

On this episode of Between Two Beers, we talk to Izzy Whitley.

Izzy is one of New Zealand's most successful self-made men under 30.

He's 28, has founded two businesses that do over 30 million a year in revenue, and has the world at his feet, but things weren't always so smooth for Izzy.

In this episode, we work through his incredible rise from his humble beginnings in Gisborne to leaving home at 16 and dropping out of uni.

At the age of 21, he had lost his father to suicide and suffered two heart attacks and was dealing with his trauma alone with nothing in an Auckland hospital.

That's when he had the idea to start Auckland labour hire by contracting himself out to construction sites.

The seven years since have been a whirlwind of success and hard work.

Auckland labour hire is now Aotearoa labour hire with 11 branches around the country and a short term goal of 100 million in annual revenue.

Izzy's story is captivating and his mindset inspirational.

We both left this recording quite blown away.

His approach to life, adversity and using his time is exceptional and he's probably the most dialed in under 30 we've ever spoken to.

You're gonna love this one.

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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 www.between2bears.com.

Also follow us on Insta and TikTok where we've cut up all the best video clips from each episode and join our private Facebook group Ambassadors to chat with our community about each episode. This episode was brought to you from the export beer garden studio.

Enjoy!

Izzy Whitley, welcome to Between 2 Bears.

Cheers, happy to be here fellas.

That can pop.

It's been a long time coming Che.

That's a nice, it's nice to have that back in my eardrum.

I've been talking about that for about three months but we finally got it.

Hey anyway, super excited to have you in the export beer garden studio.

This is a net vnche I've been super excited about and there's so much goodness to get into but we wanted to start in a place which is perhaps a little bit unexpected and it's music.

So we asked your fiancée you know some quirky bits about Izzy.

Oh she kept that quiet.

And yeah she's come through, she's come through with some goodness.

And she said one of the interesting quirks of your life is that you have a song of the week and I would like you to tell us what that's all about.

Yeah well, yeah she sent me out to dry hair.

Now every like on a Monday and a Friday my Spotify gives me like a discover weekly and a release rate.

One's on a Monday, one's on a Friday and on a Monday morning I wake up getting on my

way in to work.

It's kind of like a 20 minute drive and I kind of out of those first 10 songs one click

so I guess and I think that's my song for the week.

I'm quite sporadic like with some of my thinking and stuff like that so if I can find anything that can kind of almost provide to be an anchor point of consistency for my week I'm into it.

So I kind of dial in that one song and then that's me.

Yeah just expand on that.

Song of the week is literally that song on repeat.

Yeah on repeat.

Look if I had control of the office music 24-7 I would play the same song and I'd try to do it a few times but is this on repeat?

I'm like yeah go on someone else jump on but if I'm in my car, if I've got ear pods on or whatever and I'm in control of the music, same song all week until Monday morning.

Do you ever go back to back weeks?

If it's a ripper.

If there's one that's been like a great week and it's almost like sentimental I'll carry the momentum through you know so but that's pretty rare but there is sometimes an overlap yeah.

So I've got a playlist on Spotify it's called Bumpher 2023 and I just add my favourite songs that I've had so people and I believe people in the office follow it.

I was actually done in Hawkes Bay at the weekend and I went to go into the TV it's a place I'd stayed before and my Spotify was still on the TV so I could just like from six months before I'd just tune back into Bumpher bit of house music bit of energy so it's always house music or a verge on a little bit of DMV but I enjoy my house music.

That's fascinating point number one about Izzy but does that expand into routine being a very important part of your life?

Yeah if either of you had to hire a hit man on me I'd be the easiest person to kill because I'd do the same thing all the time.

I love it.

Same food, same timeframe I'm leaving the apartment, car park, it's a pretty routine base week and when it does get I guess inconsistent at times like I always try and have a couple of anchor points to bring me back in to feel like I am in control of my week.

So it's actually just feeling like I can have some ownership on my week more than anything it's kind of like actually I do I am in control what some basis points that I can kind of go back to to give me that consistency so I don't feel like I'm reactive to everything that's coming across my desk.

Can I pick away to just a couple of kind of things because I think we've got some similar similar traits here and some really not similar traits in terms of our bank balances but volume in a car is a multiple of two or a multiple of five?

No issues well the maximum volume is 45 so I run 45 on my way into the office and I actually often get complaints from like our body corp about like the music volume when I'm leaving the apartment because if the sun's up no matter how cold it is I'll open up the old sunroof and the windows are down blazing so I've never been too focused on the numbers of the volume

okay I do know that there's a lot of common themes for some people but nah it's never as loud as it can be that's me that might be the most shameless question I've just I'm curious can I follow it up with another one same haircut every time at the same barber yeah yeah nice fuck yeah every every week I run a two-week operation yeah I like to think that I don't even know that I can tell I've had a haircut that's how consistent I like my week to be so I've never had unfortunately I've never had someone come up like man it's a really nice haircut well because you can't tell so it's kind of my geez she actually often says oh nice haircut babe it's like three days later you know what I mean so maybe I just blow tried a little bit better that day or something that's good consistency and lunch same lunch same lunch yeah I had a bit of a falling out with my my prior lunch incumbent three weeks ago I hate fish like I can't do raw fish and I ordered some sushi and it came and I went to bite into it and it had a little bit of salmon yeah on the seaweed and that just put me out of sync a really so for about a year I'd had jumbo chicken yeah no vegetables in it just rice and your seaweed roll for probably a year and yeah put put me out of whack for long because I'm yet to recover actually so just just sticking on the food thing just for a minute have you buried the hatchet with with pack and save Albany around that pink chicken debacle a few years ago why there's a first I might here remember it I did get some vouchers for that but I don't live up those ways so you know what I'm I'm not a petty bastard and I do forgive but I don't forget so I probably wouldn't go back so no rotisserie chickens I do but not from there no way no pinkies I'm so I'm already so well you've dug deep just checking the Air Force ones as well just to see whether they were they custom yeah that's just on of Nike right Nike.com you can kind of just get the get some initials put on the back like like people do with football boots yeah yeah I'm so interested in unpacking that mind I'm gonna start with a few character references so we recently had Luke Kimmies from Boys Get Paid on the pod who is an exceptionally high level operator himself and he had this to say about you from what I say sorry from what I see he's a 1% massively driven high performer who is an ability to bring a team together to achieve a goal thinks a lot bigger than most Kiwis and won't stop until he achieves it he's mad on fitness because it's done so much for him and he encourages his team teammates to live the same way leads from the front that was Kimmies and we also had this from Sammy Jasper who I believe was your employee number one yeah he said Izzy is the most driven person I've ever met he's one of those few people that actually thrives when the going gets tough or when tough conversations are needed I haven't seen anything like it from when I started working for him you could tell he was going to be successful and whatever he did and fear play to him what he's done with ALH is incredible 25 laborers and just me and him in the office now he has multiple branches across the country and maybe 500 plus staff incredible really so no one Sammy I'm wondering if you needed a few tough conversations with him over the years but I digress I want to focus in on the point he made about the tough conversations and when going gets tough yeah like is that what you really thrive on I so there was a really big point for me like I think what people sometimes can look past as I started ALH when I was 21 that's fucking young looking back at it and you don't really get taken too seriously when you're that that age and a big kids industry so there's actually a point where I remember my now chairman Rob we're kind of getting through a bit of nitty gritty times and there was a real challenge that was kind of presenting itself and I never forget he was off overseas and I

