

[Transcript] Between Two Beers Podcast / Example: 16 years at the top of global music

I'm 2010 Billy T Winner Reese Matheson and the New Zealand Herald is proud to present Billy to Billy.

A podcast exploring the stories behind the punchlines with the 2023 Billy T nominees.

I'm Gabby Anderson.

My name is Evie Halt and I'm really excited.

Maria Williams.

Hurrah!

Guy Williams.

Jack Ansep with the 1998 Billy T Award winner.

I am Janae Henry, a budding Billy.

Billy to Billy.

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It helps the show more than I could say and the bigger the show gets, the bigger the guests get.

Okay, maybe two favors.

Also, give us a follow on Insta and Facebook.

We'll be cutting the best clips and video highlights from each episode and posting there.

On this episode of Between Two Beers, we talk to Elliot Gleave.

Elliot is best known as his stage name Example and is a musical artist, producer, writer and rapper who's been leading the way in the music industry for the last 16 years.

Example is a genuine worldwide superstar and has been the frontman of multiple generations bridging the gaps between electronic, rap and pop with his chart-topping singles, sell-out tours and multiple platinum records.

But despite all that, he comes across as an ordinary bloke and gave us such a memorable episode.

We talked about playing 1,360 gigs across 62 countries, the power of Glastonbury, the time he got invited to play tennis at Buckingham Palace, how he deals with fame, why he moved to Australia, his approach to creating music in 2023, life hacks, parenting and much, much more.

This one was a lot of fun and we're incredibly grateful Elliot gave us so much of his time while in New Zealand.

Listen on iHeart or we'll get your podcast from or watch the video on YouTube.

A huge thanks to those supporting the show on Patreon for the cost of a cup of coffee a month.

To get involved, head to betweendobeers.com.

And while you're there, sign up to our new weekly newsletter which has behind-the-scenes recaps of each episode.

This episode was brought to you from the Export Beer Garden Studio. Enjoy!

Elliot Gleave, Elliot Gleave, welcome to Between Two Beers.

Yeah, I'm good. I'm really good. There are certain guests we get on this pod that we gloat about.

And I reckon I've gloated to about 10 people about having you on this week.

I've not stopped talking about it at all week.

What's the most people you've gloated about?

Probably you.

Yeah, genuinely you.

And can I just say, unanimously people have been buzzing for it.

Oh sick.

Like your audience in New Zealand is, yeah, it's huge.

It's everyone we talked to who couldn't believe, example, was coming on.

Oh, I appreciate that, man. I've been coming here for like, since 2012.

Like I visited before that, obviously, but I think the first sort of big memory I have of this place was Rhythm and Vines.

And which is obviously like now is like your Glastonbury, I guess.

You know, it's just like, it's my dream to get back there and play that again.

I don't think I've done anything wrong to upset them. I just haven't been back since 2012.

But I've probably been to New Zealand and said like 50 times now played like 37 gigs here.

Have you really?

I've got a weird spreadsheet because I'm into stats and figures and all that.

And I've kept a spreadsheet since my very first gig in 2004 of every gig.

I still add to it.

Really?

No, I might do it every few months because I used to do it every week, religiously.

But it's like date, venue, name of event, lineup, capacity, fee.

So you can go back like 2003, it'll be like fee zero, capacity 300.

How many people turn up 12?

And it just slowly goes up and up, you know, and then so starts going down again.

Yeah, yeah.

Starts going up again.

And then you go to a new country that you've never played before.

So I played Glastonbury, headlined the Glastonbury on the other stage.

So I was the Rolling Stones on the main stage, 150,000.

I had the other stage behind that 30, 40,000.

And next day when I played a gig in Luxembourg, 25,000 people.

And then Sunday when I played my first headline show in Madrid in a pub called Moby Dick's Pub.

And it was like 400 people.

So it's good for the, for keeping you humble.

No, I was going to say as a fellow Excel spreadsheet enthusiast.

I wondered what you were waiting for.

I was really, I wanted to get my sponsors.

Excel porn.

Is it all on one?

Is it one sheet that you can just scroll all the way down?

Like what row are you up to?

I don't know, mate.

I've done, I've done 1,360 something gigs.

Dunedin this Saturday will be, you know, maybe 1,667 gig on Dunedin this weekend.

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Well, you and Steven get on because he is our stats guy.

Yeah.

I've listened to a few interviews done and I've been really impressed with the breakdown.

Here he is, example.

One wife.

One ex-wife.

Two kids.

No, go on.

No, I was wondering if you knew your breakdown for, because I've heard you talk about where your audience is based around the world.

And it's like Columbia is 2%.

And it's like Hungry's 4%.

But is New Zealand, like does New Zealand factor into it?

I've got a high percentage.

I don't think my overall percentage is in, I think it's probably like 1%.

But you haven't got a massive population.

No, we haven't.

But there's a high proportion of your population are fans in my top 1% fans, I think.

Yeah.

You know, they listen to me religiously.

It's crazy because I will walk around London and not really get bothered.

But maybe that's just because people in London are spoiled.

And then I go to a hotspot, you know, in terms of like people stopping to ask for a photo or whatever, which is fine because it's just part of the job.

But if I go to Glasgow or Manchester, those places for me, they're like, they're always the first gigs to sell out when I put a tour on sale.

Manchester, 3,000 tickets in two minutes.

Glasgow, 2,000 tickets in five minutes.

London's the biggest venue always, like Brickson Academy, 5,000 people.

It's always, you sell it out by the time you get to the gig because there's so many other options.

There's like 100 venues and 100 acts coming every week.

But for some reason, I don't know why, but I don't really get bothered in Brisbane where I live.

Sydney, don't really get bothered.

Go to Perth.

It's just like people waiting for me at the airport.

They know what plane I'm on.

Or maybe they've been waiting all day.

And then Auckland's one of those places as well, where I just, I've probably had like 25 selfies today.

Oh, wow.

It's a nice buzz.

People who complain about being noticed or people hassling you, that's bullshit, man.

It's just part of the job.

It's nice.

Imagine also, if you've had a long career, like I've had, my career is like 16, 17 years, still going, you know, eight albums, 1,300, 600 gigs.

Now, imagine if all of a sudden people stopped here.

Yeah.

Like, yeah, it's always weird if people are filming you have dinner.

Did that happen?

That hasn't happened.

That hasn't happened tonight, right?

That's not a very Kiwi thing.

Yeah.

You get the side eye, yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah, I think Kiwis are like, I don't want to disturb you whilst you're having dinner, whereas people are just like zooming in.

He's like, delete your fucking photo and have a selfie.

But I think they're quite respectful here.

Yeah.

But they're almost like quite surprised to see you and like whenever I'm here, even I'm only ever in Brisbane now, they know all these things about you.

But I think it was like, oh, shit.

It's awful.

And then you get occasionally get people to know, not even like, it wasn't this time I was here.

It was like last time I was in Auckland.

No, I was in Wellington.

This guy was just like, oh, bro, yeah.

Oh, I'm not even a fan.

I just know you are.

I just want to say, hey.

I tell you what, it's not a bad Kiwi.

It's not a bad Kiwi.

Your accent game is fucking fire.

You've got so many in the locker.

They're amazing.

The Aussies good.

If I was in Manchester, I'd be scared to do Manchester.

But, you know, you're like, if I'm in here, I'm like, yeah, I mean, it sounds, yeah, what's happening there?

Yeah, from Manchester.

And you're doing Manchester.

And it's like, that doesn't sound like us.

So to be in the actual place you're doing the accent is always.

It's a good.

Stephen's actually also not only is our metrics guy, but he's our accents guy.

Wow.

This is the only reason I'm on today.

Are we best friends?

Yeah.

The other question I had about the Kiwi audience is I've heard you say Scotland's best place to perform live too.

They're just mental, man.

They just, they go to every gig like it's their last night on earth.

Yeah.

That might be.

But that's just Scotland.

Scotland.

Who knows what you're going to end up with.

But I think I'd heard you 62 countries you've performed at around the world.

This was.

Yeah.

I haven't done any new countries for a while.

But the weirdest New Zealand written terms of audience.

Do you have definitely in the top five in terms of like your energy for life, you know, your zest for life.

And you tend to find like, it's not always the best places in the world.

I'm not knocking Scotland.

I love going to Scotland.

So I get to visit Scotland, but I don't know where it ranks on the places of how nice it is to live.

You know, because there's a lot of poverty and say places like Glasgow as well.

And it's got, it can be quite rough.

I'd say New Zealand's probably, I know you have poverty here as well, but when you, whenever you see the charts of the best places to live in the world and NZ's usually somewhere in the top 10, right?

Yep.

And there's a couple of Scandinavian countries because they got their shit together.

Sweden.

Sweden.

Sweden.

Sweden.

Sweden.

But it's a combination for me of the best places to live and the worst places to live and always the best audiences.

And then the people in between are kind of a bit sport like London or Sydney.

You know what I mean?

You know, like big cities, trendy cities, cool cities.

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Think they're, you know, they've got the best food and the best music and the best footy teams and, you know, the best fashion.

Generally speaking, you'll do a gig there and it's not, it's still good, but it's because I like to get the energy out of my cars.

My cars are all about raving and jumping up and down.

So my gigs are usually pretty successful.

Most of them are like, yeah, they had a really fucking good time, but I gauge it about how mad they were for an hour and a half.

