ish million tourist a year.
And if we're doing these really interesting broadcasts, we can have more than four million people in a single day like virtually come to the island.
So if we can just like totally destroy their tourism numbers on a virtual scale, I think it's a big revenue opportunity.
So okay.

So where did you come up with this idea?
Were you in prison or was it once you got out that you were like, all right,
I'm going to start my brainstorm.
No, I was in solitary confinement and it's like totally, totally confined.
And you know, a lot of it was just like reflection.
And then a lot of it too is I want to get outside of these walls and just like.
Get back to adventure and then find a way to share this.
So we should say, by the way, that's kind of where you got into.
Solitary because you attempted to do a podcast from inside prison.
Yeah.
Terrible idea.
What the well, first, did you know that was not allowed?
Was that I didn't even realize that would be such a faux pas.
Like that that was that would be such a.
Of course that would be a faux pas.
Doing a podcast.
Why podcasts are great.
Dude, they read your mail and shit.
You can't like and like each inmate, you have like different rules for you, right?
Like if a journalist calls you and you do an interview, is that allowed?
That's allowed.
I was wrong.
The toughest part though is like it was a gray area.
I think if it was like a clear violation of the rules,
my punishment would have been like less strict.
I use the pay phone like they're available pay phones.
But at the same time, like you can't cause attention to the jail, right?
And that's what I did.
So I understand like why it was like so incredibly stupid.
But I think if I had a clear violation of the rules,
I would have gone to solitary for like 45 days and not seven months.
So you basically had a podcast host call you on the pay phone
and then you did your side of the podcast from the pay phone
in like 10 minute or 15 minute increments, right?
Because that's how you were allowed.
Exactly.
Exactly.
Yeah.
I mean, I understand why you think that's gray.
It's like, what's the difference between prostitution and pornography?
You know, it's like, oh, I don't know if there's a camera there.
It's like you're safe.
Like, you know, I mean, like you're like playing this like,

I don't know if I would be if I would be risking things at that moment.
I mean, I, I've when I was in college, I did stupid stuff and I got in trouble.
And I remember getting in trouble and thinking like,
I don't ever want to come back to jail again.
And more so it solitary confinement seems like I would kill myself.
I think I would want to commit suicide.
Like that sounds like that's like the seven months in a box.
It seems like the worst, that's the worst possible outcome,
let alone like, you know, getting life, you know,
like El Chapo and some of these guys and these like Florence
and all these like high, high level security.
What was that like seven months being in that cell?
I get anxious just thinking about it.
I actually think that it's counterproductive in terms of reform,
if that kind of makes sense.
And the other time in jail, like,
I don't think it's going to have like long lost,
long lasting negative impacts on my life.
I did 10 months total in solitary one time for three, one time for seven.
I think like that actually makes it more likely
that I make a mistake in the future.
And obviously if I do make a mistake, it's totally on me.
But like the mental hangover that I have where it's like somebody out there
could snap their fingers and put me into a concrete box.
Like that's scary.
Like that's what gives me the nightmares at night.
And I think that like, if anything,
that makes, you know, ideas bigger or different
because you're kind of fearful of that outcome.
So I don't know, it's fucking hard.
And like there are guys who have done way more than 10 months
and I can't imagine what they feel like.
But I think that's like the worst part of the experience
and actually it's just counterproductive.
Did you know it was going to be seven months or is like,
do you know there's an end point or you didn't know?
No. And I think if they said, hey, this is seven months,
then you're getting out and then you're going home a year after that.
It would have been totally different.
But the fact that they kept fucking with me,
basically saying, hey, you're never getting out of here.
You're going to get in trouble more.
Like that was the biggest mind fuck you just like wake up every morning

