I didn't think Wildin' Out would be the billion-dollar conglomerate.

I was just creating a show because Kevin Hart needed money to pay his rent.

Please welcome Nick Cannon.

Entrepreneur and rapper-actor-host comedian.

Crew superstar.

Who's Nick Cannon?

I'm me.

Nick, you've been a pioneer.

I read that one of your companies has generated more than a hundred million dollars.

That was just in our headphone sale.

We have a tour that makes millions.

A cruise line.

Restaurants as a kid.

I learned that I may not be the most talented person in the room,

but I'll be the hardest worker in the world.

That's how you get it.

Some people play basketball.

Man, there's basketball players.

Don't try it.

If you try it, it's not gonna work.

Do it as if there's no other option.

So by the time I was 17, I started writing for Keenan and Kale.

The youngest staff writer in TV history.

Yeah.

I was like Harry Potter with the pig.

And then Will Smith signed me.

I was living my dream life.

But I always felt like I had a ticking clock.

The latest on the health scare from Nick Cannon.

Nick Cannon has lupus.

If you don't catch it and control it,

you could lose your life pretty quickly.

You said that you wouldn't be alive right now

if it wasn't for Mariah Carey.

Yeah, it makes you question,

what are you gonna do with the time that you have on this planet?

What impact are you gonna make?

When you're not afraid of dying,

you focus on living.

And then you dealt with the loss of your son

at just five months old due to brain cancer.

You never know how strong you are to the only option.

Nick, what do I have to understand about your earliest years to understand the man that you are today?

I don't steal that question.

Yeah.

I'd have to say that optimism,

youthful optimism, you know, some call it imagination.

But the world was just so big,

but yet so tangible for me.

I felt even as a youth,

I felt like I had this magic

that I could just manifest anything.

Good or bad, you know what I mean?

I lived this life to where.

as small as the community was,

disenfranchised and maybe not as upwardly mobile

as one would see from the outside.

I had this big imagination in my mind,

this superpower that I could be, do,

or whatever I wanted.

It was all in my grasp.

I don't know where I got it from,

but I was just, as a kid, as a teenager,

I always felt like I had this ability

to walk in a room and get whatever I wanted.

But the environment that you were raised in

wasn't one of great abundance?

Yeah, that's what was so crazy about it.

I would, you know, even growing up in the projects,

growing up in scenarios that we didn't have a lot,

but I felt like I had a lot.

I was always destined for it.

And it wasn't even about fame.

It wasn't about money.

It was just about, I like my life.

I'm going to have fun.

I'm going to have a good time.

I was always that, you know, let's smile about it.

You know what I mean?

Even in some difficult and tumultuous times,

I would still find, you know, silver lining.

I would still find a way to smile through pain.

And it's worked, you know, it's always kept me level-headed,

you know, even in the midst of having an abnormal and extraordinary life.

It's like even the thing that humbles me is the fact

that I'll just enter spaces with gratitude and optimism.

Even in pain.

What was your family home like?

See, that's the thing.

Probably looking back at it, it definitely wasn't Orthodox,

you know, and we didn't come from much,

but it was joyous.

It was filled with love.

You know, my parents had me, you know, as teenagers.

They were young.

I went to my dad's high school graduation.

But, you know, his parents helped raise me.

My mom was constantly working, you know, school and work.

My dad went off to college.

And then, you know, I kind of felt like I grew up with my parents and their parents assisted in raising us all.

So it was households filled with love.

But, you know, it wasn't traditional by any means.

So there were the obstacles of, you know, trying to figure it out and parents and grandparents putting food on the table.

But I think that also gave me a different type of drive to say,

all right, we're going to have to make something out of nothing.

Your parents separated when you were very young?

I would say I feel like my parents had sex once.

Just one time.

And then I showed up because they were kids, man, you know,

like, I don't really know the intricate details of their relationship,

but I definitely knew they weren't together.

It was, but not enemies by any means.

You know what I mean?

They were just teenagers.

They were kids.

So after, you know, I was born, they kind of went their separate ways.

But my dad's parents kind of kept everyone together.

And it was a close-knit thing.

You know, when my mother needed assistance,

my grandmother would be there to help her out, my father's mother.

And even though my father necessarily wasn't physically present for, you know,

he was, you know, actually doing good things for himself

where, you know, getting a college degree and trying to figure it out and have a family infrastructure elsewhere,

his mom would help my mom kind of keep me afloat.

He turned his life around quite significantly, didn't he?

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

My dad was definitely headed down a path of destruction early on.

And then it clicked for him, you know, through some experiences of, you know,

incarceration and, you know, being able to kind of leave some of those

substances out there that were, you know, kind of the downfall of, you know,

the community in the 80s.

He was able to escape and put his life on the right path

and, you know, dedicated his life to his ministry and helping others.

It worked.

And when you were a young man, you nearly went down the wrong path.

Yeah.

I went down there, figured, like, made a U-turn, went back, you know what I mean?

Like, I think human nature, we all kind of gravitate towards the unknowing.

Sometimes that usually is the past that are sometimes the darkest.

Sometimes, like, you just want to, you don't want to do the responsible thing.

You don't want to do what your parents may suggest.

So I definitely have a rebellious nature.

I'm definitely an anti-authoritarian.

I'm definitely the kid that has to feel that the pot is hot.

You know, they're like, okay, I'm not going to, I know what getting burned feels like.

So I think it's probably just my, you know, nature of exploring and wanting to understand things.

It's cool to be a bad boy when you're young.

And especially when, for me, the mold wasn't necessarily presented that way.

So I definitely went through a stage of I want to prove to people that, you know, I'm not a goody-tooth shoe all the time.

And that took some maturing to do.

But then it's also a lot of it is environment.

When you grow up in, especially Southern California, you know, there was times where the life of gang violence was glorified.

And, you know, whether it's through music, through entertainment, through our culture, you know, when you come from the trenches,

you get a certain level of respect.

You get a certain level of reverence.

So I grew up admiring a lot of that and therefore kind of took that path a few times.

But, you know, luckily I didn't get caught up, you know, like some of my other friends and associates did.

What saved you from that path?

Creativity, like I said, that optimism, which then obviously was transmuted into entertainment.

When you're a young man, say you're like between the age of 10 and 14.

If I'd asked you what you wanted to be and what you thought you'd be when you were 42.

Yeah.

What would you have told me?

Same thing, a rapper, you know, probably that if it was just as simple as like at 10 years old, what I was focused on.

I loved hip hop.

I loved, I knew I was, in my mind, I was famous in the hood.

Like I just wanted to be, because I was already doing stuff there.

You know what I mean?

I always had demo tapes and I was already connected to our streets and our blocks just as being in the community.

somebody with a voice, not always a positive voice.

You know, I was considered a, I don't know, try to think.

I wasn't a bad kid, but I was a kid that everybody knew about.

You know, but luckily my art, my creativity allowed people to appreciate me.

Even at 10 years old, like within my family, within my community.

What did your art and creativity look like at that stage?

Rap music?

Yeah, it was loud.

It was ADHD issues.

It was the kid who could do it all.

You know, kind of also had a church background.

So I was, you know, I was always, I was a class clown at school trying to be funny.

He's starting to just figure out, oh, there's careers in that space.

I started to look up to a lot of people like Eddie Murphy's, even the, you know, at the time,

the Fresh Prince, as we know, is Will Smith, but he was just this charismatic, funny rapper at the time.

So those were, you know, but at the same time, I was looking up to the ice cubes and two shorts and, you know,

which was a whole different energy.

So that was kind of like my makeup of like, well, I want to be like these guys.

And you start doing stand-up comedy at 11 years old?

11.

That's TV.

Officially doing it at 11.

I have been, you know, doing stuff in church and stuff, you know, trying to make people laugh.

Like first stand-up stage I got on was I was 11 years old.

Strikes me as someone that grew up very quickly.

Yeah.

I was always called an old soul.

And I think it was because I grew up around older people,

with my grandparents kind of being, you know, patriarchs for me.

Their children were my siblings.

My father, who was, you know, a teenager, was somewhat more of like a big brother type of thing.

So like even the way he dealt with me and even the people that I dealt with in my community,

I just, I kind of had mannerisms and a jargon that was a little, little wise beyond my years.

You're a big brother as well, right?

Yeah.

And then, you know, ultimately my dad had a, my mother's only child, but my dad had five, five boys in total.

So, you know, I was the, and I was the oldest.

