

[Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / E248: Mia Khalifa's Heart Breaking Reality Of Being Controlled By The Adult Industry

I couldn't scream loud enough. There's nothing I could do to make it go away or to make them stop. I didn't

Are you okay talking about this?

Can we take a break Mia Khalifa Mia Khalifa Mia Khalifa

I'm Sarah Sarah and Joe Sarah Joe the former adult film star now business owner and social media activists with over 50 million followers

Where should this story start?

I lived through a lot of conflict in Lebanon and then I moved to America and I

Was bullied for being Middle Eastern. It was around the time of 9-11. That was pretty difficult

Made a lot of choices that I can't take back your husband when you're 18 years old is encouraging you towards the adult entertainment industry

What did they stand to gain from that?

fetishization

I

Fucked up because I signed a contract that says in perpetuity on it. Do you know how dangerous and predatory that is?

What was your anxiety at its highest?

The company going after me publicly the major production companies prey on vulnerable young women

Didn't shower didn't brush my teeth and eat didn't leave my bed

It's following me for the rest of my life

But I am not the sum of the things I've been through or the adversities I've faced

For people that are really struggling. How did you get out of that phase?

Quick one before this episode starts about

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It helps this show more than I could possibly say and the bigger the show gets the better the guests get

Thank you and enjoy this conversation

Where should this story start where where should where does your story start?

What is the most sort of pertinent moment that you recall from your memory?

That is shape the woman that is sat in front of me today

It honestly feels like

The last year or two

That's that's where that's where my life started and where I should start because the woman that's in front of you

Right now has been a work in progress and is still a work in progress

and I feel like I've been my

Like my most authentic and purest form of myself in the past year or two

Like the closer to today we get

the more secure I feel in who I am and

Who that person is but obviously there was a lot of other things that

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Happened to get me to this point, but
Yeah to answer that question like a year or two. Let's start at the end then which is today. Yeah,
why?
why
The closer we are to today the more authentic you feel to yourself. Why I'm
I'm going after the things I actually want and I'm going into my confidence and
The self assurance that I've gained from from doing the things I love and accomplishing my goals
Has formed who I am and it feels really good and it feels very validating and it's just
It's never clicked before and they always say like oh the
Confidence is the key to everything confidence will unlock everything for you and I never really
understood that because it's like okay
where the fuck does the confidence come from how do you just simply get confidence and
um, I have grown to realize that confidence comes from
um
Just accomplishing things that you want to accomplish and being proud of yourself and that pride
Makes you feel confident like I I feel confident even when I mess up now. Whereas if I messed up
five six
10 years ago it would send me into
A pit of shame
A really unhealthy
Just
Downward spiral that would get me nowhere
Did you ever imagine being here?
Did you ever imagine being
In the state you currently are today happiness confidence, etc, etc
and I don't want to put words in your mouth there in terms of the word happiness, but
The place you are today
In the recent over the last ten years, did you imagine you would get to this point? Or did this seem
unimaginable?
It seemed unimaginable for a while
But my mental health was also not as strong as it is
today, um, there was
There was a lot of periods in my life where I couldn't see past
48 hours let alone 10 years. It was very day to day for a while and
I think that's why I'm so confident because right now if you ask me what I can see in 10 years
I feel like I can answer that. I know what I want. I know what my goals are and what I want to
accomplish. So
Yeah, even in interviews five years ago when they would ask me, where do you see yourself in five
years?
I would always say I have no fucking clue
I don't know where I see myself next week
And what changed?
Taking risks honestly, um

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just taking a few risks here and there and seeing them play out for the better and learning from my mistakes and learning what I want and
Saying no to a lot of things to get to what I want like job opportunities and and things that didn't really align with
What I thought I wanted in a year or two or five years or even 10 years as like my confidence started to grow and
I started to actually see
life plans for myself, um
taking taking risks and
walking away from those risks either having them play out for the better or um
Learning from the mistakes and learning. Oh, this didn't work. This is what I need to do next time.
Oh, this didn't work. I crossed my own
I I crossed a boundary of mine and now I don't feel good now. I know
This is past where I should be pushing myself. Um a lot of trial and error
Confidence confidence is a through line throughout your story. Um
Take me back to your earliest memories of lacking in confidence
Yeah, and where because you know, I came to this country from Botswana in Africa when I was a young young boy and I struggled
I think we both struggled with
um being accepted by the culture we had arrived in
Me and Plymouth only black kids curly hair trying to figure out why my hair's not straight relaxing it chemically all the time
Um, why were there any black family in this all white school?
etc etc and then that battle with like
The lack of enoughness not feeling like I was enough and what I did to try and make myself feel like I was enough
But take me back to your story at the earliest moment where you struggled with
Um, not feeling like you were enough or confident enough
I mean, it does it's not even coming to America. It's being in Lebanon. There was colorism there I was the darkest one in my family. There was colorism
At the school that I was at. Um, I felt like a bit of an outsider because I was
Darker than what the beauty standard for a Lebanese girl is which is
Like light skin light light her skin all of undertones dark hair green eyes
Like that's the epitome of a beautiful woman in Lebanon. Um, and then I moved to America and that just got
It went to the extreme side of that. I was definitely one of the
Darkest kids. I was bullied for being Middle Eastern. It was around the time of 9 11. That was pretty difficult
especially since
It was in Washington DC and Washington DC was
heavily impacted by 9 11. Um, the Pentagon was hit
New York is
Not that far from us. It's about four hours. Like