And maybe, I don't know, maybe because NZ's on the other side of the world, people just can't believe people have turned up here.

Or it's just your zest for life and how, you know, you've got a really good way of living generally speaking, but then maybe Scotland, they're just fucking mad for it.

They're just mad for music, mad for party and mad for drinking.

Yeah.

You know, like every time I go north of the border and when I used to travel, I've played Scotland maybe 60, 70 times, always the most mental crowds.

And they've been drinking from the earliest and they've been, you know, and they're swearing the most and like, they've got their tops off and they're fucking mosh pits and on shoulders and girls taking their tops off.

And it's just like, but they still know what's going on.

They can still sing along with top five.

Yeah.

Top five is good.

Just looping back to places to live.

I was in Brisbane two weeks ago.

What a city.

It's fucking mega.

Right?

It's awesome.

I went there maybe 10 years ago.

No, 15 years ago for the first time.

I thought it was pretty boring.

Yeah.

I thought it's functional and clean, but the people, there's not much edge to it.

There's not the people like that exciting.

And I now feel it's one of the fucking coolest cities in the world.

Felons.

I went there for the first time the other night.

It was amazing.

I take my kids every few weeks.

Yeah.

Nice.

I was on the, on the water on the river's edge, best pizzas, best steaks, best burgers.

And they got that big player for the kids.

I was set right next to the play area.

Yeah.

Funnily enough.

Too big for the slide.

Yeah, I was.

I was.

There was a lot of people bigger than me late at night.

They were trying to get down there though as well.

But yeah, it's, um, I obviously ended up in Brisbane because the mother of my kids, Aaron, you know, we always dreamed of raising our kids in Australia.

And she'd sacrificed everything career wise, moved to London for me 10 years ago.

Didn't expect to have kids, had kids.

Two beautiful boys.

And then things were going well in London for us, but we were just like, you know, we were living on the River Thames in this lovely apartment next to a park.

And we had a swimming pool downstairs and had all these stupid cars.

You know, I went through a crazy super car phase and we all do.

We all do.

I don't know why I'm saying that.

You know what it's like.

I brought the limbo up tonight.

Lift the Porsche at home.

We were just like, this isn't a place to raise kids.

So came back to us and it was actually the best decision ever because I think looking at the kids every day, you know, despite what's happened, you know, going through a separation and getting divorced.

It was like Aaron and I and our better friends than ever, probably better friends than we were in our last year of living in London.

Because, you know, just London is an intense place to live.

There's a lot of, there's a real sense of like keeping up with appearances, you know, events and launches and premiers and everything that comes with that.

The clothes and the hair and the, not speaking personally, but nails and the tans and the, you know, and then the Ubers and the babysitters and so on.

It was just fucking so much.

It was like our life was a bit of a circus.

Thought we'd move to Brisbane and chill out a bit and it was a better place for kids.

Turns out it was a better place for kids.

And then we've ended up realizing we're not meant to be together.

And it's the coolest thing ever, you know, like we're happier than ever.

The kids are happier, certainly happier than when we were together.

And she knows, you know, she lives around the corner or, you know, five minute drive but around the corner.

It's the schools, kids schools in the middle of where we live.

And yeah, just feel like Brisbane is our life.

The kids are our life and Brisbane's our life.
And Brisbane will always be my life.
You know, the kids need to be there.
And it's the best place to raise them education wise and health and weather.
And they're all my mum and dad on the Gold Coast.
Erin's mum and dad and all her brothers are all around Brisbane nearby.
So it's just like, I'm kind of, you know, obviously sad to get divorced,
but glad I left London.
It was not a place I was, I was, I would have spiraled out of control there.
I think it was a healthy place, a healthy environment for me.
And I just think that the kids are better off for it now as well.
I didn't, didn't expect to get divorced, but if you're going to get divorced, guys,
do it in Brisbane.
So I didn't even mean to get onto that.
I just answered my mind.
I was going to say, I've only met here for five minutes,
but you seem like you've got a really good energy.
You seem like you're in a really good place.
I'm not sure if you've always been like this, but some people come into the room
and they've just, they've got that, yeah, that aura about them.
I've always, I've always had a lot of energy.
And I'm always generally a pretty positive person.
I just don't know if my energy was always authentic.
You know, I like, I'm just very, very happy, right?
And I'm very happy, very healthy, very focused.
Like I've gotten a girlfriend.
She's amazing.
My kids love her.
Erin and her get on like a house on fire.
Not because they have to, they just get on.
Like if I was out of town and one of them, you know, was lonely
and one of them had the kids and I was, they would hang together.
They do hang together without me there, which is amazing.
And not just for the sake of the kids.
They're just like hanging out.
So that's cool.
And then I just think since I've started painting recently,
that's really kind of switched things up.
Like just obviously it's being artistic and creative,
but it's just so fucking relaxing.
And then by the end of the day, you go to bed and you're like,
I've achieved something today.
What do you paint?
Like oil and canvas and acrylics.

I just posted them on my Instagram.

I've seen them.

I've had like three, four hundred inquiries to buy them already.

I bet they look cool.

I mean, a lot of people go, oh, because you've got half a million followers, you're painting shit, but I don't really care.

They want to buy them.

I'm going to give like a portion of everything I sell to charity to Teenage Cancer Trust.

So just it's a lovely hobby because I think one of the toughest things you're, you probably, you know, I've seen who you've had on your show and I'm sure the people you've met in the line of work, you meet a lot of athletes and they get to say 30 and then they don't know what to do.

So if they don't go into management or presenting, what is there for them to do?

And then I think even though a lot of musicians, there's probably not an age limit on musicians nowadays.

I mean, there's very few people get to an Elton John level, but I've had 15 years, which is a fucking lifetime.

You know, some people, most people are maybe lucky to have two, three years now in music,

but you often meet actors, musicians, athletes.

It's like, what the fuck do you do in your downtime?

Especially when you've got to a point where you don't necessarily have to go to work every day.

And for me, that was a real struggle for so long.

It was just like, okay, I've got the next album recorded, dropped the kids off at school, I've been to the gym, I've had a coffee.

Yeah.

You know, really like frustrating and you can see why so many people end up in rehab, you know, like ADHD, could be drugs, could be alcohol, could be also gambling.

Like, you know, I've never been into gambling, but I've been into everything else.

It's just like genuinely finding painting has really chilled me out.

I do yoga in front of the TV most nights.

I've been doing that for a few years,

like not following a yoga instructor or an audio book or an app.

Like, I've done yoga plenty of times.

So I'll sit and watch a film and I'll unwind by doing yoga, like five nights a week.

It's amazing what a different Elliot we're talking to now

than we would have spoken to sort of 15 years ago.
I mean, I could talk from the point of view of an Elliot.
We're going to get to that.
Full spectrum.
The way we do things.
Elliot wouldn't have been drinking this one.
He wouldn't have been drinking that.
No, not the rig, he wouldn't be on the rig watcher.
No way.
We'll be right back after this short break.
Anyway, look, the way we do things here,
we tell the audience how we know the guests.
So, Shay, how do you know example?
Big, big fan.
Big, big fan.
Why did he beach tavern 2012?
I was at that gig.
It was fucking awesome.
That was a very sick gig.
Yeah, I still remember that.
It was amazing.
And I was, I had that, what you were talking about,
I had that Kiwi thing of like, what's he doing here?
Yeah.
It was close to where I was staying at the time.
It was an epic night.
But also, like you've been a constant,
I like to fancy myself as the team DJ
for various football teams that I'm involved in
and dressing rooms and like to set the tone
based on the songs that we play.
So, like the canine remix of Drops comes.
Sick.
Yeah, as one of the ones when we were trying to add things up.
If I was going to go into battle,
I'd want that song before.
Yeah, so that's what gets played pre-match.
It's on that pre-match playlist.
And then with Calvin Harris will be coming back
as like a celebratory song.
But I'm very happy to report when all night dropped.
Okay.
I heard it on Spotify for the first time.
I remember exactly where I was.

I was driving to North Harbour Stadium to a match
and I was like, who the fuck is this?
Look, I was like, fuck.
I know this guy.
It's example.
I sound quite different though,
because I'm not singing.
Well, that's what.
And I'm almost talking.
That's what caught me.
And I loved the song before I saw the video.
So there you go.
A lot of people just wanted it for the video.
But I was one of the OGs that jumped on early doors.
Yeah, excuse me.
That video was Aaron and I in London
dancing around our apartment
probably trying to raise money
to get flights back to Australia.
But that video was my first ever viral video.
My first and only viral video.
Obviously helped that she was in her underwear.
Her idea.
But yeah, fond memories one.
Yeah.
So you've been a constant.
You've been a constant for a long, long time.
So I'm like, this is a fan moment for me.
Like a big time fan moment.
So I'm having a great time so far.
But Stevie, your connection.
Yeah.
I'm a little bit nervous to say how I know Elliot.
I want to tell the truth.
But it's got a happy ending.
All right.
So once your publicist has reached out
and says Elliot's in town, examples in town,
do you want him on the show?
And I've taken a screenshot of the email
and I've sent it to our group, producer Adam and Shay.
And I said, what do we think, lads?
Within a few seconds, Shay's come back.
What do you mean?