And he and I's connection was different than, you know, the connection with my younger brothers, because I was almost somewhat, you know, I was closer to my father than, you know,

his parenting style was different with me than it was with, you know, his younger children.

It boggles my mind that someone at 11 years old starts doing stand-up comedy.

Yeah.

It takes some guts and some confidence to do that.

But I guess that speaks to who you were at 11 years old.

Yeah.

By 15 years old, you're at the comedy school.

Yeah.

I mean, I met so many comedians, but Jamie was definitely one of the ones that kind of, just because it's such a giving and loving individual kind of saw this kid and was like, I love it.

Like, come hang out.

Like, and because, you know, Hollywood was miles away from my neighborhood.

So figuratively and literally like it was just like, I needed a place to stay a lot of times.

So, you know, catching, catching car rides or even once I've got my own vehicle, I had nowhere to sleep.

So people would know that I was sleeping in my car or it wouldn't have a place to sleep.

So people like Jamie Foxx would let me sleep on that couch.

Brothers like Guy Tory, if you've seen the Fat Tuesday documentary about, you know, the black side of the comedy store,

he had a night that, you know, he would let me open up and as people were coming in,

I'd be entertaining the audience.

I like as a teenager, you know, and the guys like Chris Tucker and Damon Waynes and Eddie Griffin, all these guys will be going on later on in the night.

But I was the guy, I was the kid that was welcoming, you know, everybody into their seats and it'd be like Shaguille O'Neal and Kobe Bryant and Snoop Dogg,

like all of these people in the audience and there's this 15-year-old on stage, you know, rapping and telling jokes

and, you know, everybody else saw something.

Now, I was just having a blast.

I didn't think about what the future was going to offer up.

I was just like, yo, this is a dream come true right now.

People might hear that and go, oh, he got lucky 15 years old, whatever, you know,

what was the talk to me about the intentionality behind that?

Like, if there's a 15-year-old listening to this right now,

what did you do to put yourself there in hindsight?

It's not always easy to know in the moment.

Yeah, I was definitely a hustler.

Like, you know, I don't believe in luck.

I believe in alignment, you know what I mean?

Like, and you got to put yourself in those positions.

It's like, you know, some people say luck is preparation meets opportunity.

I was always speaking myself into existence.

I would put myself in those environments.

Like, I met Jamie Foxx because I walked up to him and was like, yo, what's up, Jamie Foxx?

I'm Nick Cannon.

Like, ever since I was four years old, I introduced myself as my full name.

Like, everybody used to think it was so funny.

Like, as a four-year-old, I'm Nick Cannon.

Like, I just thought my name was cool.

I thought you were everybody else.

You know, you teach a kid to say their first name is funny.

I teach my children the same way.

Like, nah, you got your full name.

You're Munro Cannon.

You're, you know, you're a powerful cannon, you know what I mean?

Like, and I think maybe I got that from such a cool last name.

Like, I think my dad probably did that.

His dad probably did that.

Like, it's just like they called, you know, my grandfather, they called him Cannon or Daddy Cannon.

It was just like, it's such a cool name.

So, and that's why I was like, I believe it's so much in a name.

But so even as, I think those steps kind of ordered the personality.

So then when I would find myself in scenarios that I would take advantage of him.

I wasn't a shy kid.

I wasn't an overly outgoing kid either.

I wasn't like, I kind of, my ADD kind of maybe shifted, like made me always seeking attention or like,

I don't say I was seeking attention.

I got attention because I was always doing something.

I was always in some shit because I was just trying to figure it out.

Therefore, I got a lot of attention and a lot of it probably wasn't positive attention, but it was just attention.

And then from there, you know, that shifted, you know, I grew up around hustlers.

So I was like, all right, we're going to try to, we're going to figure it out.

If there was a door over there, I'm going to figure out how to get in that door.

And that's how I was able to rub shoulders and, you know, I studied rooms and I'm like, all right,

if I'm a maneuver in here, I got to do it in a way that not just based off of instinct,

I got to put a plan together.

And I moved like that, you know, since a kid.

I find it incredibly fascinating that when we look at the back end of Spotify and Apple and our audio channels,

the majority of people that watch this podcast haven't yet hit the follow button or the subscribe button.

Wherever you're listening to this, I would like to make a deal with you.

If you could do me a huge favor and hit that subscribe button, I will work tirelessly from now until forever

to make the show better and better and better and better.

I can't tell you how much it helps when you hit that subscribe button.

The show gets bigger, which means we can expand the production, bring in all the guests you want to see,

and continue to do in this thing we love.

If you could do me that small favor and hit the follow button, wherever you're listening to this, that would mean the world to me.

That is the only favor I will ever ask you.

Thank you so much for your time. Back to this episode.

What did you learn from Jamie Foxx?

What lasting influence has he had on you the way you are, your career, your perspective?

It's so interesting, man. I have so many great mentors coming up.

I feel like a lot of my first part of my career, I always acknowledged and bigged up Will Smith, because he was so influential to me.

You met him through Jamie.

Well, yeah, I guess, yeah, but it wasn't directly.

Jamie didn't introduce me to Will, but Jamie had a comedy festival called Laugh a Pelusa

that Will Smith's company, Overbrook, saw me at that comedy festival and gave me a holding deal at the time with their recall,

and kind of signed me to Will's company, which then I got to meet Will, you know,

a few months later after getting that opportunity in Atlanta at Laugh a Pelusa.

And then that's when Will and I's relationship began when I was about 16 years old.

So it's like, I met Jamie when I was 15, and then I met Will when I was 16.

It's hard to think of many more greats and multi-faceted entertainers than Will Smith and Jamie Foxx.

Man, that's what I'm saying. They trained me, and it's so crazy, because two of the nicest human beings you would ever want to meet.

Like, never seen, what you see on camera, that's who they are.

You know what I mean? Like, walking in a room, everyone gravitates towards them.

They're loud. They know how to have a good time. Like, that's just who those guys are.

So I don't think I'm naturally like that.

Like, I talked to Kevin about that. Like, when I come in a room, I'm quiet.

Kevin Hart, like, he's one of those guys that, like, they're loud there.

Like, everyone loves him. Like, I'm more like, I'm in the corner. I'm watching. I'm observing.

I know how to be that. I can, you know, I can joke with the best of them and get as much attention and stuff, but I'm a little more reserved.

And that's like to finally answer your question in a very long-winded way.

Like, the things I probably learned from Jamie is I observed him so much that he's such a great storyteller.

I've stolen all of the tricks of when he can get everybody around the table and tell the story.

He's such a great impromptu type of guy. I could sit down at a piano and, you know, sing a song and get everybody.

Like, I know all of those tricks and I'll probably learn that from him, you know what I mean?

Just watching how to, you know, captivate a room in a very jovial manner, no matter what's going on.

But, man, yeah, he's, and just his, his, his thespian muscle is so strong, you know what I mean?

And I think from whether he's being a silly character or he's being something that's so tuned in and understanding the subtleties

and really embodying, you know, all of his characters, I learned a lot of that from him as well, too. And Will, so you describe Will as you're mentoring you from 16 years old.

Yeah, the thing I learned from him is hard work. And, and really, like, I've heard, he said this quote so many times, like,

I may not be the most talented person in the room, but I guarantee you I'll work the most talented person in the room.

Or I've also heard him say, you know, I may not be the most talented person in the room, but I'll be the hardest worker in the room.

And he just, if you want something, he's not going to stop until he figures it out, you know, and he dedicates himself in that manner.

And, you know, when this job is done, he's going to stop where everybody else is going to go to sleep.

He's going to go work 10 more hours to either perfect that craft or on to the next thing.

And I saw that at, you know, as a teenager, I'm like, okay, that's how you get it. That's what I'm going to do.

If he's not sleeping, I'm not sleeping. You know, and it'd be times like up in the studio all night and then be on set early in the morning.

And you just, you're so grateful and appreciative of the opportunity that you want to be the best you could possibly be.

Did he correct any of the errors in your ways when you're a young man, you're 16 years old, you've got a perspective.

Yeah. He taught, I mean, every, I mean, before I met Will, I didn't know how to even musically. I didn't know how to rap 16 bars. And, you know, what that was, like I knew, I knew music counting,

you know what I mean?

But I didn't know a verse, specifically a rap verse was supposed to be 16 bars.

And I think that culture might have had just started to happen because everybody wasn't writing 16 bars in the 80s.