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So many people in my school either had family and parents that worked at the Pentagon
it was a lot of
Bullying that then turned into internalized racism and all I wanted to do from then forward
Like you said, you wanted to relax your hair. You wanted to
You you wanted to assimilate and fit in
I also wanted the same thing and I just
Held that in and it it turned into internalized racism
How did that go because I I often reflect and I'm I think it's taken me time to look back in hindsight
and realize what I was feeling
Versus in the moment, you're kind of just in a state of like defense
It's like, how do I get through today? How do I get these people to like me versus?
You know, and I look back and think no, man, you had so much shame
Like you were carrying around shame and insecurity. Um, how did that go at that time?
So you how old are you at this point seven ten?
11
um
eight nine eight nine, okay
And how how were you aware of your feelings? I guess is the question. Yeah. Yeah, very much so I
think I think
Yeah, I've always been
an introvert and um very aware of of what I was going through and
Angsty and even like going into my teen years. I've always been
Aware of the fact that I what I was feeling is
shame or what I was feeling is
um
I'm not feeling like I'm enough I
Feel like
Yes, I've I've always been aware of that feeling. It there was also confusion with it, but
I think self-awareness has been
Prevalent the whole time
What was your relationship like with yourself in those teen years? I was very hard on myself. Um, I
was very
angry at myself for not fitting in and for not being a certain way and um
Yeah, just
I did not like myself
I didn't like the reflection in the mirror and
Me not liking the reflection in the mirror obviously affected my confidence myself esteem everything
So in turn, I also didn't like the choices that I was making which made me not only hate the
reflection
But hate the person that I was with at the end of the day
The choices you're making. Yeah. Um, I think insecurity leads you to
Leads you to do things for validation that you otherwise wouldn't if you were secure in yourself or if
you respected yourself or if you loved yourself

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Like relationship choices
relationship choices, um lifestyle choices at anything
anything
What what are some of those so in the context of relationships from doing this conversation with multiple people?
I've I've started to sort of piece dots together around if your
Self-esteem is lacking. You might become a people pleaser. Yeah in your in your work
So you might you know be exploited by your work and you might not get what you deserve in your job
Is there anything else that you've seen as a symptom or a consequence of having real low self-esteem
People might be able to relate to
Like for you so much it's such a broad spectrum because you can either turn into a people pleaser or you can turn into an insufferable
A people pleaser on the surface level
Everyone loves a people pleaser. They they want to please everybody
but the downside of a people pleaser is
they want to please everybody they
Have no boundaries with themselves or with other people. They don't respect their own boundaries they don't respect others boundaries if they're people pleasing person a and
What person b wants goes against what person a wants they will find a way to please both of them.
So a people pleaser
also turns into
someone who lies someone who deceives someone who
Is a habitual boundary crosser with themselves and with other people like it's there's there's a spectrum to it
I would say it was definitely a people pleaser
I also
sought validation from
From people who's looking back on it now whose opinion I probably shouldn't have respected back then let alone today
So that is that was a that was a downside
Made a lot of choices that I that I can't take back
porn being one of
The biggest ones but I feel like that wasn't even the first one the first one was
getting into
a relationship that I never should have been in with someone who
was
Extremely abusive extremely
dangerous in the sense that
Looking back on it and and having the self-awareness and and being able to call it what it was is
grooming it was
it was

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it was just a relationship that
I feel like a lot of girls get into when they're in their late teens
What what does that happen? What do you mean?
This really getting into a relationship when you're roughly 18 years old, wasn't it the relationship started when I was 16
Okay, then went until I was about 20 and this person was significantly older than you. Yes
Yes, the
age difference was
How to play in that dynamic my low self-esteem how to play in that dynamic
um
everything was just kind of like
16 yeah
This person's double your age. No, no, no, it was about a 10 year age difference. Okay
okay
And at 16 what were you when you looked forward to your future?
Had you asked yourself that question about you know, what happens in 10 years time?
Oh, no, no, I wouldn't have known what happened in a week's time. It was I mean
I got I got talked into a loping to Las Vegas four days after my 18th birthday
So if you asked me where I see myself in five years, I don't I don't know
I would have looked at you with doe eyes and said I don't know and then looked over at him. Where
do you see me in five years?
like
I
I didn't have
A sense of self so I attached myself to someone who
Was more than happy to abuse that and someone who could see that and see someone easily
Manipulatable. Yeah, but at the same time
Eager to please so
Yeah, it was just the perfect storm perfect storm. Yeah, you got married at 18. Yeah, even that is
Uncommon to say the least. Yeah
Do not recommend it
So when you say that this this, you know, this person clearly took advantage of several things that
were present in you
Whether that was low self-esteem or
You know, just general inexperience and naivety of being a young a young woman
Which direction in life did they push you towards?
Did they push you towards becoming a
A really good partner to them or do they put you push in a professional direction or was it do they
pull you towards themselves themselves?
yeah, it was
There was there was no encouragement. There was no pushing towards anything. It was an
extremely
unhealthy relationship and

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I I even feel weird calling it a relationship because the dynamic
Was not one of a relationship. It was more one of
someone who
Saw a toy to play with
um
they were
There
The industry they were in is probably not the one that you're thinking of they were in the army
so
It wasn't even
It had nothing to do with
The porn industry, but it also had everything to do with it. They were the ones who
Kind of
Put that whole world in front of me and encouraged it and they encouraged it
Oh, very much so your your husband. Yeah
I struggle to understand
this
How so your husband when you're 18 years old is encouraging you towards the adult entertainment
industry
it started off as
just online
But then eventually yeah when when I was
Asked to to
I was given I was given a business card and told to think about it. I went home. I
Laughed it off and the consensus was you should do it. I think it would be great. That's what I mean
Okay, so you're um, I read the story you were out out at lunch somewhere someone a guy walks up
to you when you're
how old
20 and gives you a business card and says if you ever want to consider getting into the adult
entertainment industry
Here's my number. You take that home. I was wondering this when I read about that part of your
story. Um
What happened post that business card, you know, because I was I think it was she was married
so
You know, I've got a partner my my girlfriend comes home and says a man's come up to me in the
street
And given me a card and made me an offer like that
um
My I'm gonna be honest my natural disposition would be to like fucking burn the card. Yeah
like well, they were also
unhealthy had mental health issues that
I don't know if they've ever addressed but it's a sickness and
They were not the right but what the whole point of this is when your relationship with yourself