said to him I was like fuck Rob I was like you know what do I do here how do I have this conversation and and what do you do and he and he kind of said to me he said well is he I'm actually off overseas for the next seven days why don't you show me that you're a capable leader and show me if you're as good as you are and if you are you'll be able to have that conversation so when I come back why don't you signal to me that you're that guy and if not and and if not right and and I was kind of holy shit like if I don't have this conversation the goat is gonna is might not talk to me again you know what I mean it's kind of like so I guess I've always appreciated feedback and if I've ever once I've got that respect for someone I'll often be really proactive with actioning that feedback and that was the first time I felt like I had to do that so I guess I did I dived into a hard conversation that people still aren't comfortable having and it was around an underperformer in our business right like it was through an underperformance sector stage and we just had to dive into the problem at hand where it's kind of like you can ignore a problem and it's actually only gonna get worse or you can address it in a respectful way but a direct way and you actually get a better outcome for often both parties from just being up front and honest amazing insight on that and quite often we shirk away from the tough conversation right yeah and and you know like it's it's it's I think it's far easier to soften someone's edges than sharpen someone's edges so when we're kind of going through the recruitment process of bringing into our leadership team and our management level I always think I'd rather have a hard time trying to almost calm this friggin bull horse down and break it in then trying to push it to be better right or be tougher and be harder so I'd much rather get people that are a bit rogue in their communication and what they want to achieve and their competitiveness we can kind of pull them back and help mold them but

it's really hard to go the other way. There's a difference between knowing that you have to dive into these difficult conversations and really thriving and enjoying it are you like did that happen quite quickly that you actually look forward to that challenge yeah it happened really quickly I think like I was always it was well geez might might as well explore a sport where it probably comes from actually like being thriving and uncomfortable settings it's actually kind of been the normal for me always growing up when I when I first started working and at a young age and even started playing football everything revolved around pushing myself to the limit and learning how to be better when I'm in that kind of threshold and zone so when I was kind of 10 or 11 me and my dad would go for a head bike around the block and then I would run next to him and he'd be biking and we'd do power poles right so sprint jog sprint jog and I'd kind of get three quarters in and and I'd be really outside my comfort zone and my dad would be on the bike screaming like this is when you learn about yourself you know and it's like what do you mean like I just want to vomit but it's kind of like I take it back that far so when I was 12 or 11 or 10 in those ages constantly having to be willing to go a bit further when I was uncomfortable wanted to stop I guess for me mentally you think actually I don't want to have that conversation but I know I can and often the benefit comes from going that bit further just like exercise how early did you make that distinction because it's a it's a great analogy now looking back with that old eyes but was it a was it a teenage thing yeah I would probably say it was a oh nah look I actually think it was probably once dad passed away probably actually unpacking some of the stuff because I think when you when you grow up how I grow up you know it's probably frigging borderline psychological abuse like so military focused for me you actually don't realise that that wasn't normal so you kind of almost think oh that's all good and then you kind of start to

have these experiences like Jasper's kind of alluded to and you think well if I can have these conversations like what if a duck's back what why can I have that and other people can't what actually has built that resilience or that kind of comfort to be in an uncomfortable space so it was probably like early to mid 20s you start to unpack things when when when you start performing in that zone in a different vertical I think I was kind of okay maybe a couple of reasons why you know we'll be right back after this short break I'm really keen to start painting the picture and I want to start in Gisborne growing up little in high school and I've heard you talk about the success you've had and part of it being based on your ability to communicate with lots of different people from lots of different walks of life and this listen high school it was kind of like well 11% Pakiha in Gisborne you know can you talk to us a little bit about that experience growing up there yeah so we so like growing up I guess in the home environment that we're a massive family we're all working working class family no one really in our family like everyone was kind of involved in the trade and stuff like that it's kind of like you 99% of people in Gisborne are like that so you end up going to school with people there's actually never really someone at your school in Gisborne that's getting picked up in a cool car or something like that it's actually such a level playing field so it's actually you grow up and it's just what it is you got so many different cultures in Gisborne which I friggin loved right like we had a we had a buddy on our school at high school like while some people think that's odd that was cool because you learn about the culture and because I was so religious like with our Christianity growing up we're actually never allowed to dive into that because you weren't allowed to worship like false gods or other gods so little things to know that you weren't allowed to walk over the Fuddys front lawn because it was tough it was a different like it was a form of disrespect I just always really loved those communities and being involved in them so it's kind of like it wasn't until I came to Auckland that I was like geez why so many friggin white people at school like honestly like you know like I'd never I'd seen more Asians on my first day at Westlake boys they're not ever seen in Gisborne do not I mean and like it's just like it was hectic so go back to it but it was the norm for me do not I mean constantly interacting with different communities different cultures different people from different places in the world in different income brackets but it was actually kind of a common denominator like our school was like a DSL one school so they're kind of all in the same group do you know what I mean it's again no one's no one's going to school with a cool backpack it's got shit backpacks it's kind of no one's living any different so I guess the question for that is is that that was what it was like until I left Gisborne so I actually didn't know any different you know and I didn't know that you had to treat people different if they were in a bigger profile role or if they're in a lesser profile role because you just learn to respect everyone you know so you've got that side of things the respect and at the same time there's fostering this competitive element within your family is that competitive with your siblings and competitiveness passed down from your dad yeah so so massively and it and that all started a young age like I everything I did my dad was kind of almost playing me off against my siblings right my bougie is 12 years my oldest sister she's 12 years older than me my brother's 10 years older than me my sister's five years older than me like of course I'm not going to be able to catch them whilst we're still living at home but it was kind of like almost made to believe that I should be so it's kind of everything we did it was well you should be doing that so well like I'm six and my brother's you know 18 so so yeah the

competitors all started started at it I can't remember not being kind of encouraged to be competitive that would be what I would say and it was and it often came at costs right like I would I would Salko'd cry when I'd lose like it was just I was the worst sportsman ever because I just walk off I couldn't bear myself to shake people's hands if I lost it was just like the worst thing because my life revolved around playing sport on a weekend and and that was kind of almost you know like a bit of an escape for me out of the life that I was kind of succumb and in that was I looked so forward to that and if it didn't go my way especially because I impacted it in a negative element I didn't forgive myself right I'd be out for around that afternoon after kind of school sports and stuff it was just like so I was always pretty hard on myself but that came from my dad being being hard on me it was like no no from you know I was never allowed to sleep in and never remember like about allowed being to sleep in past 7 a.m. growing up in Gizzy and it was always because you know that teaches bad habits you know five years old no you can't sleep in bad habits just with the the upbringing amongst the religious backdrop stuff like TV and bits and pieces were they prevalent in your household or were they so another thing that was a great question probably a good question to answer because it gives people insights of how intense it was right we weren't allowed to listen to worldly music so like if I could hear my dad coming over the road because he had keys in his pocket because he was a caretaker I could hear the the chinkle of the keys so I'd turn MTV off and I put on something else but it was we were never allowed worldly music playing at home and we're allowed to listen to like the righteous brothers in the Beach Boys on a Sunday and that was at a push you know but mum always had Savage Garden seating in her car so we'd kind of get in there and have a bit of a hoot to Savage Garden but truly madly deeply yeah so yeah so that's kind of like to the extent that it was at but again like you just didn't realize that that wasn't all that abnormal yeah I wanted to ask that because I've heard you describe it as coming from humble beginnings but I wanted to understand when you reconcile the fact that it was humble beginnings because if you don't know any different it's just what it is just beginnings yeah like going back to the Gisborne thing like you know at our school they'd have like you'd get free Milo and toast in the mornings they'd do a breakfast club at school the DSL rating and stuff like that because it was not normal for people to not be able to bring lunch to school so I always felt like we were wealthy you know because we actually had clothes we had a roof we you know like home was safe and and I always felt we're still 20 times better off than other people but then I kind of come up here and I've experienced some lifestyles out of here and I'm like far out like it's people just have no idea but then that's not their problem that they don't know you know and I just use it as a bit of a strength and a bit of a tool to my box to say actually I know what this can be like so so every day for me man waking up and doing what I do is a real privilege right now like pressure generally is a privilege and and I've never woken up without a smile on my face and thought shit let's get stuck into it no matter how sticky the mud is for my reading the Izzy story you're at 27 now right 28 just turn 28 has three chapters and there's the beginning which we've covered in Gisborne and family life and there's what's happened with ATL yep and in the middle there's ages 16 to 21 ALH bro ALH oh yeah good pick up yeah ATL I was like what have you been doing in Atlanta bro yeah who knows but 16 to 21 is when you left Gisborne and you moved to Auckland yeah and then we sort of mentioned some adversity are you able to talk about those years why you moved to Auckland and then paint the picture of what happened across those years yeah so I getting into Auckland was