You know what I mean? Sometimes a song would be seven verses or sometimes, you know, like people would just,

but I feel like they're, in the 90s, they began this infrastructure of songwriting.

Obviously, most choruses and hooks are about eight bars.

And then therefore, you had to have a hot 16 double that was your verse.

And Will taught me how to write, because I was just writing.

He would give me a beat or I'd get a track and I would just write and just memorize it and then be like, oh, let me spit this for you.

He said, you need some infrastructure around that.

He's like, you got some good stuff there.

So even as, you know, simple as something like that is, but then he also just life ways, man.

I learned a lot about integrity, character, obviously perseverance from him.

And then stuff that he went through as a teenager, he passed on to me.

And even I didn't listen, but I learned, you know, he went broke, you know, at 19 after winning a Grammy and having a platinum album,

just spending it all on cars and living fast.

He gave, I think my first check was somewhere from him, like \$150,000, \$200,000.

And I went and bought the exact same range Rover he had.

He's like, I'm the biggest movie star in the world.

He's got millions.

I got \$150,000 and I went and bought a range.

He told me, don't do it.

He's like, man, he's like, I don't do that.

Like you got to, there's other things to do with that money.

And this is from the person who gave it to me.

And he was right.

I totaled that range Rover six months within having it and ended up having to move back to my mom's house probably a year later because

thinking that, you know, I'm signed to Will Smith, the opportunities, but you don't like,

that's money that you're supposed to survive on.

Those, everything that, you know, that was the time I had wrote and created a television sitcom through Will's company called Loose Cannon.

And it was like me in a military school, a teenager in a military school, thinking it was going to get picked up.

We got a six episode commitment.

Will Smith's the executive producer.

Quincy Jones is on set.

Like everything Stan Layton is the director of the pilot.

Like everything, I'm like, oh, I'm set.

The entire network of the WB makes a shift and they don't pick up the show.

So it's like, I thought I was, I was, and it's so funny.

I don't never even think about these correlations.

The one of the executive producers and writers was Bentley Kyle Evans, who's a writer and creator of Jamie Foxx.

I had, my time slot was scheduled to come on.

My show was going to air right after the Jamie Foxx show.

So I was like, it was all together and it didn't happen.

And you held at that point?

Nineteen.

Same age Will was when he had to re-figure it out.

I think we shot it when I was eighteen.

But nineteen is when they let me know that it wasn't, it wasn't going to move forward.

Probably one of the biggest heartbreaks of my life.

I probably, I cried for days because I didn't, you know, that's the thing.

You think you're, you've arrived and then it snatched from under you and there's no plan.

I had nobody there.

Even the people like, it's going to be all right.

I didn't believe them.

Like I was like, I was just on the Warner Brothers lot with, you know, in my Range Rover.

And, you know, like I saw the millions.

I saw me being the biggest young star in the world.

Everybody was rocking with me into everybody's gone like that.

And it was just, and it wasn't like they abandoned me.

It was more like everybody had to move on to their next thing.

I had to be the one to figure it out.

So that was, that was probably one of my greatest life lessons that Will even taught me indirectly.

I mean, because he was warning me the whole time.

And he held me down, you know, time and time again since then.

You know what I mean?

It was, you know, I wouldn't have got drumline if it wasn't for him.

It was, like I said, it wouldn't have my first record deal if it wasn't for him.

So there was, I, I truly, it's funny.

I get a little esoteric real quick, but I have this when it comes to like Akashic records and, and, you know, energy.

I feel like you're placed in certain, it's the law of synchronicity.

Like I feel like certain things just happen because they are constantly happening.

There's certain energies that just are attracted to each other.

And for whatever reason, people like Will Smith, Jamie Foxx, like they're throughout my career.

They're always there.

They're always, even when they're not like, we may not speak every day, we make, but they, we

always connected.

Like even the same thing, like, you know, I call Kevin Hart my best friend of me.

Like it's just like we've all since day one, even when we're not trying to be connected, we're connected.

Like we're doing projects together.

We're thinking alike.

He might, he might create a car show and I would create a car show.

He has a restaurant.

I have a restaurant.

Like, and it's not like, it looks like competition.

But it's like, oh no, like we just, we're on the same frequency.

Like we're just, we just operate the same.

And there's people kind of attract each other.

They attract each other.

Like, and I think that's, like when people talk about like secret societies and I think it's like, it's not, it's not like this form to me.

It's just like like minded individuals, like people who operate on the same frequency.

They, they don't, there doesn't have to be this written rule book.

It's just like, oh no, we intuitively, this is, we, we move like this.

We gravitate towards certain things.

And it's, it's unfortunate because people who operate in low frequency, that it's the same way.

And it's like, you know, you, you always like, damn, that person can't, can't catch a break.

It's like, ah, that's cause they're living in that frequency.

What does that frequency look and feel like?

It's slow.

It's thick.

It's heavy.

Blame.

Yeah.

Victimization.

Victimization is anger.

Anger is, it's, it's, you know what I mean?

It's one of those things where jealousy.

Yeah.

All of that.

And it's unfortunate because of people who operate in it.

They don't know that they're in it.

And it's almost like they, they almost desire that.

And they feel like they have to have angst and anger to, to get their point across.

Like, man, you're doing so much more damage to yourself.

And you're digging yourself deeper by pointing fingers at people who are on a completely different frequency and they don't even hear you.

And you're, you're clouding up your existence instead of just like stepping out of that frequency.

You were the youngest ever staff writer, right?

17 years old.

Yeah.

I think, I mean, unless somebody's beat it before, like, I think TV history.

I think because.

Working on Keenan and Kel, which by the way was massive in the UK.

Yeah.

Yeah.

I mean, again, two of the most beautiful people I've ever experienced, specifically Keenan.

Keenan is like my brother.

Like my, our, our mothers are like best friends.

Oh, really?

Yeah.

Like, um, he, they, they gave me the opportunity because they were kids too.

And I started off doing warm up in the, you know, kind of entertaining the studio audience when, you know, they're moving the cameras around and stuff.

And people were like, yo, that kid is sometimes more entertaining than what's going on on stage. So they're like, he has a voice.

So through my management, you know, Michael Goldman is still my manager to this day.

Still Keenan's manager.

Like Keenan actually, I feel like, I don't know if Keenan introduced me to, because Keenan would hang out in the comedy clubs.

And I was in awe of him because he's Keenan from Keenan and Kale.

And we're in a, since he's a few years older than me, but I'm like, he's doing what I want to do.

So we would kind of, you know, catch each other.

And I would, you know, I wouldn't jock them too much, but I'd be like, ask them questions and stuff.

So one night his manager came to, um, to the improv on Melrose with, and I was doing standup.

And, you know, they produced Keenan and Kale and all that and all that stuff.

So they gave, they allowed me to do the warm up job.

And then from there, I'm in.

So I'm like, Keenan, I was like, yo, we should write something.

So I went to Keenan, wrote a couple of episodes.

And, you know, he was like, yeah, let's do it.

I remember we wrote one episode with, uh, Keenan had a crush on Tamia at the time.

Like, like he was like, we all had a crush on Tamia, but he really liked, you know,

the singer Tamia.

And I was like, yo, let's write an episode about your crush on Tamia.

We could get Tamia on the episode and it worked to like, like we got Tamia.

She was in the show.

And I was like, this is amazing.

Like, you mean I could write something that actually happens?

Like, I was literally like, I was like, Harry Potter with the pen.

Like, like I couldn't, um, I couldn't believe that I could write something in my mind and it would actually come into fruition.

Uh, and that, and so I just began writing everything and I figured it out and they hired me as a staff writer for a bunch of different Nickelodeon shows.

At 17, 18.

Yeah.

I was just 17.

Yeah.

Because I think I wrote, we wrote the Tamia thing probably when I was like 16.

And then so by the time I was 17, I had like an official job and then I started writing my own stuff.

And then hence I wrote my own television show that I would later then pitch to Will Smith, you know, in that same time.

When you're 20 years old, which is the, the Nick Cannon show, right?

Well, no, the, remember I said the loose cannon show is that didn't get the big lesson I learned that I was still a teenager then.

So, but it's the way I got back on my feet after loose cannon didn't get picked up.

I then wrote my own show for Nickelodeon, which is interesting because I was so, I did that out of, to be honest, I wasn't even proud or even, I kind of did that out of just like, I don't have nothing else to do.

So let me create and produce my own show because I felt I was at a low point.

I was 19.