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Isn't right. You are not going to find the right person. You're not going to choose the right person. You're not going to choose someone who
Wants the best for you or will bring the best out of you
because
You don't want that for yourself
Well, what were they getting out of it? You doing that you accepting the invitation from that business card?
What did they stand to gain from that?
fetishization really that was it
So there wasn't a commercial element or anything like that for them
Do you forgive that person?
No, I forgive myself. Yeah. Yeah. Do you think there's a need to forgive people in life?
um, I think you need to forgive yourself for if someone has crossed your boundary
You need to forgive yourself for letting that happen for giving them a position in your life to hurt you
like that
me telling you that wasn't to
Explain or shift blame it was to give context as to where I was mentally
How would you from from that point onwards from 20 years onwards then for the next couple years
when you look back at the the mere
Sarah
Sarah. Yeah, would you prefer to be called Sarah?
Yeah, yeah, but it also it's not I don't take offense to I did I did
A while ago, but I don't take offense to it or I don't feel like my name's actually Sarah
It's either or you prefer to be called Sarah. I do. Yeah. Yeah, okay
um, so that's Sarah through that period of your life characterized by low self-esteem people around
her
Capitalizing on that in various different ways you in your own words not knowing better at that time
in your life
Um at that point in your life 20 21 22 you go and study, right? So you you study at university
again with the aim of
Pursuing some kind of academic academic or professional pursuit
And what was that history history? Yeah, they didn't really see
Even then I didn't see like a like a future doing anything. I just thought I really enjoy studying
history felt like
Watching a movie like it I I'm enamored with like it
It's it's my favorite subject. It felt like the easiest thing. Um
The second easiest thing is like psychology. Oh, I love psychology. Yeah, exactly. They're the
interesting ones. They're the juicy
They're the juicy majors
I didn't see myself doing anything other than
Whatever I had going on the next week and then I guess the furthest I thought ahead was I guess I'll
Work in archives or work in a museum or something. I didn't have a plan like oh, I want to be a
teacher or something

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I've heard you talk about weight loss and weight related issues attached to the self-esteem conversation

What role did your weight play in um all of this and the self-esteem and the confidence and Body image issues and all of that. I think a pretty large one my weight

Now still fluctuates and the more that I've worked on myself in therapy the less that bothers me and my and it affects my relationship with myself so even

In the months where I feel like I do not look like myself. I don't feel like myself

I've let myself go a little bit. It doesn't affect me the way it used to 10 years ago. Um, I don't fall

Yeah, I don't let it get to me as much anymore, but it did for a very long time because it was

I weighed like 60 pounds more than this

Which is a lot

That's a huge amount of weight to lose. Yeah

I read that the ways that you lost that weight were slightly um

Troubling. Yeah, I mean I wasn't eating well. I wasn't

Exercising well. I had unhealthy habits. I was young

Therapy you went to therapy that's helped you get to to where you are today

What role has therapy played in your life and when did you first start going to therapy? Oh the biggest role?

2016

Yeah

The biggest role. I don't I mean, I'm still in therapy. I

Don't see myself ever stopping really

I cycle out therapists. It's like

Yeah, I love it. I love I love feeling like okay. I'm ready

I'm ready for a first start. I'm ready for someone new. I'm ready for a new perspective. Um

It's it's it's a way to keep me grounded

Every week I have to sit down and analyze

Myself my my thoughts my past like

I have to dig down and actually come face to face with the decisions I've made the

My ways of thinking my my my relationship with myself like there's accountability with therapy

And I think that's the biggest impact. I guess accountability

Yeah, what are the what it when you've dug down and sought to understand yourself

Um, what are some of the key takeaways you've taken from from therapy?

As it really so when I think about that question if I was to be on the receiving end of it

The one of the first things that comes to mind is actually my my ongoing

Evolution of understanding why I was so avoidant in relationships

Like always running away from any woman even if I pursued her and then she turned and said, okay

Let's be boyfriend and girlfriend

I would just bounce and I had sort of like toxic model of like what love was from my parents

But then also all the shame and insecurities like I think I'm ambitious. No

I'm being dragged by this need to be enough, right?

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So those are kind of the two two top line ideas that I took away from
My experience was sort of introspection. Are there any like big picture ideas that you've taken away from therapy
That were epiphany moments connected dots
That's a loaded question because I I'm so grateful for all of the information I've learned about myself like like the
Dots I've been able to connect like how
Being triggered by something
A friend of mine says is actually related to the way that I felt like
The way that I felt ostracized on the playground when no one wanted to play with me and like one little thing
even though they didn't mean it that way or or even
Had any malicious intent behind it has then taken me back to
That 12 year old girl who just feels so alone and doesn't know what she did wrong and and just wants to people please and
I think the best part of therapy is
Within a split. Yeah, have you seen that so raven?
Oh, it's this show with raven samon on the disney channel when we when we were growing up and she has these visions
She's a psychic and she just like stares off into space and then she zooms out and then she zooms back in and no time has gone
but she saw maybe
30 minute vision play out um, but she comes back and it's been like a split second and that's how
That's what therapy feels like it takes me back
and I analyze that moment and I understand that that
moment is not this moment and
my friend
cares about me and she's not actually
Trying to make me feel like no one wants to play with me on the playground just because
She said you can come if you want and not I want you to come. You know what I mean?
um, I think that's
That's the magic behind therapy. It gives you time traveling superpowers
has it has it
Changed your perception of the period of your life where you enter the adult entertainment industry
Has it has it changed your perception? How yeah, absolutely. I spent so much time wondering why did I do this?
This is not me. I was in it for such a short amount of time and the entire time I was doing it
I was also asking myself every day. Why am I doing this? What is wrong with me? What is wrong with me?
That's like the number one question and
I know what was wrong with me. I had low self-esteem. I had no boundaries with myself. I didn't respect myself
I didn't like myself so many things were wrong with me and all of these things