and be like, this is never going to end.
You mean the guards were just assholes?
Yeah. And the jail.
They literally in response to the podcast,
they tried to send me to a terrorist facility called the CMC
in Marion, Illinois.
You can like look at their inmates on Wikipedia.
And like I'd be one of two non-terrorist facility
and they would come and fuck with me and like pass like program statements
under my door for this communication management unit.
Like here's where you're going, McFarland.
And like I thought they were bluffing.
And then like a day later, oh, we submitted you there.
And like they legitimately tried to send me to a terrorist facility
and it's like, you're never getting out.
What's going to happen?
That is fucking crazy.
I think that like whenever I was thinking,
I remember talking to my wife at the time
when you were getting in trouble.
And I'm like, unfortunately, I think four or five years
probably is a fair is probably a fair punishment.
I don't think solitary is a fair punishment.
And I don't think being like tormented is fair though.
We should also say you went to jail,
not because you threw a bad festival.
You went to jail for what was the exact reason?
Lying to and lying to investors.
And you lied what about the financials or what did you lie about?
Yes, badly, financials, revenue, personal company.
What were you doing?
You're literally making shit up or what were you doing?
What's that charge is fraud?
Wire fraud, I think is the main charge.
But there were a couple,
couple surrounding charges as well.
But basically anytime you lie to get money,
it's essentially wire fraud in the eyes
of the federal government.
But you you are making fake documents.
Like you were photoshopping things
and making fake PDFs, I think, right?
Yeah, I made I just made fake like Excel documents basically

saying, hey, our income is X million this month.
And it wasn't close.
So I was, you know, totally guilty.
It was it wasn't like it wasn't a gray area.
I was black and white, wrong. Right.
The festival was better than I advertised,
which is obviously impossible.
I still haven't gone to jail when you.
So I remember being like, OK, wow, that's crazy.
Sounds like, you know, he got kind of in over his head, you know,
and I was having some sort of sympathy in a way.
And then there was some story like when you were on probation,
then you did something else.
You created something called like VIP access or some shit like that.
Met Gala. Yeah.
And then that was also like, you know,
you know, little fugazi in some way.
What was that?
And how do you defend that part, right?
Because that's after the fact now and you're already on probation.
And was it just like I just had a habit of doing this?
What was going on there?
The only defense is that I was a fucking idiot.
Like there's no other way to to get around that.
Yeah, I was totally wrong.
And I kind of got in this mindset where it's all about the money.
I'm like, that's probably wrong.
Then figured, hey, I need to find a way to pay everybody back.
And let's get back to what I was doing at Magnesis at the end
to kind of fund FireFestal, which is to sell these tickets.
Right.
And dude, you needed you needed like a like if I was your father,
I would have just I would have punched you in the fucking face.
And I'd be like, Billy, like this is you're you're hurting me.
You're like you're hurt.
Like you needed like a like a like someone just to be like, dude,
you are so talented, but you are fucking this up so much.
It's like these are such clear mistakes.
I don't understand why I don't understand.
Like did you not have a friend that was like it sounds like you were trying to
trying to do a quick fix if I can get the money back,
if I could pay people back, then I'm not going to get in trouble about the other thing.
Is that is that accurate as what you were thinking?

I was scared of jail.
Like no one was picking up my calls anymore.
I'm on, you know, on bond, I guess.
And like, I just couldn't once again, I couldn't zoom out and understand
the bigger picture where if I sat down, shut the fuck up.
Yeah, sure.
I'll be broke for a couple of years, but I'll go to jail for two or three years
and I'll get out my late 20s and, you know, have a chance to pay people back
the right way. And I just like couldn't understand that.
But yeah, I think that like going forward, a big thought process for me,
and it's been three months is, you know, how do I position myself,
whether like, whether it's a company or something else, like to get that help I need.
And do I operate within a bigger company?
Do I find like partners that, you know, are senior to me and experience
an age who I can like trust and defer to.
So it's just all part of my journey right now.
And I think that like this time around, I think I prefer those boundaries more
and it's just trying to find it and spend, you know, super early in the process.
Are you going to raise funding for this next company?
I think a lot of people, I don't know, but if I had a bet, I would say you probably
actually could raise, I bet you there's people that would give you money.
Is that.
So I texted a, I texted like eight venture funds a few weeks ago.
And, you know, we're literally like a broken grammar, like two line sentence,
like two told me to fuck off, like, you know, one didn't respond.
You know, one asked for more questions and four is like responding and like, you know,
within a minute saying we're in the issue is, you know, as I've kind of gone through
the process, I'm actually not allowed, due to an SEC deal, I'm not allowed to raise securities.
So I can't go and raise money.
I think the ironic part is that like it's probably going to, it would have been easier
this time to raise venture money and like no decks, like none of that shit.
Like I said, I have no decks.
Here's all, here's all I have.
And yeah, people want to back it.
I just can't raise the funds.
So.
And I think that would shock people is that, you know, you just had a few
you just had a 50% hit rate on a text message, but how do you explain that to somebody who's listening?
And they're like, you know, there's some people who are frustrated that that's the case.
I can't believe people would fund him.
How would you explain it?
Because it's people, people are making this decision.