And you know how this game sometimes if it doesn't work, it'll spit you out.

Like that was my shot.

Like I was like, oh, I had, I was signed to Will Smith.

I had, it was the protege of all of these big comedians.

I had, you know, hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of holding deals with networks.

Usually that you only get that shot once.

So I was like, damn, I blew my wad at 19.

Like I got to go get a regular job now.

Like that's like, that's what I was thinking.

Like I was going to go back to hustling in the streets and, but it was, I was like,

all right, well, maybe it's nickel.

I was doing Nickelodeon.

So I still got the relationships.

Maybe I'll just write a kid show, you know, but I was thinking I was about to be the next Will Smith, the next Jamie Foxx.

All right, I got to go do children's television.

And through that, I exercised these muscles as a writer, as an executive producer.

And even like now, like I didn't, I didn't have, you know, the foresight to know how powerful, you know, children's entertainment is how it's one of the most dominating forces to be able to entertain families that, you know, I utilize in every aspect of my business.

Now I used to look at Nickelodeon as like preschool, you know what I mean?

But I didn't know that there were the billion dollar conglomerate of, you know, Nickelodeon, Disney.

Like I didn't understand that then because I was in it.

So yeah, I created the Nick Cannon show for Nickelodeon.

You know, garnered a massive youth fan base through that.

When I look at you being 22 years old, writing this, the Nick Cannon show, you being 17,

writing for Kenan and Cal, I go like, where did you get the repetitions?

Like where did you get the skill from?

And if I was to, if you have, if I had like a baby Nick Cannon here and I had to do something to give him

the skills that you had at 17, where you're writing hilarious things, where does that skill come from? I think stand up, to be honest, stand up because writing my own jokes from 11 years old.

And then by the time I'm 12, 13, I'm seeing Def Comedy Jam, Comic View.

I'm seeing all of these things happen.

And I'm watching these individuals become their own intellectual properties,

become in their own business, become in their own producers.

The thing about stand up, you have to write, direct, perform, promote, market, all by yourself.

It's a one man show.

So I think by the time I had honed those skills at like 15, 16, I knew how to do it.

I knew how to write a script.

I knew how to write a great joke.

I knew how to, you know, hours of sitting in libraries and figuring out words, hearing stories,

like all of that stuff was starting to pay off.

And I knew, like, I just zoned in.

Again, like, when you know this is my space, this is my flow, you operate in your gift.

So I think just, you know, trial and error as well too.

But like, I just figured it out.

You know what I mean?

Like, this is what is a gift that I have.

So I'm going to continue to operate.

They say you got to put in 10,000 hours to become a master at something.

Yeah.

And actually, when I run the numbers, I go, listen, you started at 11.

Veah

And you wrote your own show at 22.

Yeah.

That's more than a decade of repetitions in the gym.

Yep.

And then even, and to me then, even then, I was still just getting started.

You know what I mean?

Like, getting the beauty of like even Nickelodeon.

Like, even I, I mean, it was, because I think the Nick Cannon show was, I was from, I did it from like, age, I started 19 and ended right when I turned 22.

I was a baby.

I looked like I was 15.

Like everybody thought I was much younger than I even was.

So, you know, that's when everything else from like drumline and my music career began.

And I was a baby then too.

And then so it just, like I said, I lived so many lives and learned so many lessons early on that even as I sit here before you today, I'm like, I'm still just getting started.

I still got, I still got so many more movies that I got to do.

I still got so much more music I got to produce.

I still got so many more television shows.

I got to write.

So, like, if your kids come to you though, and they say, dad, how do I become the master of my craft?

How do I become the top of my industry?

Not only have you become the top of your industry in many facets, but you've been around people that have got to the top of the industry.

So the things you point out and the similarities and the people that get there, what are those similarities?

If I'm your kid and I come to you and say, dad, I want to, I want to get to the top of the industry.

What's the advice you give to them?

Do it.

I think, especially now, as simple as that sounds, that's what it is today.

Like, do it and stick to it.

Like, don't give up.

Like, do it efficiently, do it because this is, don't try it.

If you try it, it's not going to work.

If you do it, like, that's even like, even when people always talk to me about acting.

Like, how do you know or become a great actor?

Do it.

Like, it's not like, it's not believe it.

It's not, uh, act it.

You got to actually every, embody every aspect of it.

Like, do it as if there's no other option.

Like, if you try something, that's you sticking your foot in it.

If you believe it, you're kind of like, I think I, I'm okay.

But when you do it, when you live it, when you operate in it, when there's no other option of like,

like, you know, it's like, it's some people who like, you know, they play basketball.

And then somebody's like, oh no, they, they're a basketball player.

You know what I mean?

Like, there's some people who, who train or try to box.

They're like, no, that's a box, right?

You know what I mean?

Like, they embody it.

They live it.

You got it.

And even with my own kids, I'm like, all right, what do you just naturally do?

We're just swag naturally yet.

Why naturally?

Because like some of my kids are just natural athletes.

They're physical build.

They're what they gravitate towards.

And then I'm, all right, I'm a water that I'm a, I'm a, I'm going to cultivate that seed.

And that's what, because they have fun at it.

Then there's some of my kids that are just like natural musicians that just gravitate towards the piano.

Like they just, they have fun at it.

Why does that matter?

Yeah.

And then it's like, okay, I'm going to, I'm going to help you with that.

Why does the fun matter?

Well, I mean, that's, that's the, that's the battery.

Like that's, and that's what, if they ever lose the fun, at least for me, like when it's no longer be fun,

becomes fun and why are we doing it?

You know, are you doing it for money?

Are you doing it for like, no, you got to do it because you enjoy it.

I find that fun part so important, but a lot of the time people don't appreciate it.

And I love your, your reference of the battery because a lot of people will be orientated because they come from tough

upbringings to go, what's going to make the most money.

Yeah.

And what I love about what you said about the fun thing is ultimately, well, it's my belief that the thing that

will actually make you the most money is the thing that you can master.

And the thing that you can master is the thing that you can do for 11 years.

Exactly.

Which is the fun thing.

Exactly.

It's like, I would say, uh, money doesn't make you happy, happy makes you money.

And then it goes to the concept of happy money or good money because there's definitely the opposite.

There's bad money and there's sad money.

And I've seen so many people live in that frequency.

Sad money.

Sad money.

Sad money.

It's like stingy fear that people only want you for your money.

Loneliness.

Loneliness in this big glass castle by yourself.

You got all the money in the world.

Like we, we know those entertainers, you know what I mean?

Like man, they, they put themselves in this, this glass tower and everybody could see them and they hate that everybody could see them.

And they're so lonely.

And it's like, they got more money than they know what to do with.

And then everything becomes about a transaction.

Like, and you can see they have the biggest yacht in the world.

They have the most diamond studded watch ever and they're miserable.

And it's like, that's sad money.

That's, and it becomes bad money.

You know what I mean?

Like they're making, and it's, it's vindictive.

They're, they're not honest.

They get it in a way.

They're like, man, how do you sleep at night?

Like the music industry is filled with bad money.

And I've, I've seen people, they take advantage.

Like it's literally designed in these contracts.

That's why I never really wanted to be, I didn't want to thrive in it.

Once I saw it, I'm like, oh, it's so manipulative.

It's about, it's one person robbing another, robbing another, robbing another.

And I was like, that's not a fun industry to be in.

Like clearly there's some people who figure it out, but even as a, as a music executive,

I'm like, I don't, I don't want to operate in dishonesty.

I don't want to operate in manipulation.

And it's just like that entire industry is designed off of that.

And, but it's, it's ways to, you know, far and few between, but you can operate with happy money and good money because the crazy thing specifically about music,

it brings so much joy to the world that the industry shouldn't be in a low frequency place.

Like everybody should be able to thrive and win and provide for their families.

But there's a lot of people who aren't musically inclined, who aren't musically talented, who don't know how to have happiness with music that latch on and control the artists.

And then therefore they run the industry and they operate on a lower frequency of like, you know, I'm going to control your, your intellectual property and I'll make more money off of it than you did, even though you made it from such a pure and happy place.

There's a balance.

It almost feels like there's a bit of a balance act or, or I don't know,

a conflict between being selfish enough that you, you get on and you get what you deserve,

but being generous and kind enough so that you can stick around.

Yeah.

Do you think about that?

It's the beauty of narcissism.

I am that balance.

I am a narcissist.

I believe there's the balance of narcissism because you can go to,

you can go to an extreme of narcissism and it becomes dangerous.