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anyone can work on

It's hard. It is it is hard though. It's hard once you become self-aware

There's no going back. I think I cried more in the first two years of being in therapy than I ever did going through anything

I did in my in my in my life in my adolescence and my early teens and anything

This is why a lot of people don't get a therapy. It's hard. It's hard. That self-awareness is like, I mean It's it's it

No, and especially once you start realizing things about people in your life that you've kind of put rose colored glasses on for all your life

To make up excuses or to kind of change the situation in your head so that you don't actually have to face what the reality was or

or

The fact that wow, this is actually a really situation this person that I

Love who's supposed to support me who's supposed to be there for me was actually not that great in hindsight not even in hindsight in

In 2020 site in actual vision

And the um the shedding that takes place when you can you become that's a great way. Yeah, that's great

That's exactly how it feels slowly letting these pieces go

um

What's interesting is when I read about your your life post

The adult entertainment industry, which was only a couple of months anyway all in all. Um

You sounded incredibly isolated. So when I think about the word shedding

I think of all these people that you're letting go

But in that period you sounded like you were alone. I remember the story of you going to austin and meeting your friend on twitter

X all those kinds of things

Take me to that period then so you you you make the decision that that that career is not for you.

Um

What happens the next you know the next day week month

Post that fucking loneliness. I was living in an efficiency in an efficiency is not even a studio. It's

Where this rug cuts off to that wall that

Is wider than what it was but definitely the length my

toilet

My bathroom sink was also my kitchen sink. There was no stove. There was

A broken window that I had tape over and there was only one window. It was it was like it was it's a room

I think they're popular in south florida or like

I don't think you have them here because I don't think they're legal to like sell as living spaces

um

Very lonely extremely lonely, but

At that point in my life loneliness was better than what I was doing before and that I think was the start of

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The tiniest tiniest tiniest bit of confidence
That gave me the confidence to take the risk of
Moving to austin and starting a new life and I was so lonely. I was so broke. I was so lost
I was so confused, but all I was completely 100 sure of was
I don't want to do porn. I've never wanted to do porn. I'm never gonna go back to that
and standing firm
on my ground in my morals in my boundaries in
Just everything that that was like the tiniest glimmer of
confidence starting to grow
Standing firm in my boundaries. Even if I didn't know that was a boundary. I couldn't pinpoint it
I couldn't call it that I didn't know what it was. I didn't have the verbiage or the knowledge or the
self-awareness to
To call it what it was, but that was how it started. I would not if I
If I hadn't moved to austin, I wouldn't have started therapy. I wouldn't have that
that was the domino effect of
In a positive way in my life. It could have gone a completely other way and it does for so many
people and I'm
so so so grateful that
I was able to get out
That first domino falling which took you to austin in that in that new direction
Was there a catalyst? Was there something that pushed that domino?
Because I noticed that in this in the sort of timeline of events you then at the same time separate
from your partner
Around a similar time. Yeah, and then you leave the the adult entertainment industry
Is was there a catalyst because those two things those two decisions are huge decisions and they
feel correlated
They feel like they're attached
I had nothing to lose and I think that I also knew I need to get the fuck out of Miami
I was in Miami at the time and it was where everything happened and I just did not want to be there
anymore
It was it it felt daunting. It felt like walls closing in on me everywhere. I went
um
Was there like a catalyst day though something that happens that makes you go fat? I need to or was
it just slow?
Yeah, it was it was I mean it was the day I met my best friend on twitter
I had I didn't meet her that day on twitter. Her and I had been following each other for a while. She
was
Post memes. I liked them vice versa. Um
She we her and I were talking about something. Oh, she said i'm looking for a roommate
I'm asking around the office for a roommate and I said, what if I moved to austin?
I don't want to live in miami anymore. And then I started looking up
How do you move states? Like what does it take? What does it require?
What paperwork do I need for my dogs? Like all of that stuff and then within a month I was packed

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up and moved

And was that was there a catalyst for you deciding to leave the adult entertainment industry even though you're there for a couple of months?

Was that I think I think it was

How overwhelming everything became so fast

Ah, okay, like that that was the reality check

It was like it was like a like like they when they turn the lights on at the club at four in the morning like whoa

The floors are sticky and nothing looks the same. This is not what I

Signed up for it's not what I expected. I fucked up

That's not a typical experience for an actress in that industry. No, not at all. It's a very atypical experience because

You went from obscurity to

To number one in an industry in in weeks. Yeah

So you you got hit by a fucking truck. Yeah

Okay, that makes sense

Okay

You become a paralegal

Yeah for a very short period of time

Like six months. Tell me all about that

Nothing really much to say. It was for an insurance defense firm. It was pretty boring and it was very much like

Like corporate the insurance company that they represented was

It was Geico. So it was like a very boring thing and it was

It was just paper pushing. Um, it was really weird to work there

especially since that was my first job where

I did it I I did the application and I went into it thinking this is the shift. This is this is me putting Mia Khalifa behind me

And this is me like trying to be a real human. Um, did not work everyone in the office recognized me

It was a very uncomfortable work environment not because

not because anyone was

overtly

inappropriate it was just

simply

Being in an office knowing anyone who walked through did a double take and it's like are you so

That was uncomfortable. Um, and then after that

I worked at a construction company just doing bookkeeping and office work and same thing. I would have to go on a job site and

The owner of the company just

made it so I like I

I can't go on job sites. It was a distraction. It was not a good idea. It was

people would be that in that situation people would be inappropriate sometimes, but