was look I I'm always I'm happy I always say I'm always happy I'm never satisfied and I'm not yet proud just to see what I've delivered but if I'm going to put the P word out there I'm most proud of myself for getting out of Gisborne because if I didn't get out of Gisborne shit who knows I went and played at a football tournament and and linked up with a with a coach that was at Sykesie who was at Westlake and I kind of exchanged emails but I had to lie to him and tell him that my parents used my email so I was emailing Sykesie pretending I was my dad because there's no way I would have been allowed allowed to leave like to a school that was outside of my family church or my family home it was just so forbidden so I was kind of like orchestrating this whole kind of opportunity and I was like geez like I'd been working for for about four years in Gisie and I'd been mind the lawn so I knew that I could survive for kind of two years so I knew that I could have enough money I think I could have spent like 70 bucks or 72 bucks a week in Auckland with what I'd saved and I could sell my truck that I bought oh man that's a hustles mentality early age yeah well I just thought I was like like I kind of just thought like I was like man I need to get out of here so I kind of orchestrated it I never forget I I went to my my mum and dad and I said look guys I'm I've got this intercity bus ticket that I'm I'm gonna jump on and go to Auckland and give this school called Westlake a crack and if it's successful and they want me I'm going I'm not coming back I'm 16 I can do whatever I want I don't know if that's necessarily true but um but and and that was it and the trial went well um I didn't think it went well but it went well enough um got involved at Westlake had had two of the most phenomenal years of my life at Westlake what that school was able to provide me in the way of nurturing infrastructure around actually just how to be a bloke a good guy um and and uphold yourself with integrity and respect I learned so much from from that school um on a many many aspects and the family I live with the corn to the family um they did so much for me they didn't have to take me in when when they did and they did um and then yes I I went through school I failed school I couldn't go to uni um but you know dad was a builder back in the day my uncle was kind of my brother's a joiner was

as a joiner by trade I kind of knew how to swing a hammer so I was like I'll just try and get a building apprenticeship so ended up kind of getting on the books of a building apprenticeship and I kind of was veering away from playing football and I just wanted to kind of get stuck into work once you're doing big hours and your your labor intensive job you lose that that motivation to one of them has to give right and I didn't even really like football I actually never liked football not once did I kind of thrive playing it was always about winning and uh and then so I kind of took a year off footy um did the building thing did the flatting thing um with a bunch of mates which was fun and then uh year two got back into footy um martin bullock actually gave me it gave me a buzz and and kind of went in and and jumped in at the youth team at whitehack and and that was actually just cool to get back into a team team environment and team setting and then continued to play from there um but then later on that second year I then got um I got mugged in town so I got beaten up um Reuben Parker goalkeeper

that's a him problem bro throw it throw it throw it export can I'll never forget into the wrong group of people and I was the one that got uh picked on really really sorry to for for our podcast to trigger look treat the either top mate of mine that I've told them this a hundred times so it's not new to him but um but yeah so that happened so my shoulder got dislocated I had to have like a reconstruction surgery which put me off the tools for for a

long time and longer than I would have liked and it was at that stage I was I was kind of like I'm on ACC I want to play youth league and I want to time my uh surgery so it's kind of only with one game to go I'd never won anything in football like a league or anything I was like a whitehack team was pretty good um can we do it you know and then uh so we went to kind of I basically planned to have surgery two two games out before the end of the season and um so I was playing through it playing through it I was I was thinking about studying starting studying the next year I never forgot I never forget I played my um we played a game on on Saturday and then on Sunday we had a crate day um and I was due to due to um go and get my surgery on the Wednesday and that was

basically us saying catch you later so we're uh all the boys having having crates the whitehack fellas celebrating kind of a bit of an early end of season gig and um and I was getting pizza that kind of a few hours later with my girlfriend at the time and and that's when my um you know bearing in mind my dad was meant to be flying up was due to be flying up on the Wednesday morning

to be there with my surgery and uh and then I got a call from my sister um saying uh that my dad had

died and uh I was drunk I don't know what the hell was going on um and I kind of thought no he's not

I spoke to him last night he's kind of coming up on Wednesday you know kind of what are you talking

about and she said uh dad dad's been found dead and I was kind of like what what the fuck how's this happen you know he's an upbeat guy like people think I'm a pretty high-energy positive guy he was exactly the same so for me I instantly thought someone's beaten him up like because he was a caretaker you had to go and do the alarms and stuff it goes high late at night so he'd always kind of there'd be alarms going off a cat would set it off and and Gizzy's you know it's probably the last place you want to be walking around late at night and um and yeah so then I connected with the with the family I'd I've been living with the corners I went over there and and kind of they kind of huddled around me and and we hatched a plan to get me home as quickly as I can

their dad Paulie Cornter drove me to Toadonga to intercept with my brother who was in New Plymouth

and then he drove me home and I remember I saw my brother um there's the BP in Toadonga that you

kind of if you're going back onto the modeway coming out of the mount I'll never forget and I drive past that every fortnight and it's one of those things you'll never I'll never forget never forget driving in there we're in uh Sierra CornTERS Mini Cooper and my brother was sat at the kind of barley in a pace where you kind of see your tradies having their pies and their cokes and uh he was just sobbing and he was sobbing next to the BP employee and I was thinking all right you know fuck this is this is step one of this is real I need to go in and see my brother we're getting the car and then I said banjo I'm drunk I don't want to keep you know like help me to understand what's happened he said oh I don't want to know he said uh I just don't want to know I said well do you know he goes no look I don't know I it was hidden trees and I was kind of like he's been beaten up you know someone's you know down one on him I was kind of whatever

and then I was kind of nodding on and off again crate days I wouldn't recommend crate day on a day like that but um so we get to gizzy and then I walk in the door and um my my sister I got such a close relationship with my sister bougie um and if it was someone that was going to tell me what exactly happened it was her and I said bougie fucking cut me cut me break here what's going on so then my sister just refers to me and she and she just said to me um that's kind of committed suicide and uh and I was kind of like no he hasn't like come on like that's that's not happened and uh and then she said no he has like he'd he'd left the letter um and that was kind of it I was like all right well that's happened now where do I go go from here and where does the family go so there was such a massive kind of hurdle to to have to experience and especially because it caught me by surprise and maybe because I'd left home and I wasn't really there um I I didn't see any of the signs like I knew dad had a bit of a screw loose and he was quite militarily styled in the way he was kind of bringing me up to an extent um so yeah it was it blindsided me and then uh it was kind of the next day I I never forget like all the family are there as siblings people coming in and I kind of almost thought like they were kind of all right is you need to move your surgery you needed you know it's on Wednesday and I was like no like I'm not stopping for this like I'm gonna do what I need to do and what I think I need to do and I kind of almost went into like upbringing mode it's like you you've got a challenge deal with it the best way you feel and and push forward so I I kind of went about it um my way and and wasn't necessarily the way that my family thought I should have gone about it my brother-in-law um you know we kind of went up and and got my surgery and and and stuff like that and and drove me up and down and and never forget waking up from that surgery and the first question I asked the doctor is I had this bad dream that my dad uh took his life and uh and she just broke down in tears and then she said oh that's not for me to confirm but I think that's the situation so yeah so so that that was that hurdle um so that happens then I go and have surgery on the Wednesday have the funeral on the Saturday and then it's kind of my whole exercise routine that was so critical important was taken away so I was sat on my ass thinking about this thing for so long and I just wanted to get back to playing football and I've never missed football because that was our first time I actually wanted to play football so I could take my mind off things. I'll just jump in here before you continue um thank you for sharing that uh when you are dealing with this incredible adversity probably the hardest thing you'll ever go through and you're making these decisions and you're figuring it out are you getting professional help as well are you are there other people who are helping you through this? No not for a long time like I I probably went cold turkey for about like a year and a bit um no just kind of dial yourself and do do what you feel is best and I felt like I did all right like generally I kind of I was kind of I I did what I had to do like I won ugly right you kind of it's a one no win you know and a scrappy win um but then uh the the next stage the the hard stuff um so I kind of just went about my life right I kind of got stuck into what I went to I changed some of the infrastructure around my life I I dialed into uni um hated uni sucked at uni but I was playing football at the time um it was really awesome I was enjoying forest hill we had such a cool setup we had my two best mates from school we're all in the same team and and we were just having fun playing together and winning there's two we had a stacked team so