What do we think?
What's your favourite artist?
Are you fucking kidding me?
He's like, one of the biggest artists
of the last 20 years.
Are you, what?
What do you mean?
And so I've gone to Spotify and I've typed an example.
And I've listened to your song.
And I've listened to all of them.
And I've listened to like 20 of the songs.
I'm like, I'm a fucking example for you.
I love these songs.
I just didn't like, I didn't put the songs to the artist.
Okay.
So I am a fan, but I didn't know, I didn't know the song.
I thought this was going to be like, I fucked your sister ten years ago.
That was very facelift, right?
What it made me realise is that Spotify has warped my sense of music.
I saw these playlist come and I like these songs,
but I don't always associate who they're from.
But then anyway, I went back and listened.
And I was like, kickstarts, 2010.
It took me back to Queenstown.
I was in my party phase there.
Three, four times a night would be out.
I was with my girlfriend who became my wife.
That was the song that charged us up, would go out.
Every time we'd go out.
You know those songs that take you back to a certain place and time?
You know what?
I did an interview about nine months ago,
back in the UK on the quite a big radio station.
And the presenter, he's a broadcasting legend.
He's been around like 30 years.
And he was like, he goes, I got this theory that everyone,
nearly everyone has got their example song for a certain moment.
And I was like, okay.
And he went, he went, he goes, I, he goes, I, this guy's about 55.
And he was like, honestly, he goes, I speak to people.
He goes, I lost my virginity.
Remember that example song?
Took my first pill.
Example song.

Post my Mrs. Example song.
First dance wedding.
Example song.
First time at a festival, my mates.
Example song.
Not necessarily that you were the soundtrack,
but everyone can remember a time where they were like,
and then they had all these people call in.
And there's this guy who's just like, yeah,
I went to ultra festival in Miami, the height of EDM.
And we'll be coming back.
That's all we played.
And then, and I remember when dubstep started,
this song shot itself on the foot again with scream.
And that's all I played at university,
like nonstop for six months.
Another girl called in was like, oh yeah,
I lost my virginity listening to kick starts.
And then.
And it was obviously, obviously they lined up all these people
to call in and say these nice things.
I definitely associate with that.
I've got some strong memories of that song.
I'm quite proud of making a load of sort of timeless music.
Yeah.
Because a lot of my peer group,
maybe not so much in like drum and bass and house.
And yeah, I've been lucky enough to work some amazing producers
and most of Calvin's songs are really timeless,
sub focus, chasing status, all from my era,
all really timeless classics.
But there's a lot of people, rappers as well,
UK rappers who just sort of came out,
had some hits and then disappeared.
So it's kind of, I do feel,
I wouldn't say lucky, but I feel fortunate to be here.
You know, I don't think there's much luck involved
because I've worked my fucking ass off nonstop.
Still do.
Yeah.
You know, not just being here.
This is easy, like interviews and chatting,
but just constantly grafting to come up with new songs
and new ideas and then traveling around the world

when you've got two little kids to fulfill contracts to perform.
But I just think it is, I've definitely been fortunate
because there's been times when there's key people
at radio or television or festivals who've gone,
I want example when nobody else did.

So.
So last 48 hours, last 72 hours,
back catalog playing nonstop.
I've also been researching,
listening to a lot of interviews you've done,
and I have, what's the word?
I've related to you in a lot of your musical influences.
And I'm going to read the ones that I've written down.
So I read your go-to karaoke song as Regulate.

Yeah.

R&G.

Regulate.

Yeah.

How much research you've been doing, mate?

This is great research.

Don't worry about us.

I also do gangsta, I don't know, you do gangsta's paradise?

Gangsta's paradise, yeah.

Okay, so those are my two karaoke songs.

True story.

He's got a great, he's got a great gangsta's paradise
from our Christmas party last year.

It's very, very good.

It's full of pubs of Christmas.

Because Nate Dogg is, me and Nate Dogg have got a natural,
we share a natural, yeah.

Yeah, on the mission giant of fun.

R&G.

R&G.

I'm down there.

You are down there.

When my career first started,
I used to go into radio stations,
black radio stations,
and the presenter would just be like,
Oh, I'm doing a black guy.

Yeah.

That's what I've always said.

So it's just such a base to it.

Anyway, carry on.
I continue.
I've read that you know every word to Wu Tang Clan's triumph.
Yeah.
Which I don't know every word,
but I know a lot of those words.
Obamatomically,
Socrates,
philosophies,
and hypotheses,
can't define them.
I'll be dropping these valkyries,
lyrically,
perform on robbery,
lead with the lottery,
possibly the autonomy.
There you go.
Gotta start show going.
Oh, my man.
My man's here.
It's your friend.
It's your friend.
It's your friend.
All right, cool.
So we've got a try out of him.
Gotta start show going.
My man knows too.
Okay.
So we've got a try out.
Sleep on me.
My man was huge Michael Jackson fan,
but found it difficult to enjoy his music
after finding Neverland,
because my kids,
I've got three kids,
and I've gone through Michael Jackson face.
They're big Michael Jackson.
Not back with him.
Musically.
He cuddled them shortly before he died.
Allegedly.
Let me let this very clear.
But it's like the music.
Oh, I'm safe.

I'm good.

I'm glad because I feel responsible for putting this in your head.

Yeah, he did.

Me and Che had a big chat about it.

He's like,

I don't think you should be playing your kids, Michael Jackson.

I'm like, what do you mean?

Steve was like, fuck off, Michael Jackson.

And then we took it to our friend group, and it was kind of split.

Like, no, I don't think you can separate the man from the music.

And I'd read that you sort of struggled with that as well.

Yeah, I love Michael Jackson music.

I love Michael Jackson music.

Like, I used to have the moonwalker game on Sega Mega Drive to play that.

It's a throwback.

I used to watch, like, I taped the, my mum taped for me the bad premiere on top of the Pops, which was like 15, 20 minutes, that short film.

Yeah.

Like, with all the build up, you know, like the short film before, as well as the final dance.

Yeah.

And I used to watch that and repeat.

As a kid, I used to enter talent competitions, doing Michael Jackson impersonations.

Right, so.

And then I kind of, as I got older, and you get more into groove and sex, and then you discover the early stuff.

And even though he's not a very sexual person, you know, looks and interviews and stuff, that off-the-wall album is a very sexy album.

Like, you know, PYT.

I want to have you.

And you're there with the girl just like,

yeah, yeah, yeah.
I mean, now you can't listen to the shit.
Yeah, yeah.
It's tricky.
It's tricky, but the music is so good.
I'm like, I've kind of just,
I've kind of just accepted it,
but Shay keeps giving me side-eye
when if I bring it up.
Oh, look, I just,
there's got to be a point at some stage
where you tell the kids.
You tell Bowie.
You tell me.
You tell Billy.
Well, you let them find out for themselves.
Have you seen the new Chris Rock,
where he's talking about Michael Jackson and R Kelly?
No, not yet.
The new Chris Rock on Netflix.
He's just like, he's talking about R Kelly
and Chris Rock, basically.
Sorry, R Kelly and Michael Jackson.
He's like, it's the same shit.
It's the same, you know,
they both did the same fucked up shit.
But he's like,
it's just the Michael Jackson's got better music.
I was going to ask that.
What happens when an R Kelly song comes on?
Are we skipping it or are we leading it?
Well, R Kelly's got bump and grind.
Yeah.
Believe I can fly.
Believe I can fly.
And then remix to ignition.
You got to let that play.
Unbelievable.
You've got to let that play, I think.
That's a fucking sick tune.
Yeah.
Yeah.
I mean, Michael Jackson's got,
what, 20 amazing songs.

R Kelly's got four or five.

Yeah.

But you still can't play either of them.

Yeah.

It's a tricky one.

Anyway, look,

I kind of wanted to start talking about the music about current day Elliot.

And I know you've just released a single,

you're here to do a show in Dunners,

but I heard you say about a year ago

that the most important thing with creating music now is to create songs that go off when performed live.

But I also heard you say

you want a number one hit to remember what it feels like.

So I was kind of wondered how your approach

to creating music is different now

than it was maybe in sort of 2012 or 10 years ago.

I think,

so when I had all these sort of breakthrough hits

and obviously a hit back then was charts

and the charts were iTunes.

iTunes, you know, it wasn't even CDs.

It was iTunes downloads, 2009, 10, 11.

I'd only ever known hip hop

and only ever made hip hop with one producer.

I had a charm to it.

It was quite laddy and cheeky,

but I had storytelling,

but I wasn't really singing and a lot of my punchlines were,

you know, one hit punchlines,

and then you've just heard it all before.

And I was like, I didn't really know what I was doing

and I hadn't really worked with any proper producers.

And then I started working with different producers,

different songwriters,

so I started learning songwriting, song structures,

melodies, refining lyrics,

working with better producers

and then just working out the importance of a big riff,

you know, like all my big songs are just like,

as soon as it starts,

you know what it is straight away

before my voice is coming just from the big riff.