They're smart people.
They're capable people.
They have other options.
How would you explain why, why somebody would be willing to do that?
So I started trying to raise money for the first time almost 12, over 12 years ago now.
And, you know, as with everybody, the first X people told me to fuck off and kind of laughed at me. And like, so I went through 12 years of shit, including 10 months of solitary confinement to like get to the point where maybe an investor believes that I've learned enough lessons to focus on what I'm good at and get help to put them bad at.
So it's not like it is like wake up one day and can raise money.
It was it's been 12 years of just like totally fucking up to get to this point.
But yeah, and I think that before I raise money and obviously like legally I can't do it.
I'm not going to be allowed to do it is I need the help, right?
And I need like the system and the structure in place where let me go and market and like come up with these experiences and adventures and, you know, drive attention.
But if somebody else who could just help me manage like financials and logistics and operations.
What other ideas did you have?
If you weren't going to do something fire festively, did you have like other?
I'm sure you had a lot of time on your hands to think of other ideas.
Did you think about any other potential things you could do with your time?
Maybe not even businesses, just other things you might do.
I think if someone wants to go in and really understand GPT three,
like the what's kind of powering the open AI and just become an expert on that.
I think you can be like make it killing as a consultant and like teaching all these big brands,
like what's happening there and like what's going to happen.
So I think that's like one option to kind of go and like become a GPT three like expert and like be the good guy for a lot of brands.
Is your experience with GPT three since sorry when you got out six months ago?
Yeah, I actually was reading about it for like a year in jail.
Didn't even like no open AI was the name of the company or anything like that.
But it's like had random books sent in.
So I was like, oh, this is super interesting.
And like have dozens of pages and notes on it.
Maybe I'll post them.
But like kind of come out and see what happened recently, which is pretty cool.
So I agree.
I think that could be a great company.
And I bet you'd kill it because you're pretty good at selling.
By the way, yes, I think if I was close with you, I'd be like, Billy, do that.
What else?
What else has excited you?
What other ideas?
I think the concept of fire app, which is providing transparency

to a lot of these like legacy entertainment systems is interesting.
One, I think, which is really interesting right now
is like performance marketing for like social media and influencers.
So I think one, the reason why the fire just take a step back.
The reason why the fire festival marketing, I think works so well
is at the exact same time we had 400 people post this orange tile.
But these 400 people weren't related, right?
It was some music artists, like some comedians, some athletes, some models.
So when you're in our target audience and you're scrolling through your Instagram feed,
you're like, why the fuck are these five people who don't know each other
all posting this right now?
Like I need to go check this out.
So one idea I had is that basically creating like a marketplace for influencer marketing
where let's say like Starbucks has a new coffee that they want to advertise.
They can go and upload all their creative assets and set like a million dollar budget.
And then anybody around the world could take those assets and post it to their Instagram
or their tech talk to their YouTube.
And then they basically get a score for how much engagement they get in their content.
And their overall score gets in the percentage of the budget.
So if Kim Kardashian posts it and she crushes it, you know, she gets 900 grand
and $100,000 is split up to, you know, another million people who all kind of post it.
I think it's like a fun way to remove all these bullshit middlemen
in this whole social marketing world and then allow a brand to turn all of their followers
into advertisers for that company without dealing with any of the legwork.
Almost like clout.
Do you remember clout with a K?
Yeah, yeah, I do.
They measure like your overall social score, right?
Yeah, they raised a ton of money and probably sold for less than their valuation of $100 million.
Or I think they sold for a hundred, which was less, I think, than what they raised at.
But I actually thought it was a fantastic idea.
For some reason, it didn't work.
I don't know why, but you'd be in that space a little bit, it sounds like.
Yeah, I think it's interesting.
It's like providing a score to how well your content performs and getting paid off of that,
but then turning everybody into your promoters.
Yeah, I think that's a really cool idea.
It also flips the model on its head.
Right now, you have to do individual manual outreach and then negotiations and then whatever,
versus just saying it's in the reverse.
Here's a giant honeypot.
If you want it, go get it and then basically divvying it up based on the actual performance
versus who can negotiate the best at the given moment.