It becomes maniacal.

It becomes where you can be a psychopath with it or you're a sociopath where you have no empathy.

That level of narcissism is unhealthy.

That's to the extreme of the spectrum.

But the balance of confidence, of self-love, of there's no other option but me.

I am, I'm him.

Like LeBron James is him.

Kobe Bryant, him.

Michael Jordan, him.

Michael Jackson, him.

Mike Tyson, him.

All the mikes.

Will Smith is him.

Chris Rock is him.

Jamie Foxx is him.

Mariah Carey is her.

Mary J. Blige is her.

Beyonce is her.

All of those people know that there is, there will never be another them on the planet.

And that is worth its weight in gold.

So you have to have a level of self-love, self-promotion, self-dedication.

All the self is the key word, the common word in all of these things.

You have to love self.

You have to know self.

Not so much that you hurt others or you think less of others.

Because that's the people like, oh, you think you're better than everybody else.

I don't care about everybody else.

Like, it's not the whole thing I'm better than y'all.

I'm me.

Like, and that to a point, it's a fine line because you don't want to disrespect anyone.

You still want to have compassion.

You still want to have empathy.

You still want to enter the space of gratitude.

But this is my show.

This is my party.

This is my, this is my block.

That you, you have to, that's where that success lies.

Because without these narcissists, we wouldn't have, you know, electricity.

We wouldn't have iPhones.

We wouldn't have great music.

We wouldn't have great, like the director of the movie is the director for the reason.

He's the boss.

He knows he's the shit.

He knows his vision is the one that everyone else has to align with to make a great film.

Was there a point in your career where you realized that you needed to change in some way to get what you deserved and to get what you're worth?

Nah, I don't think so.

Really?

I had to learn lessons.

Because you're 15.

I see you coming up.

I go, he's got talent.

Yeah.

I could get him to sign a bad contract and I could take his money.

Yeah.

That sounds like I've learned, I've learned all of those lessons.

And people have tried to forewarn me and stuff like that.

But the thing, I think the beauty that, you know, the aura that everybody's seen is that's been consistent.

It's what you do with it.

You know, I've never let no one put out my flame.

You know, it's constantly burned for the type of individual that I want to be that I, you know, my purpose.

So, you know, we all have trials and tribulations.

You know, you got to learn how to bob and weave, but you're still the fighter in which you're supposed to be.

You know, like the, whatever made you jump in the ring from that day one, you're going to cultivate those skills.

You know what I mean?

You may be a defensive fighter and that's how you win your fight sometimes.

Then, you know, but early on in your career, you know, you are a puncher, you know, then you had to be more of a thinker, you know,

but at the end of the day, you're still a fighter.

So I think as whatever I am, I still have this desire in me to be a winner.

I have this desire in me to, to beat the odds to something.

There's something about like when someone tells me I can't do something or tells me no, I'm that fuels me

And it's been that way since day one, since, you know, my, my ADD since my anti authoritarian behavior.

Like, it's just like, I'm going to push through.

I'm going to persevere.

I'm going to do what I want.

And I'm not going to let society or individuals tell me I can't.

22 years old, you start writing Wildin' Out.

Yeah.

You start writing at that point.

I think you then self fund the pilot at 25 years old.

Yeah.

Probably before that, because I self-funded in 2004.

So that might have been, I might have been 23.

And again, I had just seen some success with film and music.

And I just started, I was kind of one of those guys whose drum line was out and had, you know, my album and stuff.

So people, but I was still doing stand up.

And I was like, everybody's like, oh, he does so many things.

He hosts it.

And I had a deal with, you know, Viacom at the time.

Obviously they had Nickelodeon and then you kind of like graduate from Nickelodeon and go to MTV.

So I was in that stage of developing things for MTV.

And they didn't understand what I wanted to do when I was standing there.

I want to get all my comedian friends together and all my rapper friends together.

And we just like do improv and play games.

And they're like, we don't get it.

So I was like, all right.

So I rented out one of the comedy clubs that me and my guys would normally frequent.

Got some cameras together.

I think, I mean, I want to say it was somewhere around like \$100,000 that I put into like that night.

Promoted it had everybody come out, you know, got some beautiful people to stand around and look beautiful.

You put \$100,000 of your own money into the pilot to show MTV.

Yeah.

And then once we put it all together, you know, edited, created logos, showed it to a woman.

Oh, we get it now.

But, you know, I had, by then I had created the intellectual property, had, you know,

copy written and patented the name of While and Out of the logo.

So when it was time to negotiate when I knew that they wanted the show, we had the, you know, the strong side of the table because we knew they wanted it and we had already created it.

And that instantly was like, oh, this is the business model that I want to continue to operate under.

Most people don't figure that out until much later in life, if at all.

That owning their IP is key to getting the value that they deserve for their work.

Yeah.

Well, now I feel like everybody knows the secrets out.

You know, I mean, when you look at YouTube and, you know, the ability of that we could create great content,

you know, for a very cost effective amount like, you know, While and Out, that probably wouldn't cost me \$100,000 today.

Yeah.

You know, because everything back then, to get a camera man.

Yeah.

That was a couple thousand dollars.

You know what I mean?

And, you know,

They're on the iPhone now.

Yeah.

Exactly.

Yeah.

Everybody knows now to, if they create it and they'll come and then you build your fan base on your own

and then you can sell it to a larger corporation.

So I feel like that model is being, you know, kind of like, look at Mr. Beast.

You know what I mean?

Like, I'm so jealous of him.

So all like everything that he's doing at 24, 25.

Like I was trying to do back then, but there was no, there was no YouTube.

Like I was doing this, you know, on VHS, you know, but I love it.

You know what I mean?

I love watching what even, I mean, the beauty of my brand now is what I started in 2004 is still going strong and probably

more popular today, going into 2024.

It's crazy.

You know what I mean?

You're about to film series 21?

We just filmed 21.

So we're going into 22 and 23.

That's crazy.

Figured out a model now how to do two seasons in one.

So.

Most shows don't last for a season, let alone 21 seasons.

Yeah.

I think my goal is 25.

So.

What happens at 25?

It'll be the 20th year.

25.

Do I gracefully bow out?

It's 25.

25 seasons.

Like do I hand it off to somebody else?

I'll probably be getting close to 50 by then.

I can't wild out forever.

Nah, I gotta stop at some point.

I think I'm probably too long in the tooth now.

I mean, that's why I even created the old school, new school.

It's funny.

Everybody, when I first created it, all of the wild and out girls, all of the cast members, all of the crew were older than me.

And it was weird that everybody was listening to this kid.

Tell them what to do.

And like, even the, oh geez, like, you know, Kat Williams and, you know, a lot of the guys who were on the show and right at Chris Spencer and Daryl Heath, like these guys were guys that I looked up to that were on my show.

And now I'm the old head and I got all of these other young kids, like the DC young flies and everything.

I'm like, it's so crazy to have the same brand.

And I literally grow up on, you know, like I remember being a kid trying to get these comedians to listen to me.

And I'm like, what do you know?

And now I'm the guy telling.

With the platform.

Yeah.

So give me a view into into that platform that you have and that you've built the entertainment company that sits behind it, the talent that you have, because it's not so obvious to people. Yeah.

You know, people kind of probably think, okay, while and out, he's, he does this, whatever, he's the host, whatever.

But when I did the research on the company that you've built behind it, it's a pretty, it's a huge business behind all of that.

You're involved in a lot of things.

Yeah.

I mean, there's so many aspects of it.

I mean, I truly look at it as a blessing.

I'm so grateful for it because it was on a job, job training.

I didn't, I didn't think while and out would be the billion dollar conglomerate that it is because I was just creating a show to give my friends jobs.

Because Kevin Hart needed money to pay his rent.

Like, because he's like, it's just real, you know, like we were trying to create something because I was the only one that was, you know, seeing some success out of our, you know, our generation at the time.

And I was like, oh, let's, let me shine a light on these dudes that are way funnier than me, that are way more talented than me, you know, like, and then I built a business out of it, of incubating, of cultivating young talent so much so that when they're ready, we, we see Pete Davidson go on to become one of the biggest stars in SNL and a movie star. We, we see same thing with like Mikey Day and Taryn Killam and, you know, the Cat Williams and Kevin's to become some of the biggest standup comedians to ever tour the world. Like they, they got they, you know, they, they feet wet, they, they skills honed on one of the toughest stages.