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Yeah, I I started to feel like a burden in the office is where I was
And I hated that feeling and I was actually sitting at that
construction job in the office
When I was talking to Rachel and the DMs like I'm gonna move to Austin. Let's do it
anxiety
yeah
Has that been a big part of your life for much of your life?
Yes, very much so and I think that has been prevalent from the very beginning
The very beginning is in since you were a kid or a teenager. Yeah, probably even in utero
I mean my parents grew up in the civil war in Lebanon and I lived through
A lot of conflict in Lebanon whether it be civil or
The surrounding countries or whatever but we left for a reason and it's because it was dangerous
So I think I've always had that
Like I jump when I hear a noise
I jump when someone who's been in the room for four hours with me speaks even though they
haven't because they haven't spoken in
10 minutes like I get scared like I'm a jumpy person
Probably because of that
When was your anxiety at its highest?
2019 2020
Okay
So that's post Austin. Oh, yeah. Yeah, it was when it was post everything but it was
in the midst of
the
porn company
going after me publicly and
Re-releasing things and digging up
Footage that was corrupted in in 2012 20 in 2013 whenever it was shot and releasing it
Like it was new and that coming back into the new cycle and them just being
Extremely abusive and exerting
Improving that they still have control over me because I signed a contract that says in perpetuity on
it
Your life had had started to move. Oh, yeah, I was married again married again 2019
You're where are you living at this point? I was living in LA. Um
Yeah, I was living in LA. I was doing my own thing. I
was
starting
To figure out what it was I wanted to do and where I went like things were really good that year
It was it was the year I had that little cameo in
That incredible show Rami
That was that was really
That was a huge moment for me and I'm so grateful for that moment
And I'm so upset that that moment was kind of overshadowed by all of the negativity that came from

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um the

The porn company in the subsequent months

the porn company um

Coming off to you and attacking you not something you would expect from a company

A billion dollar company at that. Yeah, it goes to show you how petty and personal it is

um because the people who are behind it aren't aren't exactly the ceo's it's it's the

board pseudo producers who

who

Don't like that. I am out here talking about

my experience

It it's very much

Individuals not the company but these individuals do have

The power to speak on the company's behalf. What are they threatened by?

I think they're threatened by

Like you said earlier

Most people in my position aren't in my position because

they

This is the outcome that the girls want who enter the industry most of them who enter the commercial porn industry

Um or the mainstream porn industry

They they want the fame. They want the infamy. They want they want all of that. Um

And I think for the first time

these individuals are experiencing someone who

Is fully aware of what was happening and is fully aware of what is and is an ethical and has the platform

And the resources to speak on all of those things

What is your opinion of the industry now? I have a very

Unfavorable opinion on it, but

I do think that there are ethical and unethical ways that you can support sex workers and consume porn as

as someone who

Is a creator or as someone who is simply a consumer. There are ethical ways to do it granted any company has its downsides like even only fans

has trouble

policing and and regulating the people who are on their site and the

Every company has its downsides, but I would say that the major production porn companies are all predatory and abusive and unethical and

Pray on vulnerable young women

And even me saying this I already know that some of the responses back are going to be from women in the industry that say

No, it's not

No, it's not. It's great. It's fantastic. Everyone is so nice. I love this company. I love working with I love all of this and

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To be honest with you. I think that that rhetoric is grooming
I think that if you're going to enter the industry and you're going to be an advocate for it
It has to it has to come with a caveat and that caveat needs to be
You shouldn't enter the industry unless you've already kind of been in the industry
It shouldn't be a first option for you. Like that shouldn't be something that you simply go into
because you like it
Think about it more wait on it more
It the age to go into the industry should not be 18
You're putting contracts in front of 18 year old girls that have the words in perpetuity on them. Do
you know how dangerous and
predatory that is
These are three four five page contracts
Jesus christ
I mean any contract when you're 18 years old, although it's like the list reading the legal verb. It's
jargon. It's literally another language
I was thinking about Miranda rights. We don't really have like Miranda right
We have our own version of it here, but you do you think I'll save the queen?
I've never been arrested. I'll let you know
But but you get read your Miranda. I watch all of these like a us crime interrogation videos
It's like how I fall asleep. Don't don't worry about it. Oh, wow
But I see them being read let's go back to anxiety
I see them being read their Miranda rights before they get interrogated and then they get offered a
lawyer. Yeah
Seems like maybe
From what you're saying, that's not a bad idea
if there was some kind of like
Implications clearly stated to people that are considering entering the porn industry at a young age
And the opportunity to have a lawyer or at least legal representation to impartially explain
As a as a third party the potential
Um implications for better or for worse, you know, I don't think that's ever going to be possible
unless
the laws change around
what
Around around the the rights that they have it's just those two words in perpetuity
In perpetuity what vicious words?
Yeah, not not forever not not in your lifetime not in our lifetime
On in in perpetuity of all lifetimes in all existence. Who needs that much control over a young
woman's body?
They still own the website with your name with your yeah
There's nothing you can do to have that website taken down
I mean there is but
It's a very expensive lawsuit against a billion dollar corporation. It's a conglomerate. They also own
The it bang bros isn't the only company under that umbrella. It's