Okay, so that's a really cool idea.
What else you got?
Yeah, those are my two.
So GPT-3 expert and then providing an open marketplace where brands can upload their creative assets and anybody can publish them and get paid based on performance.
And why not do that one?
Yeah, and why not?
Why just settle on the one versus those two?
I mean, they sound quite reasonable.
Yeah, maybe I'll do them.
No, you won't.
I don't think you will.
I don't know.
I don't think you will.
I guess you just have this, you must have a fire in you where you're no pun intended, where you're like, I have to go this event route, which is baffling.
I mean, but I guess people just passionate people are passionate about certain things.
I get it.
But logically, I don't want to see you fail, I guess.
I want to see you succeed and prove people wrong.
And I want to prove that second chances could work.
And so when I see this, I'm like, oh man, you're just playing this game on hard mode.
I think you're not making the same mistakes on the, obviously on the, I have no idea, but that'd be crazy if you're making the same mistakes as far as what got you into prison.
But you're also choosing a business model that's super hard.
You're talking about a million people paying 20 cents to chum the waters.
And it's like, I don't even know, those words have never even been said together.
So it's like, you're choosing to try to pull off a really, really, really difficult thing.
And it just seems like, I guess like my philosophy is I was like, in business, there's no extra points for difficulty.
In fact, you get, you get docked points for difficulty.
The harder something is, you know, the less money you end up making.
And so there are no bonus points for doing things the hard way.
Now on the other side, there is one advantage, which is when you go do something cool and audacious every day you wake up and you're motivated and maybe you can recruit people who are motivated to pull off something epic because epic things have their own, you know, motivational draw to actually go and do your best work.
Which, which he just did.
I saw on your Twitter and I think TikTok, you said, Hey, everyone, I'm hiring for my new thing.
How many applicants did you get?
Yeah. So back to a business idea, I think it's really interesting is we partner with a company called bounty hunter world to hire and they're trying to disrupt the whole recruiter model

where they're saying anybody can refer a friend to a job.
And if you successfully refer someone, you get paid that recruiting fee.
And as you guys know, like those fees could be crazy.
So I think like their site is super awesome.
And then we tried to like one up it.
So we're saying anybody who refers a friend to pirate that we ended up hiring,
we take that person on one of these pirate experiences.
So trying to like give the island entertainer experience to like any of our fans.
And we've had a lot of people apply for jobs.
I think the craziest thing is like, we have no money.
And I'm probably like paying 15 to 20% of what I was paying for the same role
five or six years ago and probably getting like better people.
So I think it all goes to show like your mission and your intention is just so much
more important than anything else.
I'm like, how big, how big is the list of this?
Like I put my phone number into this thing.
How big is the list?
How many people have signed up to like do the treasure hunt?
I'll tell you right now.
Not that many.
I think the phone number is like a tough overall ask around 2000.
Okay.
So yeah, it's not bad.
I'm shocked you didn't get more because the NELT boys thing,
that got 1.5 million views.
And I then yeah, I think like we're getting a lot of inbound.
It's like social like Instagram DMs, I think are just have gone crazy.
I think the conversion to like a phone number through a platform has been a little bit harder
for us, but yeah, overall, it's like, how do we kind of organize all these DMs?
And maybe that's a different business too.
If someone can build an inbox that takes inbound across like Instagram DMs, LinkedIn,
like in mail, your like your public email address and organize all of that and like
kind of qualify those leads, that's something that I would pay for on a monthly basis.
And you're building all of this right now with, I think you said you collected 150K in
revenue so far from like brand deals or something like that.
Yeah, 170 since November 1st, yeah.
Since November 1st.
Well, I mean, that's a pretty good run rate already.
So you're building this business now.
You have $170,000 just to play with.
That's kind of your starting point.
Yeah, don't worry, we spent it already.
Did you really?