I think we lost once that season so it's actually a really cool shift for me to have um but then I uh I trickled down your fellow's way to Hamilton that following summer when uh with y bop um and I I signed for y bop we're doing the travel thing I wasn't good enough to be playing national league I was just fit had a left foot not many people kind of have a kick with their left foot you boys know um and I was kind of just like working harder and harder and harder and the only

thing that I knew and that was kind of fitness right I was just trying to get so fit remember Scotty Hilli was in our team and geez I had some legs and lungs on him right and it's kind of like I just wanted to be as fit as that guy and uh and so everything I was doing it wasn't football based I was in training with sins about some strength and speed but it was just fitness because that was kind of my escape and then I actually realized I started to feel kind of in the end of January that something wasn't quite right in the engine and I was kind of like oh something's feeling a little bit interesting like I know I should be getting fitter but I'm getting more unfit and I was kind of kept it to myself for a long time and then the the summer season stopped

and uh you know as you have a bit of it overlap with Summer League and Winter League um I think we had a few games off with the stand-down period or whatever and then I I said to Boinesy I said I just want to get straight back into it I just need to get straight back into it um I hardly played um I was like I just want to play football and uh kind of take my mind off things and then I'll never forget we the first game of the season was against Western Springs and it was stinking hot and I was bugger day like just after half time and I was like feeling cramp and I was like something's really wrong here but but what do you think it is when you're that age you know you fit you look down you got friggin abs you got you know a couple of muscles on your legs you're feeling good about yourself when you're kind of the last thing you think that that's going to be letting you down is your heart so I kind of pushed through got got a few games in and and my last ever competitive game of football was against Hamilton Wanderers um and and I had two episodes when I went to go and do my laces coming onto the bus and I was kind of went to went to type my shoelaces and uh just felt this nasty like sharp pain kind of come come through my like lower back and then kind of in the front it almost felt like someone like went like jabbed me either side of the rib cage and I was like oh geez that feels a bit interesting anyway played the game asked to come off a couple of times but as you know predominantly I was a fit guy no one believed me that I was hurting and that I had to come off because I didn't have a bone sticking out of my leg I didn't have a swallow on that like it was kind of like you look fine keep playing and I was like seeing two eight like I'd never forget I was trying to get myself sent off like I was coming in flying into tack I was like I'm not getting taken off I need to get off this pitch because something's about to shut down and then um I went out that night uh had to go way too many beers um and then back in

at Britomart Mackers as everyone ends their nights uh in in Auckland when you're that age and sprawled across the floor and I genuinely got up the first thing I did I touched my like shoulder blade and I like looked for blood because I thought someone stabbed me like that's how intense the pain was and I was like what the hell is going on and uh so so that all happened and then I was kind of I looked at my I was with my girlfriend at the time I was kind of like whoa what happened there I don't know let's just go home I was like yeah happy days go home I could hardly get out of bed the next day and um and it was an incredibly unfortunate wake-up call

that's one of their family my partner's family at the time family friends had just um passed away because of lung cancer and uh and she was like oh we need to make sure it's not your lungs and I was

like it could be my lungs so I went and got the whole lung test and and stuff at Massey University and uh they said is your lungs have never been better and I thought so you know sweet I was like um I didn't tell the coach that I'd gone and done this checkup and we had a Tuesday night game or something I was like cool got my game they're like I actually hang back we're gonna do an ECG I'd never heard of an ECG in my life and that's when they did the ECG on me and then the the nurse she was um of Asian descent and and uh she went like pale when she'd kind of looked at my ECG and uh and she she actually didn't say anything she just left the room and I'm constantly like is she having a heart attack? I had a heart attack and uh and I was like something's really wrong and uh she comes back and she said hey um you're gonna have to go straight to hospital or we're gonna have to get your an ambulance and you're gonna have to go into the room next door and tell your family that you've likely had multiple heart attacks and that she probably hadn't seen something like that like she's a student nurse and she was so shook it didn't make me feel

comfortable um but you know she saved my life at the end of the day and I never forgot around my god

I've had a couple of heart attacks I was like I don't believe it but apparently I've got to go to hospital uh and if I don't they're going to call an ambulance and uh so my uh partner at the time's dad came and picked me up we we shot to the hospital and um kind of got all the bloods and stuff done and post that then got diagnosed with uh cardiomyopathy um hypertrophic which is kind of

they say um you kind of get a flu right and you over train on it and then you continue to over train and just exhaust it and it kind of um you lose a lot of functionality in some of like the the left ventricle of your heart and it basically shits itself over time if you don't catch it and it kind of causes heart failure if you don't catch it early enough so when they found it my heart was 27 percent bigger than it should have been because it was swollen um they didn't know what was going on so um yeah that that was kind of step two and I think in the hospital I was there for seven days they weren't coming up with answers they didn't know if it was athletes heart like a lot of triathletes and long distance runners get athletes heart and you can actually de-swell your heart um but I was stuck in there for seven days and and that's coming back to the dad stuff that's when I had to deal with it again it's kind of like I didn't deal with it early I'm sat in a hospital no one's allowed to be with me at night time you know you kind of I'm in the cardiac area I'm sure you can imagine the average age of the cardiac area fucking everyone's gray you got 70 years old it's not like I can make too many mates with the people next to me um and it was just it was a really humbling experience to say all right you've you've fanged it this hard you've pushed your body too far you've basically created a heart condition sit down figure out what you have to figure out and I remember I just cried like most nights just bore my eyes out um dealing with the dad stuff and uh and and that was kind of the the way it all all all kind of came about and then off the back of that I went to a psychologist called Johan and Gisborne six times and uh it was just more directionary right like he kind of said you're gonna feel this and that's cool but do this or these are some tips and techniques and I went six times and um and that was it I felt really comfortable and really great after it and it

was just good to kind of have something that I clicked with he's a South African dude he was funny he was pretty blokey and uh and half the time I'd gone for those sessions we'd just talk shit and it's kind of like he's not sitting across from me feeling sorry for me he's almost telling me to get on with my life and this is how I get on with my life you know and he said that to me I enjoy that you're willing to move forward he said these are kind of the guys that can be a bit easier to deal with than kind of sitting there and being like why me why me why me like whether or not or why it happened that's how do you push forward so those are kind of that yeah what was the time frame of your dad passing to the two heart attacks is that sort of a year is that it was um it was uh it was probably 18 months 18 months so dad passed when December and I found out about May the not not that year May year so yeah kind of 18 months we'll be right back after this short break so this is where the third chapter begins and thank you so much for the retelling of that I think it paints a really good picture of where you were at and to fast forward now 28 years old smashing it two businesses bringing in well over 30 million each in revenue like absolutely on top of the world but there you were 21 and your father has passed you've had two heart attacks and you're crying in hospital and you don't have anything and now the story and

now this is the most inspirational story is is what you have built so can you tell us from the beginning how what you did from there yeah so amongst the tears and nearly drowned in the south because I was crying so much I realized I didn't like football and I didn't even want to keep playing football um all the football was ever was as football was a I was so lucky to be playing football that's what I was led to believe from my dad because he wasn't allowed to play with the world Gisborne City were playing National League when he was a young fella he was never allowed to play because National League was on Sunday and he always would tell me from a young age I'm naturally

not athletic enough to be a professional footballer he said but at the least you can play National League

and I well I think I played two games and then but that was it for me like I could close that chapter I'd done it if I hadn't had done that I probably wouldn't have been so willing to close that chapter so I was like I've done everything I could have done do you know what I mean like or I thought I could have done and I didn't even want to do that so um I don't want to go back and coach I don't want to be involved in football I loved building and I knew that my boss is making six dollars an hour off me when I was an apprentice so I thought when I sit in there I can football's a no uni's a big fat no because I was fucking awful at it uh and building was cool and I thought if I could get five guys out on site doing 40 hours a week that's a thousand dollars gross profit margin a week life can be good and then I can go and be a stopbroker because that's what I want to be working suit snazzyed up suit be a cool guy being the financial markets you know I always heard they did big hours and they grind in so I was like that's a bit of me um I couldn't think anything worse