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It's a very
It's a very wide reach
The peak of your anxiety 2019 2020 if I was afloat on the wall inside your
Your apartment
Wherever you were living back then what would I have seen what would I observed?
I
Didn't shower didn't brush my teeth didn't eat didn't leave my bed was crying all the time anytime
I would open my phone. I felt I felt like
I felt like a prisoner in my own body and in the world more so not just in my own body because
I I didn't
I couldn't scream loud enough. There's nothing I could do
To make it go away or to make them stop on it. Honestly
The worst part about it was I knew that if I if I went on and actually spoke about how
How how much it impacted me
That's that's what they would want
That that's that's exactly what they would want
They were very annoyed that I started naming them by name and that's when everything started
these individuals
value their privacy more than anything in the world and it's because
of
All of the unethical and immoral things that they've done throughout their careers
in this industry
so
They all go by
aliases too being called out by their legal government names was
Not something they took kindly to and that is
why they chose to
release the video that
The footage was corrupted of 10 years ago
That's that was a pornographic video
Okay, so they started releasing more videos because she was speaking out against them
And they started doing a variety of other attacks making like mini
Instagram documentary clips of you which I thought I find I mean you you'd expect like a jealous
bitter x to be doing something like that
That's exactly what they are. You know not a corporation. That's exactly what they are a jealous
bitter x
I look I look at all the decisions I've made in my life
And I think about you know being 18 and deciding to do this or that or 25 and doing this and fucking
up at that
And you people look back and they say there's always a silver lining
Is there a silver lining?
Yeah, I'm really funny trauma makes you funny
Built character

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No, of course, there's a silver lining. I'm sitting in front of you today happier than I've ever been I've I am not the sum of the things I've been through or the adversities I've faced. I'm not the silver lining is
Fucking happened. It's over with
It's not over with actually it's following me for the rest of my life
But I am no longer in the mental space that I was back then so it's over with for me
And you get to make your silver lining
Yeah, and that's that's what I feel like you've done
Is you've made a silver lining because there's clearly you could have gone several ways
Yes, that's true
What are the ways you could have gone?
I was acting on instinct. There wasn't at the time when I sat down and thought what do I want with my life?
I I needed a job. So I acted on instinct. I applied to things that I felt like I could do. I'm good at paperwork. I'm good at
I'm good at um
just
Administrative things I like I like being left alone. So I didn't want a job where I was working with like I was always acting on instinct
There was never really a plan. What felt right it felt right in the moment to get an office job
It felt right in the moment to leave that one and go to another one
It felt right in the moment to leave everything and move to austin
It felt right in the moment and austin to well actually
I had a very that was the first time in my life where I started forming a
Core group of friends and people who are still in my life to this day
um, and they were the ones who convinced me not convinced me but
Kind of encouraged me to go to therapy
You'll know if you've listened to the last few episodes of this podcast
We're now sponsored by the incredible whoop
And if you're anything like me and juggling a fair few things every day whoop could be a real game changer in your life
When I was a young entrepreneur
I like to I think talk a little bit too much about how many hours that I worked how many emails I'd sent and all of those kinds of
things, but I didn't have a second thought on how
All of that work and that work holism was impacting my stress levels my productivity
My sleep my overall health, which is why I think the new stress monitoring feature on my whoop is so important
Whoop is this small device on my wrist that I wear during the podcast
It's a wearable health and fitness coach and helps you to sleep better to train harder live healthier
And now manage your stress one of the ways that it does this is with scientifically backed breathing exercises

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Let me know how you get on

I'm in an interesting phase at the moment in my fitness and health journey because because I'm training for soccer

Aid, which takes place in June old Trafford. I've been training a lot differently

But regardless of how I train regardless of whether I'm doing strength training or cardiovascular training

Which is predominantly what I'm doing now. I need this which is Heels nutritionally complete protein product

The crazy thing about this which I almost find hard to achieve is that it's 20 grams of protein

You get 26 vitamins and minerals and it's only

Roughly about 100 calories 105 calories

And it tastes like a dream the salted caramel one is my favorite

I've got the second favorite option of mine in front of me, which is vanilla fudge

Both of them taste amazing a little bit of ice in it. It tastes like a fantastic

healthy milk milkshake

Give it a try if you haven't already. This is actually

Next to rtd. This is my favorite product from Hyal

It's the product that I use the most from Hyal

Try it

Love it number one protein powder

depression another word

Different to anxiety in many respects people often characterize it with like thoughts of the past and they think of anxiety as worries of the future

um

Depression is another word that I read a few times throughout your story

um

Again, is that something that's kind of been with you throughout life or is that was that

Post moving to Miami at Miami. It was really that 2019 2020. Oh really? Yeah. Yeah. Um, I went on

Lexapro. I went like I that was when

I mean, maybe I was depressed, but it was never diagnosed

I had two therapy sessions a week and

a

Psychiatrist and I was on Lexapro. I was on propranolol. I was on

Beta blockers everything for anxiety depression

All of that all of that was in was in 2019 2020 the when

when everything started to kind of get rehashed and I felt like

The angst think I'm very very grateful to be out of

the depths of my depression, but um something that does keep me up at night anxiety-wise is where things are headed with

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AI and
Deep fakes and things like that because that feeling of
Of
Being violated all over again and having no control
Like it's like trying to run in a dream as hard as you as you try
It's it's impossible and it's a very daunting feeling and you feel claustrophobic and you feel like
you're
trying to breathe underwater and
All of these really really awful things that that are out of your control. That's what
That's what that feels like and I try not to think about it for too long, but
The AI stuff feels like that in the deep fakes. Yeah, okay
That is fucking terrifying. Yeah
Were people worried about you 2019? Did you have people around you that were worried about you
at that point?
I did I did. I'm very grateful. I did
Because i'm trying to think of this this step people take when they go and have therapy or they go to
the doctor and say listen
Something's wrong with me. You're at home. This stuff's happening online. This porn company are
targeting you
What is this? What is the what was the catalyst in that moment to make you go?
Do you know what I need to go get help? Oh, I was still in therapy. Yeah, and my therapist said you
need a psychiatrist
Really? Yeah, he said
I I'm like you need a psychiatrist. I can't prescribe you antidepressants
You you need you need a psychiatrist. Here's some recommendations
Again, so what's life like I joined a tv show
So uh things changed for me, you know, people start stopping you in the street and coming up to you
in the gym and stuff and you know
I you know, it comes with the territory of what I did. I was well aware of what I was getting into
Also, I joined the tv show and I was like 28 29
So you kind of like you're probably a bit more
Prepared mentally for things and you understand the world a bit better
And you're not trying to impress people as much as I was when I was younger
But it was still an adjustment to say the least
Um, what was life like for you that post miami period? You're now leaving on with your life
You're trying to you know, this porn company come for you. What is a life like day to day?
When you go to the coffee shop
I'm kind of glad you asked that because it's a huge contrast to what it is now
Even though it's kind of still the same I would get recognized and I would get come up to and I
would get asked
Like take a photo with someone all the time, but my reaction to it is completely different than
than it is now I
Would want to crawl into a hole and hide away and be ashamed. I