We're just trying to survive.
So dude, have you ever heard of like Pilot or Bench?
Dude, there's these like really good accounting like software companies that you could use.
It's like a thousand a month and they'll just like tell you like your P&L like you should
or like a part-time CFO like, I don't know, man.
Maybe that would be a good investment.
I need all of it.
I need like, I need help.
So if anybody's listening to us.
I almost said you had an Excel license.
Yeah, have you ever heard of QuickBooks?
I mean, like, I don't know, man.
I think you should like really sweat the details on this stuff.
Well, FDX use QuickBooks and look what happens.
Well, correlation, not causation, but I mean,
you know, speaking of that, what do you think?
Sean and I have both interacted a bit with Martin Screlli.
And unfortunately, you know, you're in the same vein.
There's you, there's Martin, and then there's now, I think,
Sean doesn't like calling them SPF because winners don't get accurate.
Winners don't get nicknames.
He's just, he's just Samuel now.
But what do you think?
What's your take on what's going to happen with him?
40 years.
And then you think 40, you've after like, yeah, then he'll get after like 15 to 20.
You think that's fair?
That's my, that's my guess.
I don't know.
That's my guess.
I talked to Martin after he got out and I was like, what was it like in prison?
He had a bunch of stories where he's like, yeah, I created a cryptocurrency study club.
I, you know, I had like, you know, all these like, yeah, we had this system where I was,
you know, selling information about what I was reading tons of books.
I had access to the internet.
He's like, I would be under the covers at night, like,
basically watching the Khan Academy videos, learning about like calculus.
And what's it, what do you do to pass the time?
What was your life like?
I think the hardest part about prison is it's designed to strip you of your ambition.
Right.
Cause like there are great people there and I bet some really incredible people,
but there also are a lot of bad people and you can't put bad people into an environment

where they're inspired and they have ambition to act on their bad impulses.
So there's this concept of being institutionalized and essentially it's meant
to just make you a human robot.
And I think it's like good in a certain way that it makes the time easier, but like naturally
I was just trying to fight against like all like the set process as much as possible.
So I think it made my time go really, really slow.
I was trying to fight to like find ways to stay creative.
What's an example?
In an environment meant to make you robot.
Like they feed you at the same time every day.
Like they turn the lights off at the same time.
You can only use your phones from a certain period of time.
Like just everything is like structured like this, like get to wear a uniform to go to lunch.
And it's like, you're trying to find ways where like, you know,
trying to find my creative periods and just not make every day the same.
So I can just like keep different ideas flowing and coming to me.
What were some things you did successfully to kind of like amuse yourself?
What were your maybe little tactics, little wins you had as to keep that creative, you know, spark alive?
Yeah, training a lot of boxing.
So I had like a cellmate who was a former Puerto Rican like professional boxer
and he had like wrap his hands with towels and like, you know, train me in boxing, which is super fun.
We didn't have that guys would take like toilet paper rolls and wrap them in tube socks and use that like for mitts.
So yeah, it's like finding like creative ways to go and like exercise and for your mind and like do little things you're not supposed to.
It doesn't hurt anybody.
Like you couldn't practice martial arts, but you know, you go in the back and have the guy hold your mitts for you for a half hour.
You can kind of get away with it.
It's like a good way to escape.
You look like you're in better shape.
Yeah, I was bad as hell.
So hard, hard not to be.
What are some stereotypes that, you know, we would have about your experience that either prove to be true or like that maybe weren't true about the whole experience?
The whole like racial segregation totally thing.
Yeah, totally thing.
I think like being in New York, I'm a little naive and spoiled to, I guess, like a lot of what probably exists in other parts of the world.
But literally being in a place where if you're black, you go in this line for lunch and if you're white, you go in this line for lunch and you just can't cross over.