now but um but yes I was like actually I'm gonna give this a punt and the first person I told was was bougie my sister um and I was so nervous to tell her but she was the only validation I needed and I reckon if I honestly think bougie is that important to me she'd probably be the only person that could have deferred where I am today um I said to her bougie I think I'm gonna start a business and she goes well good if it's anyone that's gonna do it it's you I believe in you go for it I was like oh off we go and and that was generally it and and and that was all I needed and then

four months later uh four five months later started up Auckland labour hire and uh and yeah that was kind of um that that was where it all started no business plan right no none none at all even on the back of a napkin like no business plan and just that's the equation in your head about five yeah and I had I had no business now it's about me I had uh no one to lean on about business it was all gas no brakes right I'd rather hit the wall before I hit the brakes that was kind of always kind of what I'd rather do you know you can kind of come back from it and is it right that the first person you contracted out was yourself yeah I said I was banjo banjo yeah yeah so funny story I was actually at the warriors on on Saturday um and we're sitting in the embankment and uh I sat down and there's this guy I I probably was a easy target but I had a like hot pink hoodie on and uh for no reason I just genuinely like pink and he like taps me on the shoulders and like knuckles me for having a pink hoodie on and he goes fucking hang on a minute and

I said oh what's up he goes I know you he goes you're banjo's brother and he goes oh listen oh you you said you were banjo you're that guy and then oh mate his name was Jimmy um and and he was an awesome bloke and he probably chewed my ears off for about 25 minutes

for the first half just talking about work he was a farmer from New Plymouth um and told me how much

he'd kind of you know even on the fit out business he'd kind of knew some of the fit outs we'd done like you know he's he kind of knew what was kind of going on and stuff like there and I kind of look back and I think you know it it's not necessarily a natural desire of mine to be uh overly public with what I am doing what what achievements we might be going or have achieved

but you have people like that that you kind of feel they've got a kick out of kind of following some of some of that journey and and and it kind of almost yeah he felt like he was a part of it right like I kind of told him I'm going to the state of origin in two weeks and he was dead seriously like can you take me I'd love to come like we kind of build a little camaraderie that that wow but it I guess he felt like I kind of got a sense he felt like he knew so much about me already he was so comfortable to have that chat and stuff like that and kind of have those things so yeah I get that that's the banjo story he was the first worker and and I guess I I uh got recognised as my my brother's my brother's brother so for those listening just to give a bit of context at ALH it started providing general labour to construction sites in the early days yeah can you help link up um the progress it made over those first few months or years to when you met Rob Fife on the Milford track and where your business was when you met him um yeah so uh I um we started out in the construction site and I was just going hammer and tong I was still building like because I was still at uni right I still like had an overlap of uni because I was like Jesus one of these got to work you know uh or else I fucked and then I ended up getting the uh invite to um go on the Milford track walk so I started in August went on the Milford track walk in end of January with Rob and Sara um and a mutual friend of of theirs and uh I handed the reins over to Banjo he ran now six six labourers that I had whilst I was away and I was stressing out the whole time because I didn't have any cell phone coverage so when I'd met Rob I had no idea who Rob was I had no idea the success that Sara had equally had at 62 um and I kind of fall into this Milford track walk and we've got all these friggin awesome people there and then I was I kind of just got talking to Rob about uh about business and he was

sharing some stories with me about Air New Zealand and and uh and I was just fascinated um by the stories he had the magnitude of the deals that he was doing like with Boeing or Airbus at Air New Zealand so for those that don't know he was CEO of Air New Zealand General Manager of

BNZ and like other things like yeah incredible yeah got a good CV yeah and uh and I was just like picking this guy's brains right there's probably times I never forget I can't it's like day three we're going over all these friggin mountains it was like cold up there the altitude was hurt in Maticka but I was not going to let him not get away without asking some more questions and then so I kind of just leaned into it and he was so open and cool about being honest with like everything from like you know it's public information of what he earned at Air New Zealand but he was happy to like I was I was always like money never impressed me and money was never my

be all an end all but I knew the challenges that would have had to have come to earn those figures so that's what always drove me um and man it was just fascinating I was kind of wow this is so cool like I've had this experience and you know he the inspiration I left from Milford track with it it was just a completely different beast I was kind of like actually I want to be having conversations like that when I'm his age to people my current age and I want to at least try and give even 1% of the inspiration that he gave me unintentionally just from being a really good bloke and sharing the stories with me at the end of the Milford track is there a little sense of fear with you that he goes his way you go your way and that moment in time is that moment in time but how did you leave it to to reconnect in the real world um I never thought about that and I actually had a really good relationship with Saiyan Rob prior to that so it wasn't like it was a cold turkey hey let's just jump into it um and you know for me we kind of laugh about I'm I'm the adopted son at uh in Saras Saras family so I had such a good relationship with them that that wasn't never a concern but equally I actually didn't think I deserved Rob's time and I actually didn't expect it I kind of just thought that was enough I'm off here and then it wasn't until two months later I called him I think he was in like Colorado or something and uh or Montreal somewhere like that and uh because someone offered to buy um 49 or 50 percent of the business for 25 grand and I was like this is a freaking awesome deal like you know I could go and buy a 10 percent deposit in Gisborne on a home you know I could move back to Gisborne I could walk away from ALH and and um and I'd still be better off than than anyone else my age in Gisborne and and that was actually a really like contributing thought to me like seriously contemplating it I rung him up and he kind of in short said to me if you fucking do that you never get my advice again you know and that was kind of it I was like actually he said is he you're the kind of guy you've got the kind of energy and drive you can get this business to 25 to 30 million in revenue he said you just have to put your mind to it I'm thinking if this guy's saying this he's a no bullshit kind of guy I'll fucking hold him to that you know like I'm gonna get there and then so I I went and delivered a full first financial year of 1.2 million in revenue by myself and then it was in about June and July um so it was nearly two years before I had any investment right um and I started with 500 bucks um and it was it took that long and then I actually went around to to say and Rob's and I said look Rob is there any chance I could tap into some of your network I've got X chasing me for uh well they want to invest but you know I don't know if I kind of align with these guys so is there anyone in your network and he and Sara is sitting right at the table and he goes oh Sara will invest she doesn't know that

yet but she'll be keen and I was like hey all right you know and then she was like yeah come around next week and thing like never forget walk in there I'm like I'm going for 80 grand for 10% business was probably worth 250k at that time right I kind of walk in there and I'm like 80 grand Sara she goes well fuck I see I'm not spending more than 50 grand today and I want 10 percent so take it or leave it deal and uh and and that was it man and and then um and then actually sorry no that conversation was Sara was in April because I remember we got Sammy Jasper on in May I think and then uh and we had to get an employee in order to get the funds released

and that 50k went straight into working capital and then as we like naturally progressed uh I went away to Robinsire's wedding um in America which was an awesome experience like you know like a guy from Gizzy I'd never been there before because all these friggin awesome people there um and from from that point uh I was there and then I met a guy called John T. Edgar um and he kind of said is he giving me your elevator pitch I'm so drunk I probably dribbled and mumbled the whole thing and it probably only went for like 10 seconds if that and he said let's just do lunch let's just do lunch and I'm back and then uh and then so we went and had lunch at at uh Ibiza it was the first time I'd ever been to Ibiza and I turned up in a hoodie and my ripped jeans and my chucks I never forget what I was wearing because we sat there at the at the um at the table and we talked shop for probably three minutes and I was so nervous I didn't actually know why why the fuck he wanted to have lunch with me I didn't know that he wanted to invest and what I was going in there for was half of what he offered me like I wanted half of what he came for he he proactively doubled what I needed because he said to me is he I don't actually know if Auckland Labor High is going to be successful and I haven't actually had a look at it he said but I believe in you and I believe in you as a person he said and I believe that your drive and energy is going to require more capital than what you're asking for so I'm going to double it he said and he went to shake my hand and he pulled his hand back and I'm like oh fuck the deals off and uh and bearing in mind like I had such little money I couldn't have even paid for lunch that day if I wanted to right like that's that's how what was are you able to say what what he doubled it yeah so so he said to me he said because you're going to come back to me in six months and ask me for more money because you're so driven and ambitious this company's going to grow quicker than you think and I'm thinking this guy's got great