So then I kind of effortlessly,
without even knowing what I was doing,
made songs and started climbing the charts.
Around the same time I was climbing the charts in the UK,
I was in the same in Oz and Ireland and NZ,
they were like the four main countries,
which would kind of make sense based on the culture.
And my first breakthrough song was Watch Your Song Come Up.
Then I had, that was like 18 in the charts
and Won't Go Quietly.
Won't Go Quietly was like number seven.
And then Kick Starts was number three.
And then, and I wasn't trying to write hits,
I was trying to make bangers,
I was trying to make songs
that people you'd want to sing along to,
they'd be timeless.
So there's no lyrics that were too specific about that era
or any pop culture references about that era.
I was trying to make songs that would just sound great
in 10, 20, 30, 40 years that would remind you
of a holiday or first kiss, et cetera, et cetera.
And that's kind of what I start to,
and at the same time radio stations around the world
were backing them so much that they became hits.
And the marketing teams at Record Label
at Ministry of Sound were getting these songs
so the right is.
So I then, I was told after Kick Starts you wouldn't,
it's very difficult to write another Kick Starts
when most people don't even write Kick Starts
in their career, let alone another one.
So I basically was just like,
well, I've got a formula here.
I sing, rap a little bit in the middle once or twice,
sing about my real life,
which at the time was breakups or late nights
or drugs or alcohol or lying to my girlfriend
or something like that.
So I just wrote about real life, so it came naturally.
I'd listened to a lot of classic grunge,
mainly Nirvana,
for the sort of melancholic,
darker elements of the melodies, you know.

It's like, it's uplifting,
but it's essentially pretty depressing what you're saying.
And a lot of my early records,
what sounds pretty depressing,
but the music was uplifting.
And I kind of nicked that from Nirvana.
Everyone borrows the shit.
And then I wrote Chains of Way Kiss Me
and then I wrote Stay Awake,
both number ones in the UK.
They were number one,
then I think it was NZ Top 5,
and then the song with Calvin Harris,
then Say Nothing was number two as well.
Anyway, so this was this whole sort of chart era,
and those songs are all in my set now,
but I kind of got to a phase
where I was disenfranchised by the music industry,
that pressure of delivering more hits,
and then all of a sudden I was in the studio
getting calls and emails,
how's it sounding, does it sound like a hit?
I was like, I never tried to write hits,
I just tried to make timeless bangers
that mean something to people.
So I went for a period of maybe five years
of really being a bit lost.
And then where I'm at now,
I just make music for me,
that I will enjoy performing.
And I guess I feel like I'm so experienced
and I've got such a back catalogue
that if you put me on stage anywhere in the world,
chances are I'm there,
a bit for my old hits, a bit for my new hits,
well, not hits, but, you know,
oh, I love his new drum and bass stuff that he's done,
but I also want to hear the hits.
Whatever you book me for,
whatever you pay for the ticket for,
I'm going to give you both,
and it's going to be loads of energy.
And what I was saying last year is like,
I'm not trying to make hits now,

but it would be nice if one of them accidentally was a hit.
So I could remember what that feels like,
because it's a nice feeling.
I've had, you know, a number one album,
two number one singles in the UK,
like that's one of my top 10 singles there,
six, three, two, one, one, two, two in the UK.
And then, you know,
countless other hits all around the world.
I had a number one hit in America
that I wrote for the boy band The Wanted.
So I've had a number one in America as a songwriter.
But yeah, I can't lie, I just felt nice to have a hit.
I'm not doing it to be a hit so I like,
I think if I was going to have a hit now,
Radio One, or Capital FM,
or Nova in Sydney, or whoever, you know,
would have to get on board with the song and play it so much.
And then I'd have to have a performance
on the Jonathan Ross show, you know,
in the UK and massive Graham Norton.
I've been on Graham Norton in the past
and that always propelled my songs up in the charts.
Stuff like that,
Tick becomes a big hit on TikTok,
nothing to do with me.
You know, some TikToker uses my song in an aerobics video,
a yoga video, a fucking cooking video,
that sort of shit.
And that is the sort of thing
that could give me a hit again.
I'm not looking for a hit.
I don't think I said I was looking for it.
I was saying I'd love to have one, but I'm not trying.
But you've released gold like a week ago.
What's the process now?
You put that out there.
Do you care what the reception is?
Do you tune that out totally?
Is it delayed gratification
where a few weeks down the track people say,
that's a fucking deal?
Well, I read the comments on Instagram.
I promote it on Twitter,

but I don't really read the responses on Twitter
because I've had a lot of toxic things in there.
You know, one minute,
I'm going back four years ago,
three years ago, one minute,
I'm defending black people and black lives matter.
And the next minute I'm arguing with black people
because of a comment I've made about Wiley
making an anti-Semitic comment about Jews.
Because you've got 1.6 million followers on Twitter.
Yeah, so you just realized, you know,
you're going on there.
I went to school with a lot of black people.
I make black music.
Most of my best friends,
my closest friends are black.
It's like, I mean,
it's not the reason to go out and support black lives matter.
It's just something I did naturally.
And you get all these people going, amazing, great, cool.
And then every now and again,
you're going to get some random racist, you know,
dickheads commenting on Twitter.
And they're so easy for them to access you on Twitter.
You know, it's quite difficult to go through
and just say, I'm going to block 100 people.
But then like six months later,
Wiley comes out and makes these comments
about hating Jewish people.
I can't remember what he said,
but it's something anti-Semitic.
And then I'm trying to defend Jewish people
against some black people
who'd got the wrong end of stick about something
I said about grime music.
Anyway, it's all, you know,
I mean, even talking about it now,
it just makes you go, yeah.
It's exhausting.
So I don't really go on Twitter.
But yeah, I release a new song
and I do care what people think.
And then I look at my artists for Spotify for Artists app
and my Apple Music app,

and I can see how many people are listening
and what they're listening to and what they're saying.
So I do care,
but I probably, if I ever have a surprise hit,
it's going to be a song that I've forgotten about
and one day I wake up and my manager calls me and goes,
that song's been used in a new Toyota commercial.
Let me do it in America.
Or this TikTok has done a dance to your song
from six months ago.
Remember that song we forgot about?
Yeah.
Oh, that's huge.
It's had 15 million views overnight
and now it's blown up in Korea.
Now it's blown up in,
that's probably going to happen.
I'm not spending money promoting these songs.
I'm not going,
here's a 10 grand Facebook ad to spend.
Or here's a five grand YouTube ad to spend.
It's like,
I'd rather spend that money on acrylic paint.
Yeah.
You know?
We're here to product.
Go listen to it.
It's a fucking bang.
It is gold.
Thank you.
I'm doing an acoustic version on George FM.
Oh, you really?
Oh, wow.
Yeah.
Well, when this goes out,
I would have already done it.
We'll be right back after this short break.
I was wanting to dive into that,
the sort of the blow up stages.
Kickstarts comes out in the second album
and the third goes platinum.
All these hits.
The fame, right?
Because you had a bit of a late start.

It wasn't till 26, 27 that you sort of...
Yeah, most people get into fame now before 20.
Yeah.
Because of TikTok or,
because you can upload straight to Spotify
or SoundCloud.
You know, it's a lot of America's SoundCloud rappers.
They can even call them SoundCloud rappers.
You'd experienced real life.
You know what real life was.
And then you got famous, right?
Like it's kind of unique.
I'd had loads of shit jobs.
Yeah.
Had you had loads?
I'd been to uni.
I'd had failed relationships.
I'd, you know, I'd tried my first pill.
I'd done my first line.
I'd been sacked.
You know, I'd had my heart broken.
I'd graduated.
I'd done all of this, but not in the public eye.
Whereas most people now do those sort of things,
their first heartbreak,
or the first time their pitch had come out of a club,
high as a kite.
They're doing that, you know, with cameras on them.
Even when I was doing this at 27, 28,
people had cameras on their phones,
but no one, you wouldn't be at a football match.
And then someone would go,
you just didn't see that shit.
Like you can now, you know,
it's crazy how easy it is to just grab your phone
and flick the camera up and hit record.
Or just hold your finger on the volume bar.
But I'm talking about a Sony Ericsson Blackberry phone,
you know, which took a pixelated picture.
And I'm, you know, when I became famous.
So I never had to deal with that, you know,
like I became famous and my space would only just
disappeared maybe a year ago.
So it was like my space on Facebook.

Twitter wasn't even a thing until maybe a year later.
We didn't read.
Instagram wasn't a thing.
Didn't have TikTok.
Didn't have, you know, SoundCloud wasn't as prominent
as it was in terms of, you know,
uploading music straight to the internet.
But I'm going to sing in my bedroom, off key,
put autotune on.
I'm going to hit the AI button to give it some drums
and percussion and sound effects.
AI button.
Sick.
Yep, cool.
Throw in some sounds.
Oh, I want to sound like Juice World.
Cool.
Put the Juice World AI button.
Song finished.
One minute, 13 seconds song.
Song, but it's one minute, 13.
Straight on SoundCloud.
Give yourself a cool name.
Take a selfie of yourself.
Invert the colors.
Okay, now my skin's purple.
My head's green.
Like pixelate it.
Draw my, go on the AI app.
Create my own logo.
What am I going to be called?
My name's James.
Right.
I'm going to be called, my name's James Smith.
I'm going to be called J.S.
J.S.
Create logo.
AI.
Bang.
You know what I mean?
We'll cut next day 20 million streams.
And then they've got to go and perform at fucking festival.
That's like their third gig.
I know most people now,