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Was I was so embarrassed. I felt like a
Like a warm feeling in my stomach like I had just been punched or like I just found out I was
Being cheated on or something like it's just a very painful visceral reaction
To be recognized and to know what you're being recognized for
um, and it wasn't until
I started to accomplish other things and I started to be proud of things that I've that I've done and
things that I've
kind of
shifted and diverted into in my career so those first few
months to a year in austin
I felt very
I had a lot of social anxiety and I didn't go out much. Um, because I didn't want to be recognized.
Um, I felt like
I just didn't want to be recognized. I didn't want to be looked at. I didn't want to be perceived. I
didn't I
didn't want to leave my house
None of that but is that a form of like self-hatred because you're like no because no because it was
more so the people who were coming up to me
College guys like like men, you know
It it it just made me uncomfortable because I knew why they knew me and it wasn't until I started
accomplishing things that I was actually proud of
that
that changed I
didn't feel that same like
gut wrenching visceral feeling of shame when I would hear the name mia or or get called in the
street or anything like that like I
The more I accomplished the more proud I was of what I've built and what I've changed and and all
of these things that I've done
the more comfortable I got with being recognized because
inherently people were recognizing me for other things women started to recognize me
Everything kind of shifted the more that I do and continue to do the more
The more the more that changes like I
I rarely get come like I get come up to more by by by women now than by men
And I love that
What was that path out of the there's a book like from a psychiatrist out on this podcast called the
path out of the jungle
for you
What was the path through the jungle? Sorry, but what was the path out of the jungle for you that
2019 depression period?
Like how did you for people that might be in that situation right now where they're really
struggling?
What was was it just time? Was it community support? Was it the medic medication?
How did you get out of that phase everything all of that combined all of that combined truly? I don't

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think I could have done it without
shout out to lexapro without the lexapro without my support system without
Without my job without people in my job
encouraging me to
Pursue what I want to do and and to and to not let fear of
Of having something taken away from me or or having something you had that fear of having it
taken away from you
Yeah, of course, of course. They're constantly threatening me even using the name Mia Khalifa
They're threatening using the name Mia Khalifa. They think they have ownership of it
Okay, which they do not it's my dog's name and they tried to convince me not to use Khalifa because
they said
No one's gonna know how to spell it
But yeah, I I I'm constantly in fear of they're a billion dollar corporation
Yes, the amount of lawsuits that they field on a daily basis
They're being sued right now by um
By a company that does mlb trading cards because they're trying to do trading cards of
Of actresses
Yeah, you're married around that time, right?
Yeah, a lot of what I read said that that marriage had fallen apart because
The attention you were getting was difficult for your partner
I don't know about that. He's also
Famous. No, no. Well, he's he's a very popular chef. Um
But no that that was more of
Irreconcilable differences. No, I'm just kidding. Um, it was it was a lot. We we weren't therapy for a
year
An entire year. We tried I was we were separated for
Three months. I lived in an Airbnb. I moved out of the house like we
We tried it was more so
It just very much came down to
We got married very too early. We got married too soon before we actually knew each other
we got married in the honeymoon phase and
um
We were just very different
tiktok
You've become a tiktok sensation
I don't like to spend too much time on tiktok because you know, I
I'll end up not doing anything with my life. I spent too long on that because it's really addictive
But I went through your tiktoks your comedian. Oh my god. It's a trauma
No, but you know, but you are you're incredibly successful on tiktok
I think that tiktok is my favorite app and I think that I'm very lucky that tiktok is just
It's what it's where I spend the most time. I I kind of just get it
I get it. It was very easy for me. I love tiktok. So suit your personality. Yeah
You've cultivated a group of people there a huge group of people at almost like 30 million people or

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something crazy
um, who love that
Side of sarah. Yeah, the woman on on on my tiktok are amazing
I'm very very
Grateful for the community of women that I found on there
You the second ago you said about 10 years time plans for 10 years time. You said now you have an answer
What is the answer?
The answer is
Two car garage
Decent backyard
um
Three
very successful
Operating companies that I'm very heavily involved in still I don't plan on retiring anytime soon
and
Hopefully a kid on the way. Oh
In order to have a kid now, there's a couple of routes to having a kid. That's not true
In order to have a kid you can adopt one you can steal one or you can have your own
Um, the all you know all of these paths. I mean, I'm sure there's there might be a fourth path that I'm not
Yeah, I wouldn't mind stealing a four-year-old someone who's already like into cartoons and stuff
Maybe that's the route I go but I go for are you are you in a relationship now? No, you know you're single. Yes
How are you finding that I talk a lot about my guess about relationships and how dating in the modern world is really really tough
It is tough. It sucks, especially for a certain generation
I think got caught between like the digital world and like the analog world. Yeah
Do you find it tough? Obviously people know who you are. You're you're famous. You're super famous. You've got like 60 million followers
plus
Um, do you find it tough to date? Very
Very but I'm also not trying. I've been a serial monogamous for a while. I got out of a
Long term long ish term relationship a few months ago. Um
But
Yeah
It's difficult
It's difficult, but I also haven't tried but I'm I don't I don't know what I'm expecting
I haven't gone into the dating world in
Maybe six years. I've been in long-term relationships
What are you what would make a great partner for sarah?
What would they have to have what would be the jigsaw shape emotional intelligence and a good relationship with their therapist and with therapy in general

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someone who's constantly working on themselves and is self aware and understands the ebbs and flows of life and emotions and how

It's not always going to be even keel how it'll oscillate but Oscillate doesn't necessarily mean go from good to toxic. It means go from good to needing a little more support than than you normally have

Men are not necessarily the best at emotional intelligence, but I think I'm not ruling out women. Yeah, good. Good and business three businesses

The business the jewelry brand. Can you tell me all about your jewelry brand and um the inspiration for that and your vision for that?