mind games like he's gassing me up and went shake hand pulled it back and he said there's one condition

and I said what's the condition he goes the next business you start you come and ask me and Rob for your for your investment if you ask anyone and uh and I said jaunty I'm never starting another business I said uh this is fucking way too much already I don't sleep like it's a tick tick it's it's full on but I'll shake your hand anyway um and and that was it and uh I walked out and I called my brother called banjo and I remember just walking I was like me you won't fucking believe the lunch I've just had and he was like what you know that's more than my house costs and I said I know I said what's the chances so ended up um kind of like they ended up equally purchasing it so sarah rob and jaunty had about 10.23% of the business each so they kind of diluted it and chopped and changed it so they're all equal shareholdings in the business because they rob had uh sarah had drag and drop rights and and whatnot and I had given Rob 4% of the business for just helping me so I gave him 4% um and that was the cheapest that that 4%

no matter how much this business is worth in 10 or 20 years time that'll still be the best focus that would be the best kind of thing because it's not the money that the money is the least value I've got from from robin and sarah and that support you know from from what they've been able to offer and provide me um has been the money's been the least and least important thing did it take you a while to get your head around the money you know we've spoken from gizbin and coming up and you've had this with rob and it's changed your perspective a little bit and then you're talking about you know someone investing the price of a house and you're still 21 22 was that was that an easy thing to take in your stride it was uh well I just knew that I actually wasn't going to take any of the money right I it's it's worth saying I went and brought a pair of Gucci shoes when I got the money and that's that's generally I brought a Gucci shoes and I brought a ticket to go to the UK for a bit of a bash for it for a week or two and that's only money I took out of the quarter of a mil so out of the 300k I'd only taken that and and that kind of had signalled I guess I walked down rob steps at his house and he wasn't even looking at me he's just looking at my shoes and then what what are those I said mate how cool are these I said gonna bought myself some shoes he goes uh do you ever see me wearing those kind of shoes and I said nah man I said but how cool are they he's basically I don't want to see those shoes I knew ever again you know it was kind of like until I'm near him or or whatever then don't fucking turn up wearing those shoes and I was like holy shit so I kind of never wore those shoes again and the cheeky bugger I never forget because I was walking down uh uh doing a beachwalk probably like nine months later and I was actually telling my friend Jordan the story and Rob comes around in the pair of Gucci shoes and it just couldn't have been better timing so I think you know probably back to the conversation earlier on about having that direct conversation Rob sat me down on my fucking seat and said you are nowhere near where you need to be before you start wearing that shit do you know what I mean he said you know getting like he didn't say it but I I interpret it stay in your fucking lane like you're not there you got so far to go and those conversations and that that harsh but fear and and rightfully so conversations continued to happen I got asked at a TEDx youth talk and I was so excited and I emailed Rob and said what do you think he said you haven't achieved enough to do one of these he said you'll be putting a target on your back he said there's nothing to talk about I was like okay I've just done three million revenue in my second full full year what are you talking about so you kind of go through those things but you look at it and if if you if I didn't have someone holding me that accountable I wouldn't have known that that wasn't the right thing to be doing so constantly reassessing my image reminding myself I am Izzy from Gizzy I grew up in a three bedroom with with a family of six don't ever lose that because I don't want to ever lose that and there's things that you can easily start to lose but but you know it's so it's always been constant caring accountable conversations to make sure I'm I'm sticking to who I am and and that's generally what we're there where the kind of run to those conversations come from what do you think Rob and Johnty and Sarah saw in you specifically dude I don't know like if I knew the answer to that question uh I could probably answer that a hundred times that so many people would ask me a year but man I was upbeat I was high

energy

I was fucking full of noise and uh I'm you know I just got a lot of energy man so they're probably just like oh this guy's got a lot of energy if he could direct it in this way um then then so be it and and unintentionally you know I'd like to think I was involved in their family enough to probably get a feel of what kind of a guy I am and what I stood for um you know Sarah's uh daughters and Rob's

step um daughters Toby and Dolly they instantly almost became like little sisters to me so I was you know before the investment happened I was kind of picking them up dropping them off and we never knew that that was where the this was going to lead to but it was just a really organic relationship in my eyes that that that kind of went to that way and and I genuinely believe

I don't even know if Rob saw where we are today in me he's just a great guy and so is Johny and Sarah's a lovely lady to think they just owe it to New Zealand business to give someone a crack.

Yeah I'm really interested in going down a little Rob Fife uh rabbit hole here um and it's in the under the frame of turning a good business into a great business because you said you had three million at revenue at that point you're up over 30 now I mean 30 that that is a great business but with Rob like what is it specifically about him and the way he conduct himself or his work ethical where does this genius come from that has allowed him to have the career he's had?

Um geez look I can only speak on on my experience with what would I would I get from him um as a chairman professionally um there is absolutely no tolerance for bullshit there there is no gray area it's black or white don't even try and fucking make it gray you make it gray you're going to get eaten um you're kind of seeing yourself to the slaughterhouse if you try and make it own the own the fucking problem don't go to him with a problem without a solution that's always been our philosophy and he's never reminded me or had to but every time I get feedback I action it immediately

so it's um and I think it's just like a a respect thing I think I don't know like I respected Rob before I even knew who Rob was I just fucking like Rob do you know what I mean like and I think that's probably what maybe made it how it is you know like I I didn't even know what the hell he was up to or what he had done at the time so it's kind of like I look at Rob in a personal perspective before I look at one in a in a business perspective you know and we can kind of decipher when we're in the boardroom or when we're at his home for for dinner on a Sunday you know

there you go so as this journey continues Auckland labour hire and you start expanding and you get into the regions and you're building and you become Alteaora labour hire what what was the timeline of that um it was about two years it was about two years so 12 months ago we had uh four branches and it was next week we opened up our fifth so in the last in the last uh 12 months we've opened up seven branches and in the 12 months prior to that we opened up two uh sorry another three so yeah a lot's happened the last two years right so kind of we've opened up 10 branches in the last two years so that was uh that that was kind of what we started trading in in Wellington and that's how the fit out business came about ended up building a really good relationship with the project director of a of a construction company who ultimately me and him had a conversation which led to us founding that that business together but I was kind of doing a contract for him supporting it from afar um and executing that under the name of Auckland labour hire and and no one likes Jaffers man especially not people in Wellington you know and uh and it took me to call him on a private number it's for him to finally pick up and I was like

Aidan bro it's Izzy I'm from Gizzy you're from Gizzy we owe each other that time we're both from Gizzy oh fuck what do you want he knew I'd been trying to call him I said bro give me a chance at this this job that you're doing in lower heart and I'll I'll give you the labourers and um and then he goes oh do you have labourers I said yeah I didn't he said uh starts next Wednesday and it was a Friday and I said cool man consider it done and and we got 11 labourers on site on the Wednesday I've gone the next flight down Wednesday that um my one of my childhood best mates uh house mustered it all up and then uh and then got going and then um yeah that that was kind of it my progression to Wellington we changed the name I stopped staying at uh Kye's house which was a flat of five progressed into Mitchie's house Cam Mitchell you boys will know um then I started going to stay with him jumping on the couch his apartment and so it was always a really cool junior and I look back at it like Auckland labour hire it's kind of like there's been some psychological shifts when we changed it you know I'd stopped staying at friends house because then we changed it out at all labour hire an ALH and we got going so that was kind of the transition it was it was actually a pretty organic transition but I went out open I never thought it was going to be bigger than Auckland what what pressure did that put on you personally that rapid progression because don't forget there's this covid in the middle of that as well right dude like I don't say this trying to sound full of myself but I've never really felt it like I've never honestly felt like there's so much pressure on me it hurts it's like I love that shit like I I couldn't just have it in Auckland I I love doing four or six flights a week I love being in three different cities I love knowing that I've got to deliver some fucking outrageous growth in this business and I'm the one that sets the growth targets it's not my board they're actually saying oh slow down like fuck we don't need this many the goal was to open up three branches last year that was their advice and I said I got more of me you know so it's kind of like the the pressure stuff it's almost like fuel for me the more I know I can deliver and it should be delivering the the more excited I get to be undertaking that that that pressure which I transfer into to positive energy like I love it man I I love walking into the office knowing that I've got to deliver for everyone in this office and I love that kind of sense of feeling you know I I I just really enjoy the competitiveness and and you know people often say you're your your biggest competitors the guy in the mirror and that's friggin true I wake up every day look at that motherfucker in the in the mirror and think you've got to be better than this guy yesterday and and you just got a push and and I love that shit and being surrounded by competitive people is great for that you know my best mate he's ultra competitive we competing with each other who wakes up earlier