they're done their third or fourth gig to 5,000 people.
In the UK, the rappers are blowing up, you know, like,
you know that and like, I'm a big central C fat.
I'm not knocking central C here.
There's a lot of shit rappers all over the world.
Rappers, singers, pop stars who've blown up through fair play to them.
Great name.
Great Instagram marketing.
use of auto tune on the track, whatever, you know,
and I'm not knocking that, but my,
I didn't play in front of maybe 1,000 people
until my 300th gig, if I refer back to my spreadsheet.
These guys now, you know, like Central Sea was like,
before he'd even headlined a show,
say in London to 5,000 people,
it was on a fucking festivals of 50,000.
And it might be in his fifth or sixth show.
And you can see as these young,
these people are doing their shows,
they're kind of like feeling their way out.
They're feeling their way around the stage
and they're learning crowd control
and they're learning how to deal with some front of drink
and they're learning how to forget the lyric
or if there's the record skips
or there's a stage invasion,
all these things that you pick up over, say,
500 gigs or 1,000 gigs,
they've got to learn in four or five gigs.
Does anyone come to you for advice on that sort of stuff?
Do they like the-
Occasionally, yeah, young artists do come up and,
or they're kind of, you know, it's more like a sixth sense
where they're just sort of watching,
you know, I play festivals back in the UK
and sometimes you get,
there's an act who's on just before me or whatever
and they've had way more streams than me,
but they're brand new.
And they sit and watch my whole show
and they start to come up after us and then we're like,
oh, well, I just saw it there, you know, like,
fuck, man, I learned a lot, you know, like,
you're sick, man, you're sick, like, you know,

because there's performing and there's performing.
I never claimed to be the best rapper or the best singer,
but I put on a fucking good show, you know what I mean?
Like, you've got to know what you're good at
if you want to have a long career.
And I know that I've put on a fucking good show
and I've got some timeless bangers, you know?
I'm not going to just be around for a minute.
Looking back now, like we saw Karen Elliott is so different
to this one during this phase, sort of partying
and drugs and women and all sort of stuff.
Do you remember, was there a specific moment?
Was it like your first hit that went to number one
or your second album or third album?
When you realized you'd made it
and your kind of the ego got as inflated as it ever was?
Was it during that sort of 2012 period where?
Yeah, I reckon somewhere between 2010 to 2012.
Can't really remember what it was.
I don't really remember most of a lot of that.
I was like, even though I'd party pretty hard,
I'd also go to the gym still.
And I think you can do it when you're that age.
I couldn't, you can't really do that at fourth,
I'm 40 now, you can't really do that.
But, you know, I would stay up all night
and then go for a four mile run.
So in my mind, I was sweating it out.
And then I'd go sit in the sauna
and then I'd sleep for 14 hours and then get up,
eat really healthily, go to the gym,
then go and shoot a music video,
then go and do some interviews and go and do a gig
and then stay up all night again and be a fucking idiot.
So that whole era kind of just blurred into one.
Like you meet bump into people, guys, girls,
managers, artists, and then they're like,
oh yeah, maybe from second, and then they say it
and my brain goes, oh yeah, but, I don't know.
Like in 2013, I did 128 gigs and 136 flights.
What's the, what?
So every three days you're on a plane or on a stage
in front of thousands of people,
every three days for a whole year.

But are you love it?
Are you enjoying it?
Yeah, I love it.
Yeah, I love it.
So that's what you dream to achieve.
That's what you dream to do, and my old tour manager,
Chris Griffiths, he looked after stone roses back in the day
and then he looked after Craig David
when he first blew up and he looked after pendulum.
He just toured the world constantly
with the biggest bands from the late 80s, early 90s.
He'd always been on the road.
And he toured with me for like six, seven years
when I did arenas back in the UK.
I did like 20 arena shows in one year in the UK
and headlined seven or eight festivals to like 30,000 people.
And he used to say, oh, it was like,
you're made of different stuff.
And I'll be like, what?
You're like, yeah, you're caught from a different cloth
to most of the people.
As in, he felt that I could handle it better than most.
He was like, some people can't handle it.
They just can't get out of bed.
They can't get out on stage.
They can't deliver the performance.
He was like, you're rare in that you can stay up all night
and then get on stage the next day
and still put on a fucking great performance.
You're lucky you've got a rich, deep, powerful voice
that isn't prone to fading or having a loss of voice.
I've had to cancel the gigs.
I've got sore throat.
But he was like, there will come a point
where you'll reach a tipping point
and then you'll just have to fucking stop
because you'll be dead.
But he was basically saying,
compared to all the people he'd seen me tour with,
he was like, you're made of different stuff.
So he was complimenting me,
but he was also just saying,
you're not going to be able to do this forever.
It's mad.

I read, I think 2012, 190,000 tickets in one year
performed 27 countries in Europe,
headline 10 of them.
That might've been over a longer period.
But just a word, like an absolute word,
like it's something to look back on.
You must be so proud of that.
Do you know my only regrets
are that I didn't film a lot of it.
And, which is mad
because we're just talking about
how everything's caught on camera and filmed nowadays.
Like everything I do now, we get highlights
or I get photos of every gig,
I get highlights and I get an edit done,
usually for instant rules.
But if you were to make a documentary of my life
from the last two years,
you'd have footage, so much footage of every gig.
You'd make a fucking amazing.
If you were to try and go back to 2003 onwards,
there's hardly anything.
And that's one of my only regrets.
And there's a lot of artists who,
even back in the 80s, 70s, 80s, 90s,
someone knew one day someone would wanna make a documentary.
You watch the Kanye West documentary.
So it was very fortunate
that his best mate at the time
was filming with a camcorder,
all those early meetings,
all those early studio sessions, all the early gigs.
And then you watch the Juice World documentary.
And it's very tragic what happened with him,
but they were filming pretty much everything,
on stage and off stage.
You get some really weird stuff in that documentary
where you see him taking all these prescription drugs
in a hotel room and his mates are just filming it
and he's just doing it in front of them.
And it's quite shocking to see that,
someone as big as he was.
Because you often have footage of people looking drunk
or high, but you never actually have footage

of them doing the drug.
And that Juice World documentary,
I was like, fuck, I've never seen anything like that.
And actually, I was like,
I'm quite sad that there's a lot of moments like
when I headline Southwest 4, Clap in Common,
London, 30,000 people don't have any footage of that.
Do you think if you crowd sourced,
there would be footage of it?
Do you think there's people in the,
because there's camera phones then,
that people you can put together a little?
I think, yeah, you could,
but I'm just talking about professionally filming,
we've got the lasers and the flames and the visuals
and the fireworks.
You know, there's just moments
that I'd like to re-watch one day with my kids.
I don't want to watch them every week.
And I'm not even talking about making a documentary.
I'm just like, it's quite mad that you've done that.
Like I've got, I played Elle's Court
and I've got footage of that.
And Elle's Court is knocked down now,
but that was like London's biggest indoor arena,
it was 24,000.
Like the O2 arena is 19,000, Elle's Court's 24,
I sold that out in 2014.
And then the Arctic Monkeys played two weeks after me
and then they knocked it down.
So I was the second to last band to ever play there.
I'd been COASIS there when I was a kid
and Chemical Brothers.
But yeah, it's just mad, like there's,
everything's filmed.
I'm certainly glad there's no footage
of all the fucked up things I did.
Yeah, they live on in your brain.
Yeah.
When you reflect on such a like a hectic schedule
like we were talking about during like,
you talk about your voice holding out and things like that,
but are there times where you're waking up in the morning
and you're just going,

I can't fucking do this anymore.

Yeah.

And what do you, did you just power through though?

Just power through, man.

I think because I've always,

I've never been really good at sports.

Like I was good at running in the straight line

and I was good at swimming in the straight line.

Like I wasn't very good at team sports,

but I was really into anything to do with endurance.

Like, you know, I run a half marathon when I was 25 for a laugh.

And I did it in an hour and 17.

You know, we sort of,

That was 17.

For a laugh.

For a laugh.

For a laugh.

For a laugh.

So I've always had the engine and the lungs
and the determination and I got back and I couldn't walk.

And then I passed out, I think for four or five hours.

I had eight burger and passed out four hours,

woke up, needed like help to walk.

I just put everything into it.

And my dad, you know,

both my mom and dad are amazing

in terms of their endurance for life,

their energy for life.

They've both been for a lot.

As you know, you find out,

most people chat to their parents and they're like,

fuck, what the fuck?

My parents have been for shit.

But my dad was always a marathon runner.

He'd done like 10 marathons.

My dad's best time was like 2.36, a full marathon.

Fuck.

2.36.

Yeah.

So I would always look up to my mom, my guests,

and now I've had kids as well.

I looked and then maybe you look back retrospectively.

You know, my mom was,

she had a lot of endurance in terms of pretty much raising

my kid, me and my sister by herself
because my dad was always away working.
And my dad had this endurance for work and success
and I guess running on the side, which kept him sane.
So it was always ingrained into me
that you just fucking get on with shit.
And that's why I think whatever state I was in,
you know, and I wouldn't always wake up hungover
after every gig, but sometimes you would just jet that.
Yeah, no, I'm just thinking of the physical toll of travel.
Sometimes my legs wouldn't work.
And I'd just sit there and have to stretch for an hour.
I'd have to sit and jump in a bucket of ice.
We'd have to have an emergency physio brought in from,
you know, I'd be in Frankfurt playing a festival
when I was on 6 p.m. before like mega death.
And, you know, it's like a rock festival,
but it'd be like Skunk and Nancy in mega death
and Ramstein at Rockham ring.
And I'd be stuck in another German city
and we'd have an emergency physio come in
to work on my legs because I was pretty much walking,
like crippled because I'd been jumping around.
I'd done five 40 minute shows in three days.
You know, you just show at 4 p.m. show at 9 p.m.
And you're high energy shows, right?
Yeah.
Your shows are full on.
Yeah, so yeah, there was, I couldn't do that anymore.
Like last summer, I did 20, no, 33 shows in the UK.
So obviously you got your NZ summer, UK summer.
Occasionally I delve into Europe,
I might do Spain, Portugal, Austria, Hungary,
where I've always had that a bit of a big following.
But mostly it's UK, I was in NZ at the moment.
And last summer we agreed to five gigs in three days,
two 90 minute shows and three hour shows.
And on the Monday morning, my girlfriend's got a video of me.
We're walking to the pub to just go and get a lunch.
And I'm like, literally walking on my heels,
my calves, my knees, my hips, just fucked.
Yeah, people don't see that side.
That's right, 90 minute, that's like what, two 90 minutes.
So three hours plus another three one hour shows.