Like if you look at what while and out is, if you, if you excel and survive there, you're going to be a star because you're in a, this is the gauntlet.

This is the combine.

This is the best of the best in the grimeous of, of this.

We going to test your insecurities.

We going to test your anxiety.

And then you succeed and you get the love from people that you respect.

And then once the industry sees that, do whatever you want.

So I, I didn't, I couldn't have designed that, but it, it happened.

And I was like, wow, I didn't know.

I was literally, I didn't, we were just in the trenches.

But it's like, it's so much so like we create an environment that most entertainers are scared to come to.

They're like, man, I don't want to go a while and now they going to talk about my mama. They going to talk about my last scandal or I don't know how to rap or I'm not that funny off the top of the head.

And it's like, it's intimidating.

So when you throw a kid in there or whoever is in it and they excel, they, they've earned their stripes.

So now they can walk into any room.

They're like, yeah, I was the man on while and now, and now, because it is a platform to propel, now you can go become a movie star.

Now you can go become a rapper or a singer.

Like, so, so that was really, if I could, I'd be lying if I say I designed that, but it became, it became that.

And that's like the blessing I got.

But then the business behind it.

You used the word, used the B word billion.

Yeah.

I mean, if you, and it's, it's funny.

I didn't even, that was told to me after they did all the research and of, you know, obviously what the IP is worth because one, I mean, we're looking at 500 episodes of television, that alone.

And you just do the math charge however much you want to charge per episode, what that would, you know, and then the, the careers that it's launched.

And, you know, then go to where the money really is in the actual intellectual property. So we have a tour that makes millions every year.

Now even turning into a cruise line, you know, the wild and wet, like we have restaurants that are being franchised, you know, all over the country, you know, we just expanded our South Beach location on Ocean Drive in Miami.

The logo in itself, the amount of t-shirts, we're then, we're probably Paramount's number one selling low, yeah, merchandise, t-shirt, merchandise that everybody knows that while and out logo.

And it's on everything from t-shirts to bikinis to underwears to coffee mugs to toys.

It's things like that that, I was just trying to make a cool t-shirt.

Like I didn't think, you know, for 20 something years people would be buying while and out t-shirts.

So stuff like that that when, and then even stuff I never even thought of, you know, we created while and out before there was a YouTube.

It's probably one of Viacom, if not the thing, maybe the Daily Show is probably right there but the biggest digital brand that Paramount has through Tik Tok, YouTube, you know, I feel like I think we might, we're somewhere north of 12 million YouTube subscribers on the while and out page, 12 million something subscribers on Tik Tok, 7 million on Instagram. And that's just, that's a TV show.

You know what I mean when you think about it, like not the individuals who are on the TV show have even more followers.

This is just the shows page.

How much do you think the brand is worth?

I've heard different things.

I mean, like I said, when I initially, when the research back, there was like a 1.3 billion but then that was years ago.

So like I'm pretty sure it's grown because now it's even more popular now.

So it's a, it's, you know, I try not to get caught up in that because then I'm, two things happen.

Like one, I get in, I start gloating.

I'm like, built this billion dollar business.

And then the second thing I was like, hey, where's my billion dollars?

Like somebody owes me some money.

Like so I try not to get caught up in that.

So like I know, I just know it's very successful and I'm grateful that it's still going.

I mean, I can't wait to find the next comedic superstar.

Can't wait to find the next big rapper that graces the while and out stage.

What are the other businesses or the business ventures that aren't obvious that people might not know about?

So you talked about restaurants, you sign talent, you see the while and out brand.

Is there anything else going on that from the business side of things that isn't obvious?

Specifically and while and out of everything else.

Everything.

Well, I mean, I've created incredible entertainment in 2009.

It was more of a conglomerate work because I had always had a record label, but it was separate from my television company.

I would produce the films that I was in and stuff.

So I was like, I want everything in house.

I read that incredible entertainment generated over \$100 million in revenue in 2009.

And that was, I think that was just in our headphone sales.

Like cause we did, I had, I did a headphone brand, very similar to Beats by Dre.

Monster was the parent company.

They did Beats for \$300 and they did Incredibles for \$100.

So we were the more cost effective headphone man.

And while Beats by Dre was making all the noise, we were quietly making noise in Walmart and the radio shacks for selling an affordable product.

That was pretty much the same product, except for we made ours affordable.

So yeah, just so that alone, I was just in consumer electronics that I would never thought I was going to be, you know, selling electronics.

So, but yeah, incredible.

And ultimately I created a one stop shop that could be everything from consumer products to entertainment to so and it's been thriving, man.

It's been, and it's kind of, I guess my brand is somewhat known of giving people opportunities and finding that next big thing.

So we're cultivators, we're curators, we're incubators.

And so a lot of the content that I've created, I found my niche.

I was going to say you was a Simon kind of the entertainment mode, but you're in fact just the Nick Cannon of the entertainment mode.

Funny, me and Kailani, me and Simon talk about that often because I found her on America's Got Talent on his show, my show, our show, but he wasn't paying attention.

You know what I mean?

And it was like, you know, he was focused on One Direction or whatever on one of his other shows.

And I was like, you know, Kailani came in and it was, she was an amazing talent.

And like I hate to say found because she was already talented.

Once you get to America's Got Talent, you're already proven, you know, and she was the lead singer for a group called Pop Life, which was put together, I believe by DeWayne Wiggins from Tony, Tony, Tony, his sons were in there too.

But she was clearly the star of this group.

And I remember Piers Morgan was being an asshole as he does so very well.

And he was telling a 15 year old little chubby Kailani that she should leave the group.

And the only way that he would put her through and not buzz her off is if she left her band because she was the talent.

Clearly he was right.

But how do you put a 15 year old in that scenario?

And she stuck to her guns and she said, I'm not leaving my brothers.

And everybody else on the panel was like, we're going to, you know, we love that you stuck to your guns.

So even though Piers was being an ass, they went all the way through to the finale.

I think they performed with Stevie Wonder on the finale as Pop Life.

And then unfortunately, you know, when you don't win, life goes on.

She had to go back home to Oakland and probably met some hard times.

And I remember it's funny, the father of her, you know, as we know now, I knew as Gabby, who also grew up in that same musical.

And he called me and say, hey, man, you know, that girl that was on America's Got Talent, she's homeless now.

She's not doing so well.

I was like, what?

I was like, yeah, she's, you know, not doing, she's being a teenager, but like she needs help.

Like I didn't really know her background of, you know, her father, you know, being murdered when she was a child and mother, you know, dealing with substance abuse.

And she has a very compelling story of just the resilience of her and her family.

And they were explaining all that.

And I was like, yo, give me your information.

Find who's her guardian and kind of went and talked to the family and say, yo, I'll move you to LA. But first you got to finish high school.

Like the one promise, finish school, I'll take care of everything else.

A year later, her mixtape was nominated for a Grammy.

So it's just like, just, and, you know, so it's stuff like that to where, you know, I was like, I put in the work to, you know, help her out.

I was like, tell Simon, yeah, you missed that one.

You got a lot of other ones, right?

But you missed, you know, you missed that one.

Did you sign her?

See, that's the thing.

I feel about signing.

I don't, I'm weird about that.

I don't like signing people.

And people, everybody in my life is like, that's what you have to do.

I would say I didn't ask for anything.

I was the impresario.

You know what I mean?

I funded scenarios because I could.

So she didn't have to worry about anything.

You know what I mean?

She had roof over her head, food on the table, anything she wanted.

Studio time, you know, we figured it out.

I introduced her to, you know, the good people over at Atlantic Records.

And the rest is history.

So hindsight's a wonderful thing.

Yeah, I didn't want no money from it.

You know what I mean?

I do, I do that for a lot of people.

It's created, you know, me and Craig Cowman over at Atlantic.

That's my man, you know, but where a lot of people would be, you know,

and Kelani would be signed to them forever.

I don't want that.

You know what I mean?

I want her to be able to provide and do, like, I always tell everybody I work with

from the beginning, whether you make it or you don't make it,

my life is still going to be the same.

So I don't want anything from you, but to see you win.

I just want to see, like...

But you could have, you know...

I could, there's a lot of people and that is their business.

They're like, I need my percentage of every song that you write from here on out

because I found you.

I discovered you.

I signed you.

My spirit...

I don't sit well with my spirit.

And that's this future superstar show.

My inner struggle when you watch it, because I'm on the show as well,

I struggle with signing these kids.