you know we're texting each other happy Monday fucking happy Friday whatever it's like oh shit you talk about delivering for your staff and but you literally do that as well and the people are the core of your business right you do look after them as best you can yeah and that does that stem from just listening to your story without telling it for you that time in Gizzy like growing up in Gizzy and seeing what people had to deal with at work and and making work a fun place yeah like again going back to the way we grew up we we always did so much more than what was what other families would do for each other I didn't realize that until I got out of my family we always did so much more out of out of no charge we would always be doing working bees at one of the uncles or aunties we'd always be dropping off firewood before the winter set in you know we'd go up to Duke and Nisho and Gizbin with my me and my dad and we'd chainsaw up the we'd chainsaw up the cores and then we're going to drop in and stack them around so it's like we were always doing more

than what other people would do for their families so it's actually just natural that that feels like I should be doing more for my people and the people that we have in our office and that's actually just been a natural a really blessing a major blessing that I had that whilst I didn't enjoy doing it if I can hand it firewood but if I look at it now it's actually just part of my process it's one of the things we have learned the sense of community and how people enjoy belonging or being part of a group and it feels like that is to the people I've spoken to that work in your company is a real theme you know you've got a basketball court and in one of your warehouses you do like team workouts and things which perhaps other workplaces don't and which really separates

you yeah is that fair yeah no absolutely it's it's uh exercises is so important man like you know for for my my two my two things that I think about every morning I wake up and I think today's a fucking great day I don't want to take my life like my dad did I'm not in that rut and today I can wake up and I'm not in hospital with my heart so those are two fucking wins I have first thing I wake up every day is a good day man you've got to start your day good and you've got to start it positive and you've got to feel thankful for the body you're in I've never gone to the gym to look a different way right I I have the worst genetics for putting muscle on but I go into the gym every day to use my body because I'm thankful I've got a healthy body I've got a healthy mind uh and I just want to get the body tickin right that that's my fuel that's my my my gas station get into the ALH engine room man turn some shit out get some fuel to me you know we'll be right back after this short break

so we've done this whole story and we've only briefly mentioned fit out solution which on its own would be its whole story so I actually talked to Shay I was like fuck I don't know much about fit out solution I was like do you he's like yeah I think so so I'm gonna put him on the spot so Shay what is fit out solution and and what do they do my rudimentary understanding

would be fit out solutions when tenders for commercial commercial contracts and fit out the shells with how they need to be for the client yeah can you give us an example like if ACC are moving their headquarters to Hamilton yeah that they've someone has built a building and fit out would come in and make that building inside look how ACC want it to yeah mate now on the head there's my guy they do a bit of other stuff don't worry about it I'm not involved I'm not involved in it day to day anymore uh Bretton Aidan uh Aidan the CEO Brett's Brett's uh the the TYC project director they do an amazing job uh constantly focused on on top delivery and and they're a real pleasure to be kind of doing on on their own journey with but it's there it's there it's their race and they're running it fucking well and they're two top like so is your oh yeah you've got a fit out follow-up because I've got another one you go ahead well I was going to say is your list listening to your talk is your um major contribution now building up the people around you like your senior leadership team around you in the branches because you can't physically be in every place at every time I've got um three 14 direct reports no 13 direct reports and they're basically all branch management staff and our internal kind of office management and uh and finance manager um so I'm I'm I'd spend 95% of my week communicating and interacting with with our branch managers and it's just gassing them up man giving them an opportunity you know we're all young like I pride myself on giving people an opportunity five years before anyone else would and uh give them give them an open open canvas to create it how they want

um and I love seeing ambition and drive come through this business and it gets me so excited every day to know that I've got some young keen eager leaders that are just out there ready to fucking win you know your story is fucking inspirational man it's it's so good um I'd heard interviews a few years ago maybe a year ago where you talked about goals of like a hundred mil in revenue is that where are you at at the moment and is that still the target uh that's a New Zealand target um hello um so we're going for 50 mil this year um this current financial year uh we'll get this business to a hundred mil in the next five years uh and we've just kind of uh we're incorporated um ALH PTY which is Australia labor hire um and so well isn't it and uh and we've got someone based over there full time uh at the moment and we've got a couple of partnerships

that we're servicing right now so we're currently trading in uh outside of Brisbane um but we'll be basing in Brisbane um and we're looking to do that kind of from early next year we're just getting everything done in the right way and kind of easing into it but um 100 mil 100 mil in New Zealand 100 mil in Aussie so 200 mil is that is that the most ball uh that's between two bears they've ever received is 100 mil a tow when you see one tow man like like like it's it's you know probably for for for you boys you know you see people you would have played footy with some boys that that know how good or think they're good how good they are and it might sound it might sound overly ambitious when you hear some boys thinking i'm gonna go pro and they go and go pro but they

just believed in in and what what they what what the tools that they have they can kind of go and deliver and i that's how i kind of look at it i'm like man like i'm a fucking loser if i don't deliver 100 mil because i've got everything i need to do to do it and if i don't i'm not as fucking good as i am you know and that that's the accountability i put on myself like oh there's no way

i'd let this business not get to 100 mil in New Zealand and then there's no way i'm not going to let it do the same over the ditch that's that's generally how i wake up and i feel every day and i don't have one percent of doubt that that's not going to be delivered and that's not an arrogance or or a cocky thing i just know how much i want this and how much i want it to win and the people we have in the business right now uh want it to win too and it's like it's gonna happen you know it's it's an insanely impressive mindset um and i'm loving it i want to dig a little bit i won't keep you too much longer but um what your day looks like like how you actually struct your day what time you wake up like what what is it yeah uh first alarm goes off at 4 45 um and i'm kind of up and out on a monday it's earlier it'll go 4 15 because i like to just to get that spotify playlist so yeah i just like to get the uh the i probably put the body through its paces a bit more on a monday just now i've got a big week and and sometimes i might

not have as much time in the morning as i'd like but 4 45 leave home at five um kind of at the gym at 20 past five i'm kind of on the bike at at kind of you know around there and um and i just just hook into it i kind of do 30 to 45 minutes of exercise in the morning and i do a sauna for 20 minutes and then i'm kind of up at my desk ready to ready to get at it um i always make a conscious effort to be home for dinner um and and then you know i'll have dinner with g and then uh if i'm not on the road and then after that um watch a bit of tally and then the laptop's back open kind of going through what i need to go through and uh but i'll be on the road two nights a week minimum so kind of four to six flights is my average flights a week so it's kind of flat