So six hours and my shows are pretty much like
on a massive, just that.
Yeah, yeah.
And I'm like rapping like, you know.
So it's basically like skipping.
A lot of calf work.
Skipping for six hours over a weekend.
You know, a bit of alcohol and then eating relatively well.
And you know, stop, I do say hydrated
and I do stretch before everything,
but, and I stretch afterwards.
But it's basically like, you can probably do that at 27,
but you can't do that at 40.
And not before, and I was, I was probably fast.
Like having to get my physio now in the UK,
this guy called James Davis,
who's basically got me into ice baths and saunas.
I've got an ice bath and sauna at home now,
which I use three, four times a week.
And that's pretty much,
I feel like I'm aging backwards as a result.
Changes your blood pressure
and your skin starts looking different
and your stress levels go down
and then you sleep better.
And you know, it's just,
you can hold your breath for longer.
You feel like you can train harder.
You can train harder, quicker, sooner or after you've,
you know, cause you helped with the recovery.
But he was basically like,
this guy looks after a load of Premier League footballers.
He still sees David Beckham every other week.
You know, cause Beckham's obviously in still an amazing shape.
Massage, needles,
cracks your back, like osteopath.
And this guy was basically just like,
dude, you're gonna have to start treating yourself
like an athlete.
If you do a show Friday, show Saturday, show Sunday,
Monday, you stretch, eat really well,
hydrate, Tuesday, you come see me, needles in your whole body,
cupping, you know, the deep tissue massage,
do nothing, Wednesday down the gym light session,

Thursday, gym, stretch yoga Friday morning
and then gig Friday, Saturday, Sunday and repeat.
Cause otherwise you will not be able to walk
or your knees or your ankles will be gone and you'll be.
It's so wild here in this cause you're such a rare species.
Like someone who is so in demand and so popular
that they've got all these gigs to play
and they got to look after themselves for their musician.
Like you never forget most people you've seen behind decks.
Yeah, yeah, that's, yeah.
Or, you know, the other, you know,
people hear about pink and pinks live shows.
Pink's an athlete, whether you like it or not,
you just see pink on stage,
regardless of whether she was 25 or 45,
like what she does in a two hour show
and then you see how she trains,
how she eats to recover, read the massage.
Obviously she flies around the world with these teams.
I don't fly around with her, I can't afford it,
but if I could, I would fly around the world
with someone who would put needles in my legs
every day after every show.
And I think most people aren't doing it
because most people aren't doing it at my age.
That's right.
You're talking about Craig David,
he's about the same age.
Craig David is an incredible shape.
Like there's not really many people you meet
who aren't in great shape.
And if they weren't in great shape,
all of a sudden you find they have to get in good shape.
Like I'm pretty sure Adele wouldn't be doing the shows
she's doing now in Vegas if she hadn't got into shape.
It's a fact of matter, you know,
you can do it maybe in your 20s.
As soon as you hit 30, male, female, whatever,
your disposition, whatever you made of people is just like,
you're not going to be able to do 100 shows this year
unless you start fucking taking this seriously.
And that's one of the funny niche areas of this podcast
is kind of understanding from different people,
like the life hacks that they've picked up along the way.

And I've heard you reference like Wim Hof breathing.
I do that every night.
I do breath work or Wim Hof, you know,
like the 30, 40 deep breaths in and out.
So it's like short ones out until you feel like
you're sort of your body's hyperventilating
and then you hold your breath for a minute,
minute and a half, two minutes.
I can now do, I can do three minute breath holds
and do, you know, I can do 100 push-ups
whilst holding my breath,
all this sort of shit that Wim Hof does.
There's loads of different versions though.
I got into that for a phase,
Wim Hof has done the breathing a lot.
Do you ever listen to music during the phases
where you're holding your breath?
I listen to the sort of, you know,
Nepalese, you know, it'd be like, wait, no, it's not there.
I would listen to Tool while I was zoning out.
And sometimes I would hold my breath for about three minutes
and I would just be in this amazing trancey state.
And I'd kind of like snap out of it.
I do it before I go to bed and then have the best night's sleep.
Yeah, so good.
Yeah, it's almost like you're breathing
all the stress in and out, you know.
Yeah, a reset, it's a really interesting part
of your personality, like only knowing you
through other interviews to kind of see the different,
the depth of your character and the different things.
Like it's easy to take you on face value,
but then you hear, you hear you're talking
and you're going, oh fuck, that's completely different
to kind of that high energy person
that you only might see on stage.
Yeah, I'm still that guy, I'm just a lot.
Do you know what?
I think I was never into spirituality
and I was never really into like energies
and chakras and all the terms, you know.
It doesn't matter what you call them out.
Every religion, every language has got these words
for these things, right?

You know, essentially they're all about the same things.

I think the main thing is, is I'm a lot better at reading a room now and in terms of reading other energies in a room.

Whereas before, I would go in with just my energy and that was starting to affect my marriage and it was starting to affect my kids and my kids' behavior and my, you know, waking up in the morning and coming upstairs and just being me and however I felt at that particular moment.

If I'd had a bad night's sleep, everyone knew about it.

Not that I was in a bad mood or aggressive, but, you know, just putting your mood onto other people rather than reading and vibing of other people.

And I think if you're in a room to perform, you can do that.

If you're in a room to be interviewed, you can do that for most of the time, you know, depending on what style of interview it is.

But for everything else in life, you're going for dinner with someone or you're having breakfast with your kids, or you're even going to the gym, just feeling the vibe of the energy of people around you is something that not enough people do.

And I think it's self-awareness.

And I think when you're a big personality and you are quite confident, it can be negative unless you're aware of it.

And I think I was starting to have a real negative effect on I go visit my mom and dad.

And then afterwards I'd be like, why are you in such a mood?

And then, you know, Erin would say to me, well, you did this and I was like, oh, fuck, yeah.

And the first thing is just admitting it and then, you know, taking, you know, whether it's advice or criticism, being able to open to that criticism.

And the next thing is like, what am I going to do about this?

You know?

I meant what I said at the start,

like you do have that,
we had another guest, Mike Minogue recently,
similar energy, like as soon as I met you,
it's kind of like you make people happy in your space.
That's nice to hear, Mum.
We'll be right back after this short break.
I wanted to take a Glastonbury detour if we can,
because I've heard an incredible story.
It's podcasting for about three hours, innit?
Yeah, we got time.
I'd heard that Glastonbury is different other live gigs
and that the video element of it
is so beneficial to you as an artist
that you kind of take a bit of a pay cut
because you're going to pick up audience elsewhere.
And was there one year where the Rolling Stones
were meant to be the live act?
Well, they were on stage,
but they wouldn't let the BBC show their gig.
Like for whatever, you know,
like you've probably read about the Rolling Stones
and supposedly like, you know, tax exiles
and avoiding paying tax, you know,
because they're non-domicile
and what they do three months here,
three months here, three months there.
So then then we've got a, you know.
Fixed a boat.
Fixed a boat, so they don't pay any tax,
they pay very little.
So I'm pretty sure that I'm not knocking the Rolling Stones,
this is just facts.
Pretty sure Rolling Stones and non-domicile
travel around, don't pay tax.
And their managers are also their lawyers
and their accountants, you know, they're all,
you would expect that
for the biggest band in the world.
So for whatever reason,
they were the first band to ever turn around to BBC
and say, you're not airing our gig,
which I guess is their way of going,
if you want to hear the music, you pay for it.
And if you want to see us live, you pay for it.

And people do still pay for them.
So, you know, whether you like that or not,
seems a bit aggressive money grabbing,
but, you know, it's, it works for them.
So they, anyone tuned in to watch the Rolling Stones
and they got me instead.
But the sort of roll on effect of that
was that three of your album
went straight into the top 10 of the iTunes.
10 the next day, right?
This is what I would read Twitter every day.
There'd be a lot of like, you know,
what the fuck, who's this fucking example?
I want to see the Stones, you know,
this guy's fucking awful.
This guy's shy, you know, what the fuck's this?
Can't, I'm hitting the red button on BBC,
trying to get the Stones.
All I've got is this fucking example guy.
But, you know, you learn to just take that
with a pinch of salt.
Any abuses, any criticisms, it's good.
You know, it's good press.
It's wild that reach.
I want to detour again, I'm going all over the place,
but I'd heard a story about,
I'm talking about those years when you were mixing
and mingling with the biggest socialites in the world.
And I'd heard a story that was a hot tub
and it was you and Harry Styles and Freddie Flintoff
and Holly Willoughby.
That was at Jimmy Carr's house.
So Jimmy Carr used to throw these house parties for celebs.
Probably, you know, I probably not invited anymore,
so I'm not A-list enough,
but I went to his house party once
and the first party was,
it was about 60, 70 people there
and they were all the most famous people in England
and the world.
All the people we just said, like,
was Harry Styles, it was Peter Jones of Dragonstone,
Holly Willoughby, there was Ricky Gervais, Russell Brand.
Fucking hell.