It's funny because we go from city to city and I give a local artist

\$5,000 to \$10,000 a city.

And a lot of times that's what these record labels are signing these kids up for.

Someone signed my publishing away when I was a teenager for \$10,000.

One of the biggest mistakes, one of the biggest lessons I've ever learned.

So now I'm giving that \$10,000 away to these kids

and I don't want nothing from you, but to see you win.

And that's me paying it forward.

That's me correcting what this industry has done to people for so long.

So I don't want...

If you want to sign with Incredible, that's your choice.

You can sign to me if you want to, but I'm good.

I'm gonna still be rich, so I don't need anything from you.

If you want to join the gang, let's go.

There's benefits and perks to being Incredible.

But a lot of people, even from my attorneys and people in my circle,

like, man, you got to sign these people.

How are you going to function?

How are you going to allow your business to thrive if you don't sign?

It's been working thus far.

So I don't like signing people.

I don't like having ownership in someone else's brand.

Now, we can be collaborative, we can write a song together,

and we can split the publishing.

It costs money to keep the lights on.

You can use my studio.

I get reimbursed down the line when it's time,

but I'm not going to take something from you.

I'm not going to charge the artists.

That's a fucked-up concept that we've just been operating in

and no one's ever corrected it.

This is an artist who's making brilliant art,

and someone who had nothing to do with it gets to own it forever in perpetuity.

What the fuck does perpetuity mean?

There's these terms and these words that we just signed up for that is just wrong,

but it's made a lot of people a lot of money so they don't want it to change,

but it has to change.

Technology is making it change.

These next generations are people who have more empathy

and giving spirits are going to allow it to change

because I don't believe people are as animalistic.

They don't have a savage mentality like it once used to require.

I believe we're more empathetic, we're more compassionate,

and it's starting to show even in business.

I think you're right, though.

I think because of platforms, that middleman has less power than ever.

You say like, oh, maybe they're becoming more empathetic,

maybe they have no choice because a Kalani or a you or whatever

now has all these platforms where if you've got art and you've got talent,

that shit's going to go viral and you're going to have the followers

on your account and you own the password.

So they've got to come with a different value proposition.

Before I was like, oh, I can introduce you to that person.

I was telling people like, networking is stupid.

If you're focused on being the best you, they'll come find you.

But there are some people who have made a lot of money by networking.

That concept is like, oh, I know this person, I can introduce you to them.

God bless you.

You know what I mean?

If that's how you're connecting, I'll get it.

But if we're really trying to get the artist or the IP or the genius to the people,

now technology is doing it for us.

I just debate with my assistant all the time because she tells me to network more.

And I say to her, I say like, my networking is doing my thing.

Yeah.

And then you become a peacock or a magnet versus me having to small talk in a room for three hours.

Exactly.

Which I can't do that.

I hate small talk.

And that maybe we're just different type of individuals.

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Because there are other people to be like, your network is your network.

Yeah, yeah.

I don't care who I know.

It's more about who knows me.

I'm going to go over here and figure it out.

And you're welcome to the party.

But I don't want to go to your party.

I don't want to hang out with everybody dressed in white and got on billion-dollar watches.

That's not fun to me.

To each his own.

But some people can do that.

Yeah.

And maybe because I've been in it so long, I've been to the white parties before and wanted to show off.

And they were fun.

But I'm at this point, I don't want to do that.

That feels like work to me.

I'd rather be in a studio.

I'd rather be with my children.

I'd rather be writing somewhere.

And not to say that those people don't do that as well.

I just like, that world is, I don't have a place in it.

That's not where I could be my best self.

I low-key though do envy the people that can do it and enjoy it.

And that can be that network and connect this person to that one.

And just because it's an energy that I just don't have.

I think as an introvert, I don't have that muscle to like show up, small talk my way to a lunch with someone and fucking.

Yeah.

Yeah.

I'll tell you why I'm an outgoing introvert.

And that's what me and Kevin Hart go back and forth about all the time because he has that gift.

He walks in a room and lights it up.

You know what I mean?

And he knows this person and this person.

And I'm like, yo, that looks exhausting.

And that's coming from a person who like my personal bandwidth is overloaded constantly.

But my spiritual bandwidth, I keep like, I don't, I don't give everybody my energy.

Like, and that's probably why I am a little bit more subdued in rooms.

That's why I may not go to every event.

And most of the time, if somebody asked me to come, something's like, no, I'm good.

And it's not because I just like my peace.

I just like being with where I can be my authentic self, where I can be my best self.

I don't like having to turn it on.

But I understand when it's time to like, all right, it's the ward season.

You got, you got to go do this.

So you got it.

All right.

And I know how to do it with the best of them, but that's not who I naturally am.

As you guys may know, we are a sponsor of this podcast and I'm a shareholder in the company.

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And I have a suspicion you'll stick with it because I certainly have and I don't stick with much as it relates to wearable tech.

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I'm 30 years old, Nick.

And at 32 years old, you got a diagnosis that changed your life.

Yeah.

It threw me for a super loop, like literally part of the plan, but Lupus.

Lupus.

Yeah. man.

Lupus Nephrite is specifically in 2012.

And here, living my dream life, you know, married to the most gorgeous, beautiful, super-talented person that ever stepped on the planet, literally my dream girl.

We got two kids.

We're in Aspen.

I never, like, I'm from the hood.

I'm from the projects.

You don't go to Aspen.

Do you marry too?

Mariah Carey.

But it's like, I've been asked with my wife and thinking I'm in probably some of the best shape of my life.

Go to boxing three times a week, you know what I mean?

Got in my own home gym in Aspen, you know what I mean?

And I had the weirdest pain in my right side.

I'm like, I'm thinking like a muscle cramp or like, I'm gonna just jog through it.

Here I'm in high altitude, jogging in the snow, thinking I'm like, this is my rocky moment.

I don't know what I was thinking.

And by the time I got back to the house, passed out.

Like, and I didn't know, like, like literally Mariah came in and found me.

They call the, you know, rushed me to the ER in Aspen.

How did she find you?

I was, I don't know.

I was laid out.

Like, and I think everybody because, you know, I think it was that bad because I had just came from jogging in Aspen.

That's right.

Oh, he probably got altitude sickness.

You know what I mean?

Like, I was just dehydrated.

So that's what the narrative we were going with.

So once I got to the hospital, like, I just need some fluid or IV.

I'll be all right.

You know, that happens.

It happens on the ski slopes.

People are like, my dumb ass was jogging in, up a mountain.

I'm probably going to pass out.

And I was only doing it to try to rid this cramp that I had.

I thought I could like work it off.

And then the longer I was in the hospital, they were like, oh, well, maybe you have a

kidney stone because there's something going on back there.

And I was like, oh, it wasn't a kidney stone and got the fluid.

You're no longer dehydrated.

All right.

Well, you know, maybe you got a kidney infection and then they wanted to do a biopsy.

And then through the biopsy, I think at the time it was kind of like acute kidney failure.

Like it wasn't full.

Like I was, I had caught it early enough to where my kidneys didn't completely fail.

And then they found out the reason why is that my immune system was attacking my kidneys.

Therefore, the autoimmune condition lupus and lupus nephritis to where, you know, where your immune system can get out of whack based off of whether it's levels of stress, things that you're putting into your body.

You know, a lot of times it's not hereditary.

They don't really know what the cause of it is.

It's definitely related to stress, which I didn't think I was stressed out, but it's

like, obviously there's various types of stress where physical stress, emotional stress, but this can send your immune system out of whack.

And therefore your immune system then starts to, you know, self destroy, you know, it starts to attack the whatever organs, different people's lupus attack different things.

Mine specifically were my kidneys, which then created a bunch of other stuff like pulmonary embolisms.

And so like the lupus started, I started having these flare ups and it was doing a bunch of stuff to my body and that if you don't catch it, you know, and control it, you can lose your life pretty quickly.

So it was a scary time.

I didn't understand it, but we got it in order, you know, and even I feel like I got a good hold on it now.

But every once in a while, it's a great reminder that health is wealth.

Health is currency.

Health is the most important thing next to time that we possess.

And we don't, we can't control the time.

We can control our health.

You can control what you put in your body.

You can control what you, how well you take care of yourself.

So my lupus is my alarm clock every morning.

Letting me know you better do the right things.

You better drink your gallon of water.

You better take your supplements.

You better, you know, not eat too much sodium or processed.

They're like just a constant measuring stick to keep me alive.