tack but get that in routine really easy and what's bedtime if you're getting up in the fours 11th then okay so it's asleep not prioritized no i i actually just think i've you know maybe back to the whole upbringing thing i was never allowed to sleep in right so so when you're young you think about you know you're up on your phones you're doing this your eyes are wide awake you're thinking about x y z so you kind of get to the point where i was going to sleep at two o'clock some nights but dad would still wake me up at seven so i was having to learn to operate it at you know at uh at on five hours sleep so that was kind of part of the parcel i don't know any different you know never check a bag in if you're traveling never check a bag in brother not even overseas not even overseas because you lose time you know you lose half an hour either side of the plane talk to us about this time compounding on the biggest like that there's a big priority in my week on on compound time right like if i think all right if i'm doing four flights a week right that's two hours uh that's two hours that i can not be kind of sitting around or mucking around checking my bag and right that's that's eight hours a month you know that that kind of sticks up pretty quickly but compound time for me is like i always think about it for when i'm working at night so i always think if i'm doing two hours from nine till eleven nine p.m to eleven or eight p.m till ten p.m my competitors aren't right i'm doing five days of that that's 10 hours a week that's 40 hours a month you know you kind of do that then you kind of end up getting and you know you start to kind of get things ticking i'm doing a whole working week when people are fucking sleeping and that gets me going you know something actually over the course of the seven years we're coming up to now you sit there and you think yeah it might look like seven years on paper but i've fucking done 15 years of work you know it's like when i started at age you know you just have to ask jess but how many hours i was willing to do you know like i was doing 80 hour weeks like relentlessly like i was fucking living in that in the in the dungeon man like i was i was grinding and then you put fit out on top of that for a couple of years it was just it was you know you turn into it like an alien and you're just on that grind so compound time whatever i can do you know i think over a year if you do 40 hours a week it's 2 000 hours a year right i'll thought for my first three years i'm going to do 80 hours so then i'm going to do 4 000 hours a year so what someone takes six years i'm doing three because i'm beyond the grind right so when people say man you must be so stoked with where it's at after six years i'm at feels like 12 brother you know it's been a while whilst on paper it looks like that i i know what we've been able to do here is has been fast tracked through nothing other than ambition and willingness to do more the way you are this super mindset optimized life everything seems to be firing on all cylinders is obviously a result of your upbringing but we talked about you know it might not have been the i'm not sure what the right word is but it might have been difficult in in patches do you reflect back on the way that you were brought up in a positive way like did it make you the person you are and would you change anything so i wouldn't i wouldn't change anything um and to to probably be vulnerable to to getting to the underneath that question me me and my dad didn't have a good relationship from the time i was about 12 to 16 right we're kind of at each other's throat it wasn't until i left home that we kind of almost repaired it he was obviously looking back starting to kind of have that real kind of shift in and in how he was feeling in his mental health but you know there'd be weeks when i was uh year nine um year eight i was doing two hours before school i was going to school two hours of mind the lawns i'd go to school i'd gone through two hours you know i was doing 20 to 25 hours mine lawns a week whilst i was at intermediate

up until i left the west lake and then he knew the owner of bunnings so i went and did one till six p.m on a sunday at bunnings you know i was working i was working every day from the time i was 12 to i was 16 and and we'd get to like breaking point and there'd be times he'd kind of say well if it ever gets too much just let me know but oh no you'll never let me know well you're not really opening the door for me to let you know and i said there'd be sometimes you get to breaking point and there was a only three times where i kind of felt like this is too much i i need to know why the fuck we're going this far in terms of why you're pushing me like this because you didn't push your other kids like this and uh he'd give me this distinctive look and he'd say look we don't know what we're working for he said but you'll thank me one day for the work ethic i'll give you and you kind of look like back at that and i think that's the one thing that that you know if i lose sleep on it it's like i've never got to say that to my dad you know i never got to say thanks for that work ethic because if i look at it now i'm i wouldn't be here if it wasn't for that so going back to it massively the the upbringing is why i am and i wouldn't change a thing if anything i'd probably dial it up a notch you know so so for me it's um man i still lived a better life than a lot of people do and i think it's just understanding and appreciating that there's always someone that has it worse you know there's always someone that

loses their dad earlier there's always someone that has a worse living environment someone always has it worse than you have it and it's understanding that and and kind of getting that that feeling you know so so yeah the upbringing is is is is easy you know and i think that's it and i'll never be too proud to or or or beyond knowing that that's where it came from that's such an introspective reflection that's that's so good thank you for sharing all this we've just got a few uh little bits and pieces before we we wrap up uh one on my list was um this surprised me that you hadn't read a book but your father-in-law has written a book and you've said that you will read it and this was from an interview a while ago so i'm wondering how far you've you've progressed with that one uh i think i got like four or six pages in i can't remember uh i haven't ever read a book i i don't have the attention span to things i'm not passionate about not that i'm not passionate with my in-laws sorry lance yeah he's a good guy but uh she's am i gonna read his book no like uh i've never read a book not at all my one is coming from gizzy you must have had some r and v stories not only attending but have you been part of a packout crew and what does that actually look like i i went to my first r and v at 16 i was on the security and i did the old drop the drop the hive doesn't get stuck in there so my my experiences was was always i was working for my youth group

not so godly straight in there man got a couple of cans um my experience has always been great i've always been there i love r and v i'm going r and v again this year i went last year it's fucking awesome um it's it's such a hoot and it gets better and better every year but yeah there's been some doozies that's for sure the ultra competitiveness that you spoke about earlier have you got a lid on that like do you what do you like these days if you go out and play a social game of sport or golf perhaps dude i i can't i don't like i like i won't put myself in the situation if i think i could lose i won't do it i i not because i i'm worried about my reaction i'm worried about feeling like i've lost like i i i don't i don't even play snap right like i i don't play any board games i don't play any card games i i'm the families i'm involved in uh they all love it i hate it because i there's a lot of chance right at least at least i'm in control of alh i'm in control whether we win or to an element you know i can control our result i can't

control whether i roll a six or a two i don't want to be involved in that you know it's like i want to be know that i can work harder than someone to get that win that that's so no like golf golf's super challenging for me like oh i'll do it i you know jeez you wouldn't have to look too far to get some horrific stories of the extents i've gone to the wins last last one from me mafia stole sitting in a restaurant always have your back to a wall so you can see what's happening out in front of you yeah uh i've got weird ears man like like i um like almost get like a a bit of a sensory overload so like if i'm if i'm sat here and there's like uh people behind me like i almost can hear their conversations over the ones that i've got in front of me and it kind of gives me the twitches and shit so i i eat the same place all the time and i'll always sit on the wall and uh and i sit at the same cafes and it's kind of like you know takes a few months to say to someone oh i've got weird ears i'll sit on the wall you kind of sit there but kind of get there man uh all right i'm going to wrap up and i'm going to throw to shea as a outro guy but firstly thank you so much for coming in i know how busy you are i think you've forgiven us your time um 20 i was just thinking before like you speak of someone who has lived a full life like it's incredible your 28 and i was thinking about where you're going to be in 10 years 20 years time like it blows my mind what you've achieved uh the mindset you have is perhaps the most impressive mindset that we've ever had on the show like it is razor sharp it is so determined uh it's it's so exciting to see yeah you continue to follow your story so thank you for coming in and sharing with it but i'm not the outro guy shea i will say firstly i'd like to say on on here um i appreciate the kind words but i'm the star struck one um i remember for those that are listening i uh when i was at the ripe old age of 19 or 20 i was trying to i was thinking about what football clubs to be and then uh there's this name stevie holloway northern league veteran please please don't do this done this i try to tell shea that please don't do this done that and uh and it was it was a real draw card um to to come and train with that team so mate i feel a little bit star struck nine years later being being here sat set across you so privilege and pleasure is mine makes me very busy you know i'm hating every moment of that um i'll i'll wrap i'll wrap us up properly um a fascinating case study man an amazing reaction to some real adversity that's that's come along your way and uh the resilience to bounce back from some of those challenges but then to approach life with a smile on your face with energy with drive your enthusiasm is infectious i listen to you on the drive up i've been privileged to spend an hour and a half with you here now and you talk about gassing up your staff like i feel genuinely juiced and it's a real special skill that you have i don't know how you've been blessed with it but i love that you continue to hone it and i love that you don't see a finite end to it um i'd love the reaction that this episode is going to get i hope nobody sleeps on it because like steven said you're being one of the most thoughtful poetic articulate guests and for someone who says they dropped out of school they didn't do uni the way you speak and compose your ideas and get that message across is really really inspiring keep doing what you're doing man i can't wait to see where this thing ends up cheers brother i think if you like being gassed up too if you've got to come in for a workout one morning at five o'clock and we'll really get gassed out be brilliant sounds good show we in yeah only if i can ice bath i promise you i'm going to hold you to that yeah we're all in cheers is he cool