It was just like, I was the shittest celeb by the long way.
That's how good, this party was so A-list,
I was the shittest.
And we ended up in a pool.
I think my, Erin, my wife at the time,
Erin went to get McDonald's of Harry Styles around 1 a.m.
And then we were all in a hot tub.
That's a dangerous game, isn't it?
Yeah.
Oh, McDonald's.
Yeah, so we were all in a hot tub,
at like 4, 5 a.m. at Jimmy Carr's house,
or we're in our underwear.
I don't even remember what we were talking about,
what happened, we were all pretty lit.
And then the next time I went to Jimmy Carr's house,
I went to his house, I went to three parties in total,
always just like crazy levels of,
I actually became really good friends of Heston Bloomingtile
from Jimmy Carr's party.
Yeah.
But I think someone was just like,
you two will get on, you're both fucking nuts.
And me and Heston, we don't chat so much,
I'm still in contact, but he's kind of off the grid,
but Heston lived close to me in London,
we used to hang out every two weeks,
just sit around on a Sunday talking food and science
and drinking wine and smoking cigars.
But yeah, Jimmy Carr, the last party I went to Jimmy Carr,
I did a photo booth with Stephen Hawkin.
Wow.
Stephen Hawkin died six months later.
That's a fucking amazing.
Me, Aaron, and Stephen Hawkin in a photo booth.
And he was there doing his twitchy thing that he did,
good old Stephen.
And he was obviously typing something out
because he had this way of quickly selecting,
you know, a way to say a speech.
They don't think he wrote the letters, he wrote the sentence.
And much where you do like, you know, you're typing now,
and it'll predict, not only the text,
but then predict the next word,

and you've got an option for next words,
and then he would blink to...
And Aaron was encouraged by Stephen Hawkin's nurse
to lean in and pull a sexy face.
She was like, oh, go on, he likes that.
Stephen loves all that.
Seriously.
And Aaron's then in and gone.
And then Stephen Hawkin's gone, I like the sexy.
I like this.
I often wonder when I look at the world
when what would it be?
He's got one of the most famous voices ever,
and it's not even his.
I didn't know you had a Hawkin in your accent locker.
I often wonder when I, since I was a little boy,
and I looked at the universe.
But yeah, I met Stephen Hawkin just before he passed away.
Would you like to go to McDonald's with me?
Yeah.
I like the sexy.
But yeah, I don't really,
people are like, was he a lovely guy?
I mean, it's hard to say.
I mean, Stephen Hawkin, he doesn't,
I'm not being mean.
He doesn't move or do anything, so.
Hard to get a read.
Hard to get a read.
Was it amazing to meet him?
Yeah.
Have I got that photo up in my house?
Yeah.
Did Aaron want that photo in the divorce?
Yeah.
Um, no.
Was there?
Just an absolute bonkers though.
What did you say about meeting Stephen Hawkin?
Oh, this floored me as well.
I'm like, it's a hell of a party.
You mentioned Jimmy Carr.
Was there a Jimmy Carr, Princess Beatrice connection?
Yeah.

Oh, the Prince.
So I met Princess Beatrice at Jimmy Carr's house.
And Princess Beatrice comes over to me.
Well, her boyfriend at the time came over to me.
Dave, what's his name?
And he used to work for Virgin Galactic.
So he was, it was called Dave, but Dave.
It was big in the game.
You know, it was like high up at Virgin Galactic.
It was not like a shit job.
It was like astronaut shit.
That's good to say.
Yeah, astronaut.
I want to grow up and be an astronaut.
Dave grew up to be an astronaut.
Um, so, yeah, so Beatrice has just come over to me
and she's gone, I'm a fan.
Dave says it's okay.
Anyway, so I've taken Dave's number, I think.
And I'm chatting to, that's it.
She texts me and invites me to come play tennis
at Buckingham Palace.
They've got one tennis court, I think,
at Buckingham Palace, and obviously she gets music,
says I'm Nan's house, late Nan's house.
And the same day I got invited to play tennis
at Buckingham Palace, I was invited by Lifewater,
the charity, which was run by Simon,
who's a good mate of mine.
Simon is Adele's ex-husband, who I'm still very close to.
And I knew Simon through Adele.
And Lifewater was bottled in Wales.
And for whatever reason, that day,
Queen Elizabeth, good old Liz,
was in this part of Wales doing her duties as a queen.
You know, she's just travelling around the Commonwealth,
meeting people who do work for charity.
And this day she was meeting people who bottled water
in a water boiling plant.
And I was invited as an ambassador for Lifewater
to go and meet the queen in Wales.
The same day I was invited to play tennis
with Princess Beatrice.
Bearing in mind, I don't know the Royal Family.

I met Princess Beatrice and was invited to play tennis
four days later at Buckingham Palace.
Don't know the queen, but had a link to the queen
via Lifewater's charity purely by chance
because she was in Herefordshire where the water was bottled.
So I've had to text Beatrice and say,
would really love to come and play tennis at the palace,
but I'm off to Wales to meet Nan.
I heard the wording of that text was from
Princess Beatrice coming on your phone.
Do you want to come play tennis at my Nan's house?
And you're like, your Nan's house?
Now, is this the Nan? Is the queen or is this...?
Yeah, because I'm off to meet your actual Nan in Wales.
And it ended up being that the person who introduced me
to the queen, I've got a photo with the queen.
I've met the queen twice.
And I've got a photo of shaking her hand.
And I'm just there going,
I've got a photo of my face, which is just general goofiness.
And the queen, the guy from Wales was like,
oh, your Majesty, I believe Elliot,
there knows your granddaughter, Beatrice.
Obviously, the queen's in the middle of Wales.
She's probably like this guy.
Of course he fucking does.
So she's just sort of going, oh, nice.
Just walked off.
And then, it's Phillips there.
And he's going,
what is this?
Oh, this is Elliot.
He works for Life Fort, he's an ambassador.
He's actually a rapper.
And he knows your granddaughter, Beatrice.
Well, rappers are as well as relatives.
We've got water bottling in Wales with rappers.
Lovely.
Splendid. Lovely to meet you.
Shook my hand, walked off.
And then I've text bitches and gone,
just met Nan.
And then she's gone, oh, that's so silly.
I'll call her and tell her she met my friend.

I'll call her.
And the queen's just got like,
Nan, you just met my friend in Wales.
That's what happened.
What circles to be in?
These are the people.
Can you play tennis?
Not very well.
I can't bottle water either.
That's such an amazing invite.
Come and meet you four days ago.
Come and have a game of tennis.
Fucking all right.
Yeah.
She knows how to lure you in.
Yeah.
The only thing that's going to stop you going to Buckingham Palace
is because the fucking queen's not there.
She's elsewhere.
She's probably like, why don't you want to come back in Paris?
Who turns on Buckingham?
Oh, he's going to meet my Nan somewhere else.
Also, the only time that you can play is when she's out of.
Fucking brilliant.
That's probably one of, probably my best story.
We've had some really good luck with royal stories on this podcast.
Actually, one was told about a hacker in Buckingham Palace
and it's gone ballistic on TikTok.
Weird algorithms.
So we'll post that one and see how it does.
I'm not so confident.
It's a good area to go though.
Streaming and music and how it's changed.
We talked about what it was like when you started.
Now you release a song like we talked about.
You're monitoring the streams.
But as much YouTube and TikTok as genuine Spotify plays,
has the whole game changed so much?
It has.
I just think the main difference now is I think it's easier
for people to fast track success and fame.
I think before, generally speaking,
you'd have to put hours in,
either behind the scenes or on the scene.

[Transcript] Between Two Beers Podcast / Example: 16 years at the top of global music

Generally speaking, if it was from a rapping point of view,
you'd have to put work in on the circuit,
performing, freestyling, battling,
doing pop-up performances in record shops,
releasing mixtapes, collaborating.
I put out seven vinyls and three CD mixtapes
before I even got play on Radio One.
Now it's just like, it can all be because of one song.
I'm not knocking that.
That's just the difference.
That's just the way it is.
In the same way that today,
algorithms on Spotify and TikTok
would probably love Britney Spears,
because it's fucking catchy.
It's got a little bit of an edge.
It's cheeky. It's sexy.
She's good looking.
She's cheeky. She's sexy.
Her name rolls off the tongue.
Her image, she's got a lot of hits.
She's got all the best songwriters in the world
and producers have been writing songs for her.
We're going to get to a stage soon
where there's going to be A.I. pop stars.
It already is.
The songs are being written by A.I.
The videos are done by A.I.
The artists are created by A.I.
Songs are performed particularly well at Spotify.
Mainly, if you're a massive label with a lot of spend,
because don't forget, Spotify is obviously Scandinavian,
but a lot of the major labels have shares in it as well,
and then a lot of the major labels have their own playlist.
A lot of the big playlists you listen to, you might not know,
but that playlist is run by Island Records
or Warner Records or Universal Records.
90% of the records on that playlist might be by Universal,
but a song's getting so big over at Warner,
and then someone at Warner's like,
can you stick our artists on your massive pop playlist?
And Universal are like, okay,
but we need one of our acts on your big Warner playlist.
So it's kind of, there's a bit of that,