I'm really really excited to launch it. It's called shaytan. It's the inspiration is Every woman who I've ever admired every Arab girl who chooses yellow gold over white gold every just

Women in general huge inspiration behind it. Um, it's body jewelry for the most part, but it's also lifestyle it will launch imminently and

Yeah

Why did you choose jewelry?

Because I love it. I was I was custom making the things that I wanted that I couldn't find easily. Um

Hand lariates and foot lariates and belly chains and broad chains and Like all all all of this stuff was extremely hard to find. So I was custom making it and paying a lot for it so

Very excited to put out something that is Extremely delicate and precious and beautiful but also affordable

You know, when you think about like the ingredient ingredients list of your own happiness right now in your life

What is on that list of ingredients? What are the like factors that need to be present for you to feel like stable and um full

I would say 70 percent alone time interesting 20 percent time surrounded by people who

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energize and recharge me
and
10 percent
Just
10 percent fuck it
10 percent just if something feels right do it follow your instinct, but like i'm kind of scared of my
instinct a little too sometimes
even though
Yeah, 10 percent just listening to your gut
And going back to the start of the conversation. This is because you feel
Closer to knowing who who you are. Yeah. Yeah the most secure in
The decisions I make on a daily basis
And who are you? I'm sarah
I'm sarah fucking joe
And who's who's sarah joe sarah is unapologetic and
Not fearless pretty fearful, but I think that's a good thing cautious cautious and
Secure okay, so unapologetic and then the second one was
Not fearless pretty fearful. Yeah, but in a good way cautious cautious, okay
The unapologetic part I get that I sense that from you
Where did that come from rihanna
Rihanna no really that came from oh, absolutely. Yeah. Yeah, she has a whole album called
unapologetic and that
That is what I base my
My personality off of
Why
What do you mean? Why why did you choose to date? There's so many different albums rihanna's
made or oh, that's that's that's the one
That just exude that's the one that kind of that was her that was her shift also. That was her moment
of
Now I know who I am and I'm unapologetic about it
It might not be the bubblegum pop girl. You thought I was or wanted me to be this is who I am and
this is the person
Who's not going anywhere?
Is that a stark contrast from the sarah I would have met had I met you at like 18
Like I want to if I like put that 18 year old sarah there and I had them both side by side
I'm guessing sarah 18 wouldn't be unapologetic. No, what can you describe how her her vibe would
have been sat here today?
Shriveled insecure quiet probably or too loud just because insecurity screams
Not
Not someone well actually no that is someone who I would want to be around because I I feel
empathy for her
And I forgive her and the journey to unapologetic was
From what I've garnered so far based on the evidence you got from going out and doing things

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improving shit to yourself

Yeah, that's so important

I was going to say this at the start of the conversation this idea of confidence

People don't know how you said it like how the fuck do you get confidence like where does it come from?

How do I buy one?

But from your and experiences, it's the evidence you gain from doing shit that changes your beliefs

Exactly, it's all evidence. Yeah, you have evidence for like low confidence is negative evidence

Yeah, and the confidence you've thought over the last couple of years is from

Doing really cool shit. Yeah, exactly

We have a closing tradition on this podcast where the last guest leaves a question for the next guest

Okay, and they leave it written in this diary

Aristotle said give me the child at seven and I'll show you

the man

or one

Is it true that the first seven years of your life

Make you who you are

I think they have a huge impact

just

Psychology speaking like that psychologically. I think those are very formative years

Yeah

Seven years old you could have um whispered some words into Sarah's ear

What would those words have been?

You're amazing. You're enough. You're perfect

Thank you so much, man. Thank you Sarah. Yeah, that's okay

Learning about your story and really like the reaction to the mistakes you made when you were younger is

Incredibly inspiring for me because we all make we all make decisions, especially in our young years that

You know through neither to your other or coercion or whatever it might be. We're not necessarily

You know, we wouldn't make those decisions again and the way you've responded to that and built the life that you're building now

of the back of that and

The audience you've built around tick tock in social media

around your personality and your humor is incredibly

Hope inspiring it gives me a lot of hope that regardless of you know, the the the steps I make in my life

There will be um, there's a way through there's a way through the jungle and that's what your story represents to me

It's incredibly inspiring one and your

Yeah, you're an inspiration for that very reason. Thank you. Thank you. I appreciate that

As you might know this podcast is now sponsored by the incredible airbnb and airbnb have saved me many many times

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Whenever i'm working away or on business trips or on holidays
But have you ever thought about whether your home could be an airbnb when you're away on business or on holiday?
Or even just a part of your home. Let me explain
Maybe your roommate is moving out and you're thinking about what to do with the extra space
Or maybe you have a spare bedroom that you've never used you could airbnb it and make some extra cash for bills
Or to pay for anything in your life holidays
Or just for some extra money
I've airbnbed my place previously and honestly the process couldn't have been easier
It's something i'd highly recommend you all to check out your extra room that extra space you have in your house
You might be surprised how much it's worth
I was surprised how much it was worth and you can find out how much it's worth by going to airbnb.co.uk
Slash host that's airbnb.co.uk slash host check it out
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I feel like i owe them a greater debt of gratitude because that means you listen to the whole thing
And hopefully that suggests that you enjoyed it if you are at the end and you enjoyed this podcast
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Thank you so much, and i'll see you again next time