It's like wild.
It just like feels like it's 60 years behind the times and obviously something that like have an experience in New York and like probably spoiled to that sense.
But really kind of getting over the racial issues were, I think, kind of a weird hard part for me.
And it's probably like what's weird about it is like when they separate by races, it's not always out of a place of hate.
It's just like, no, this is just you stay with us, they go with them.
And it's not necessarily that they're they hate the other group.
It's just this is just how we do things.
Yeah, it's always been done this way.
It's just how we're going to do it.
And like there certainly are terrible races on both sides, but the majority aren't.
There's like, this is the way it's done.
So this is the way we're going to do it.
And like, it doesn't really make sense.
If you could go in and change one way that the prison system works.
Well, while still, you know, achieving the goal and then the job to be done of a prison,
what would you change now that you've kind of saw it from the inside?
I think that I would make sentencing more equal across the board.
And there are a lot of people who committed the exact same crime who had wildly different sentences.
And this is almost like an interesting problem.
Maybe it's a really cool business is to build some sort of like AI sentencing thing.
Because like right now it's up to one independent judge.
And that judge, like in my case, I've could have gotten nothing or I could have gotten 20 years.
I'm like, literally one person can decide the fate of your life.
And I think what I got is fair for me, but many other people sense is weren't fair.
So maybe it's some sort of system that takes in all the information around someone's crime
and their personal life.
And then studying everybody else who has had similar crimes and seeing who was successful
and actually sentencing based on this idea of future success.
Well, what are some examples of different punishments
or different sentences based off of different crime or similar crimes?
So I think for my situation was a financial crime.
And typically your sentence is based on what the dollar amount that victims lost is.
So the more you lose, the more time you should get.
I think like there's plenty of people who were from New York,
whose dollar amounts were hundreds of millions of dollars who got one or two years.
And I go out to a jail in Detroit where there's people who have lost $500,000 who got 30 years.
So it's like they're just total disparity where it shouldn't be like that.
I don't think sentences are based on future success.
And some judges are like, I think kind enough and smart enough to do that, but some aren't.
So almost like having this AI system that recommends a sentence

in addition to the judge, there's like a different data point.
I think it could be super interesting.
Yeah, that's a cool idea.
That is crazy.
Because like the judge, it could be like this happens where a judge is in a bad mood.
Or has seen certain patterns that are biased.
And yeah, I mean, that is it is pretty wild.
You know, I've had friends like go through some of this stuff and they're like, oh, this person was in a great mood today.
And I just or I just happen to get this person who falls under this political party.
And this is what happened.
It is that is pretty crazy.
It's just tough.
I'm like, look at Elizabeth Holmes.
She realistically could have gotten two years or she got it.
She could have gotten 35 years, right?
And it's like it's up to one person to determine what that length of time is.
And that's it's like a big task for some to take on.
And yeah, unfortunately, the system isn't fair.
Yeah.
So do they have like a like a like, you know, if you go to a company and you're going to get a job, it's not just up to the manager to just pick a random number for what you get to get paid.
It's like, no, we know for this job title with this many years of experience, this is the range and the range is between this and this.
And if you're going to go outside of that range, you got to have like a pretty strong indicator.
And it's like people have to be notified that I'm going way outside the range, the normal like expected range in order to make this offer.
It's almost like they kind of need that or maybe they have a version of that for judges who are trying to sentence.
They have a guideline system that gives you like a recommended range.
And that definitely helps.
And it's good.
I think the issue though is that it's really hard for the judge to get to know someone to the short period of time.
And those who have access to great attorneys have an advantage because like your attorney's entire job in the federal system is like, you're going to lose the case.
It's all about presenting who you really are as a person and why you should be afforded a second chance at some point in the future.
So people who don't have access to quality attorneys just don't really have that same opportunity to explain why they should have a second chance.