but then there are songs that just are so fucking good
for whatever reason, human ear likes them,
and we put them in our running playlist
and our gym playlist and our party playlist
and our house party playlist and our revising playlist.
So humans still have, you know, the average Joe,
the average listener still has an influence, people power.
You know, like some of my songs will say,
48% of streams are from your listeners,
and then 20% are from our playlist,
and then 22% are from listeners' own playlist.
I bet those numbers are accurate too.
Yeah, but then every now and again,
I'll get a song where it's like,
only 22% of your streams are from your listeners.
56% of streams are coming from our editorial playlist.
So you've obviously clicked somewhere
and somewhere at Spotify, UK has gone,
oh, this is doing really well for a Spotify Germany.
I've gone, oh, we're going to try this this week.
Spotify France, oh, we're going to try this this week.
Before you know it, you're on playlist all over the world,
and you get an extra 10, 20,000 a week from those countries.
So basically the answer is it's fucking impossible.
Like anything has always been to know.
Like if you've got a cat falling down a slide
into a swimming pool on YouTube, it's probably going to do well.
If you've got a really cheesy, catchy pop song
that's one minute 47 with a really hot girl selling it,
it's probably going to do well on TikTok.
So the same rules have always applied.
They're just in a different playing field now.
It's like, you know, Britney Spears was the TikTok star
of her day in a way, I think, you know,
and then, you know, pretty much every pop star you can name
after that, they're all versions of that, you know.
Was there one, but I'm not sure what part of the journey it was on
that Spotify did like a push to every person
that had ever listened to one of your songs,
that was that a new album was released or a single or something?
Like is that just priceless? Is that?
Yeah, like so, yeah, we, so I'm signed with BMG now in Sydney.
So it's a worldwide deal.
And the reason I went with BMG is they offered me similar percentages

to if I'd have been independent.

So, you know, 15 years ago, my record deal was I got 20% or 20 pence for every pound, and the record label got 80.

Most deals now, most artists are getting 70, 80, 90 pence or cents a dollar, the record label get the rest.

So I took a deal with BMG because they gave me quite favorable percentages compared to if I'd have done it by myself.

I thought I might as well use their infrastructure.

They seem like really cool guys.

They love the music.

They've got the radio plug as the marketing people, et cetera, et cetera.

And yeah, we just had an email or a call maybe a year ago and they were like, Spotify, I love this new one so much.

The day you're out, this single comes out.

Anybody who's ever listened or clicked on an example song on Spotify will see this new song banner as an advert with an option to click.

Which is probably the biggest sort of bit of promo help I'd had from Spotify that we hadn't paid for or that they hadn't paid for.

I don't really pay for that shit, but, you know, and then I don't even think it was hugely successful.

I think, you know, there was something like maybe 100,000 clicks out of a potential 47 million, but it's probably similar to the amount of people you see an advert, a bus stop and go, I'm getting a Coke Zero.

I don't know.

Yeah, it's wild.

But yeah, I can just see this.

You'd rather do a separate show just about stats.

I love asking people who, I mean, we've got kids similar ages.

What have you learned about yourself as a dad?

What does the parenting journey taught you?

I think one of the main things I've learned is you can't bullshit kids.

Really?

Like you can lie to kids, but you can't really bullshit kids.

Like they've just got a sixth sense for bullshit, you know?

Like it's in, you know, the same way that pets can read good and bad energy.

You know, like some weird fucker who lives down the end of your street and like he walks down the street and goes to the woods, the cat and the dog and the cat's like, fuck off.

And you're like, one day that guy gets arrested for something and your mum's like, I always said there was something funny about him.

You know, remember our dog, Lassie?

Lassie never used to go near him.

Like kids can read energy.

I think they can, you know, they can tell, even though they won't be able to work out

if you're lying to them at a young age, not that I lie to my kids.
What I'm saying is they force you to be the best version of yourself.
You know, I love being sharp for my kids.
I don't like being hungover.
I like having a good night's sleep.
I like being fresh.
I like to get up and I like to give them eye contact.
If they need that, I like to give them tactileness.
You know, if they want to just, not necessarily want to cuddle, but just be near you.
And I think the main thing I've learnt from them is just being aware of your energy
and your vibe that you put out and how I can change their whole day
and their whole mood if you're carrying, you know, like, you know, you see it so much,
like you don't see it, but you realise growing up, the shit that your parents
probably had to deal with in terms of their siblings, work, stress, depression,
not with my parents, but I'm sure for other people like addiction
or, you know, huge money finance problems
and not letting that ruin your kid's day or having an influence on your kid's day
is I think the most important part of being a parent.
Yeah.
Like, we can all be fun and make them laugh.
We can all tickle them.
We can all chase them.
We can all paint a picture of them.
We can sit and put a film on them.
We can play FIFA with them on the PlayStation.
That isn't necessarily good parenting, I think.
It's just the nurturing and, like, shielding them from the bad shit
and teaching them about behaviour, good and bad behaviour,
but also just, like, shielding them from the other stuff.
And I don't just mean, like, faking it, like, putting it on a brave face,
but essentially, like, their lives are so much more important than our existence, really.
We've made this decision to have kids.
So I'm just like, every morning it's just about, about them.
I've learnt to not make it about me anymore.
And I think for a while I was constantly making it about me.
I would let my mood carry over into their breakfast time or their walk to school.
You know, I'd be on the phone already on my walk to school stressing about something.
I'm like, no, I'm going to drop them off, let them go to school at a certain level,
you know, of happiness and calm, relaxation, ready to learn, energised, excited for school,
knowing I'm going to be there to pick them up with them, I'm just going to pick them up
and then I can get on with my shit as an adult, you know what I mean?
I do. It's a perspective changer.
It changes your outlook on everything and reframes what's important.
I was getting calls from the school, not a lot, once or twice,

where my elders had misbehaved.
And it was the day when I let my stress or my vibe overspill into his sense of being, I guess.
I'd put him on edge and it caused him to do something pretty rash
and like some outlandish, out of nowhere incident at school.
And I felt like I needed to take the blame for that a bit, you know.
It's good awareness to know that it's a reflected.
Hey, look, thank you so much for giving us your time today.
It's been a wild ride, it's been so fun.
We've loved every minute of it.
I'm just going to leave time for Shay.
Shay's our outro guy and he always delivers with a big outro
and I know he's got a good one lined up.
But before that, I just want to say thank you so much.
Pleasure, man.
I've loved every minute of it.
I've loved this too.
Yeah, it's my first NZ pod as well.
First NZ pod.
Glad that we broke your cherry, so to speak.
Popped your cherry?
We didn't break it.
I wouldn't want you doing that to me, man.
Yeah, no.
I wouldn't walk again.
You need that physio to come over and do the needles in the week off.
Right, here we go.
I'll try and wrap it up.
This is hard.
I find the episodes where I'm very quiet, like I've been tonight,
are the ones where I'm just engrossed in who we're lucky enough to speak to.
And this has been amazing in terms of just being in your presence.
Like Steven said, you've got an energy and it comes straight into the room.
It's an authenticity as well, which is amazing.
And the fact that your music has been a soundtrack to my life as well.
You capture it really well when you're talking about those moments in life.
And I think not just your music, but all music.
You attach memories and experiences to them.
And they take you to great places.
They take you to sad places.
But they have meaning and they're so special to you.
And to actually meet the person that's provided some amazing memories is so fucking cool.
But also following your journey and to see the depth of character as well.
And the good and the bad acknowledging relationship breakdowns
and the lessons that people can learn.

For someone that has a platform like you do,
I think it's incredible that people can pick away and take stuff that works for them.
And I think you're an incredible example of like a young modern day father
and the influence that they have on their kids.
So I'm glad Stevie's been able to pick your brain on some parenting stuff
because he uses the podcast as a cheat sheet a lot of the time on how to guide his own parenting.
I just think the main thing I feel in life is just so easy to just pass on life lessons and tips.
People often did it to me and I wasn't ready to listen.
But I'm not only ready to listen now, I'm ready to share and just ready to constantly make changes.
Yeah, and I've seen that change.
I've charted that change and it's amazing.
So thank you very much for sharing.
Long may it continue.
We'll do this again in a few years.
Yeah, look forward to your next New Zealand gig.
Yeah, right.
That's probably not in Auckland, Jesus.
Hamilton's a place.
Hamilton, yeah, that's like an hour away, right?
That's the hometown.
I did play Hamilton about three years ago.
What's the venue there?
I'll see you back there.
Founders Theatre?
No, Stephen.
Fuck me.
Jesus, Founders Theatre.
Man's in the 1990s.
What's that?
Sort of like Big Sheds.
Yeah, it was the outback.
That's it.
And it became the factory.
That's it.
Fucking Founders Theatre, Jesus.
You go watch the ballet there.
You call yourself a hamster.
That was the last time I went to a show.
You're going to revoke your hamster.
You're going to revoke your hamster.
Founders Theatre.
You're going to revoke your hamster.
Thank you very much, Elliot.
Yeah, thank you.

[Transcript] Between Two Beers Podcast / Example: 16 years at the top of global music

Thanks, Elliot.

Hey guys, if you've made it this far, hopefully that means you've enjoyed this episode.

And if you feel strongly enough about it to share on social media, that would be much appreciated.

Also, make sure you subscribe to the show in your podcast app and leave a review.

That stuff is really important for helping us grow.

Catch you next week.