And so I think that the AI probably benefits more of your like lower income
defendant, which is most of them who can't afford their own attorneys,
to just show they're more of a human than just like what the crime is.
Did you have a fancy lawyer?
I had a good lawyer.
So like, and I just made an impossible for him, right?
Like getting in trouble again on bail.
There's like nothing he could have done.
Oh, just to pose a moron.
Like I could have had 20 lawyers.
It wouldn't have mattered.
I would have, you know.
Sean, have you ever seen the movie Catch Me If You Can?
Of course.
Great movie.
And so I read about that guy a lot.
Frank Ebnaily Jr.
And turns out most of what like he made this book about his crimes and turns out
it's likely like mostly lies.
I think like they prove like he's been proven time and time again that he didn't
actually do what he said he did in terms of crimes.
But he like glamorized it.
And then he turned it into like a pretty successful consulting business.
I don't know how big, but like I looked up where he lives and he has got like a,
you know, multi-million dollar home and he's always wearing these nice suits.
And he looks like he's, he's done a good job.
When I look at him, Billy, I'm like, well, that guy is kind of like a good example of
like, like, you know, turning shit into gold and like turning a situation around.
Did you ever think about kind of going that route?
Like, I think I like, I would just, yeah, I'd hate to live off of like fire
for the rest of my life.
And then there's like a short window opportunity where the attention from it
will allow my next business just to start with the springboard.
But I'd much rather be known for and fail or succeed at a new business
and being someone who just talks about fire festival for next 30 years.
Like that's boring as fuck.
But I understand why some people would want to.
I agree it is boring, but when you, you know, are in debt of $25 million, it's like, well,
you know, like I, unfortunately I have to sacrifice my excitement in order to make this work.
On the other hand, he has got nothing to lose really.
Well, what does he have to lose?
He's got like, all right, well, starting back from scratch, reputation was pretty tainted.
And in a pretty deep restitutional hole where you got to pay back like $25, $30 million or

something like that.
Why not swing and do what you want with your life versus, you know,
you know, I guess, I guess it is there in a way it is.
It is a good idea to just go for like the most whatever is the most sort of exciting
and fun and fulfilling thing for you.
And how do you find pride?
Right?
Like, I think that talking about it, like I failed the business when I was 24 and 25,
when I'm 40, I'm not going to wake up with juice to keep going.
Like, I think like, if I see somebody else doing that, I'm like, oh, what a fucking loser.
Like, I don't want to be that person.
So I'd rather go and like try to improve.
And like, whether I fail or succeed is try something new and different
and try to build something of value.
So if it all works, if life goes the way you want it and you're now 65, 70 years old,
what's Billy McFarland?
Who is he?
What happened if it all works out for you?
Yeah.
He took his failures, learned from it, used it as a springboard to build something new.
And like, whether it's pirate or something else that I do in 10 years from now and one
for it, but like made good friends and help people along the way.
And if I can pay back $25 million, amazing.
If I pay back a million dollars, but you know, I try it and do it honestly, like,
that's okay too, I think.
And yeah.
And I actually, I think that a lot of the investors listening would probably agree with that.
As long as it's kind of done the right way, I think at this point it's less about the money
and more about how I change.
Well, we appreciate you coming on.
You know, this was like, when we were, I was preparing for this and I was like, man,
I don't know how to approach this.
I don't want to like glamorize someone who's done something bad.
But like, this was a really confusing thing to do.
But I'm happy we were able to talk.
I'm going to be following your story very closely.
I'm very eager to see how you pulled this off.
And frankly, I want you to pull it off.
You know, I want, I want redemption to be real and I want it to work.
Everyone deserves a second chance.
So I hope, I hope it does.
Thank you guys.
Super cool to finally be here.

So Sam and Sean, thank you guys.
Thanks for coming on.