How did that diagnosis change your, your life?

So if I was, if I was in your life at that moment before that moment and then during that moment, you're married, you're still contending with work and it changed it so much. I became a different person.

Feel better for us.

Both.

You know, certain things didn't matter anymore.

Other things mattered too much.

You know, I started to overly value relationships and time, but then that made me get rid of relationships that were taking up time and wasting my time.

But it all became, always felt like I had a ticking clock, but the ticking clock became more apparent in 2012 that I got to make the most out of today because tomorrow is in promise.

My relationship with my children, all of my children.

You know what I mean?

Like a lot of that all comes into play to where like, what are you going to do with the time that you have on this planet?

What impact are you going to make?

So that's kind of, that's where, in a nutshell, what it did.

Emotionally, if I'm Mariah at that time and I'm dealing with a Nick that's contending with this new diagnosis and an uncertain future.

Yeah.

She was my rock, man.

She was, she went hard.

You know, probably, probably wouldn't even, to be honest, probably wouldn't be a lie if it wasn't for how hard she went, you know, with the doctors, with me, my stubbornness, you know, she was the perfect helpmate, the perfect matriarch, the perfect mom, the perfect wife in those scenarios.

Because, granted, she's who she is in dealing with all the pressures of being Mariah Carey, being loving enough to take on all of my stuff.

And, you know, it probably took a toll on us just because of the person I was in my head and the struggles that I was dealing with.

So it probably took a toll on our relationship, but it definitely brought us closer together.

The struggles you were dealing with?

Man, just like, was I going to live?

What was life all about?

Had I wasted my time up until this point?

And if I get another shot, what am I going to do?

What type of, am I going to be able to be here for my children?

Am I not going to be able to be here for my children?

So therefore, what am I leaving them?

What am I leaving the world when I exit?

You know, staring up at that hospital bed, or from the hospital bed, staring at the cell and all alone and everybody else is kicked out and you got to, you got to just, you know, be face to face with your higher power, asking all those tough questions.

Am I done?

You know, a lot of people, we don't do that because we get caught up in the constant race of just living day to day, but it slowed down for me on many occasions.

Oh, like, it's just a wrap.

He's almost out of here.

And I wasn't scared.

That's the crazy thing when you get to that point where you're like, oh, OK, I had a good run.

Were you happy?

I was.

In that moment when you're looking up at the ceiling?

Honestly, I was content.

I wasn't scared.

And it happened, you know, more than once.

And even, you know, it continues to.

Like, I'm probably reminded of my physical mortality all the time.

And when you're not afraid of dying, you focus on living.

You know, it's anyone who's ever had a near-death experience or anyone who's been in those quiet places

dealing with thoughts of afterlife and what this current life was for you.

You live the rest of your days differently.

And at least for, you know, a certain amount of time until you're reminded again.

But yeah, man, I always say I want that life.

I've had, I've lived several lives and I want them all.

You know, so it's like, I'm not, I'm not afraid to go.

Like, and even all of the things that I study and have prepared myself for.

It's, you know, one thing is inevitable.

We all got, it's going to happen to all of us at some point.

And I think others just deal with it better and it makes you appreciate this life.

Like, I want to, when it's all said and done, I guarantee you they're going to be like,

vo, he wrote that motherfucking to the wheels fell off.

Like, he got, he got the most out of life.

And, you know, I'll be known for smiling big, loving hard, you know, and you know,

what more can you ask for?

You said you don't think you'd be here if it wasn't for Mariah going hard.

Do you really believe she saved your life?

Oh, absolutely. Absolutely.

But I think that's what you do when you, when you find a help mate,

when you find someone that you're in matrimony with, you know, you go hard for him.

I feel like I went hard for her and will still go hard.

I lay down my life for her today.

You know, it's just, it's what you do.

There's just family.

It wasn't, and I just want to make it clear.

It wasn't just that moment where you had to contend with health and mortality.

It's an ongoing conversation.

Yeah, I was in and out of the hospital.

I mean, I was in the hospital this past December.

You know, it's not as frequent, you know, but, and it's just because I have the right doctors and I'm hopefully doing the right things now that it doesn't find me.

But you, they, lupus, you have what they call flare ups.

And it happens when certain times of the year season stress and some can be worse than others.

So early on when I was trying to understand it between like 2012 and 2016,

I was in the hospital like a couple of times a year for a stents of like three weeks to a month.

Just trying to figure it out.

So those, and like I said, the flare ups would cause things from everywhere from like blood clots, pulmonary embolisms, inflammation and not have the ability to walk to kidney failure organs, not doing what, you know, they're supposed to do.

So, you know, I had blood clots in my lungs and my heart,

like things that would have normally killed other people.

You know, the doctors would be like, man, I don't understand how you didn't get affected by that, you know, having to do, you know, infusions that are, you know, similar to chemotherapy and, you know, my hair falling out, stuff like that.

Like it's been quite the journey, but, you know, you got to, you got to,

you never know how strong you are to being strong is the only option.

You just got to push through.

Crazy how that changes perspective.

And as you say all of that, having not been through that myself,

I'm so hungry to understand the perspective that it's given you

because I don't want to have to go through that to get the perspective.

I don't wish it on anyone.

Yeah.

Yeah, I mean, it's funny.

You say that sitting there 30 years old.

Yeah. And this is why it's,

ah, but man, you know what I used to do even before I was diagnosed with lupus.

It's funny.

And I don't even just put on my heart, but I knew it helped my perspective.

Every month started off every month and it started to be like once a quarter,

but I would go to St. Mary's Children's Hospital and read books, give toys,

and really just hang out.

And I wouldn't do it for publicity or it was just,

it was a reset button for me to put everything in their perspective

because you would see these children who were dealing with life altering

sometimes just chronic and detrimental disease

and they would have these smiles on their faces.

They would just be so happy and like hooked up the tubes and I'm like,

man, if they're having a good day, I have no complaints.

I can, I'm going to walk out of here in good health.

And this, I would, I, you know, I was still on the board of St. Mary's Children's Hospital

and I did a lot of work like the Children's Miracle Network and stuff.

I probably started that in like, I was in my mid 20s.

And it just, I almost want to say help prepare me for the mindset

of when I had my own diagnosis or ultimately ended up losing my own child,

you know, even a decade later after that, it was like,

you got to enter these spaces with empathy, with compassion,

because then that reminds you that we're all human

and make the most out of this day because you might not be able to walk tomorrow.

You might not, you might take a loss of someone that you thought was going to be there forever, that you thought was going to outlive you.

You're talking about Zen.

Yeah, yeah.

And it's like, and moving so fast, you start to regret like,

man, I didn't do what I should have done in that moment.

So it's a constant reminder, you know what I mean?

And I think perspective, perception, a lot of those things help us daily.

You dealt with the loss of your son, Zen, at just five months old due to brain cancer.

Yeah.

Something that no parent ever conceives as a possibility.

And so it's a awful club to be a member of, but I can understand where it's hard to relate.

I've learned a lesson in that to where when other people are going through stuff,

I never use the word I understand because you don't, you know, it's just,

it's so many things that go through your mind of, you know, even in a short period of time,

of five months, the level of pain, the level of guilt, the level, you know,

that one struggles with because, you know, you think like, oh,

that child would have got to grow to see five years or 25 years or, you know,

you start asking all of these questions that of concepts you just, you struggle to understand.

So when you go through it, you kind of have to just create this fog that protects you.

But at the end of time, like, again, you just got to keep pushing through.

And then, you know, they do say time heals all wounds.

I think, you know, you feel it's just something that you'll never completely heal from,

but you live and you learn to operate and you learn to smile, you learn to be appreciative.

If you're a jovial and optimistic person like I am, you know, you push through,

but, you know, that pain never leaves you.

Did you have space and time to grieve his loss?

Grieving is forever.

It's not a time period.

Like, that's what I was talking about.

It's not about times like that's something you're going to grieve daily.

Grieve it daily?

Yeah, absolutely.

And I think we all, and then any loss, you know what I mean?

And it's learning how to turn your grief into purpose,

learning how to turn your grief into a badge of honor in your character.

Because we all experience it.

We all, instead of, because sometimes grief can turn into anger and sadness.

I don't think that's what it's meant for.

I think that may be the innate feeling.

But when you can turn, oh man, I lost my grandmother.

I lost my mother, so therefore it makes me more compassionate to women.

I lost my child, so that makes me appreciate other children.

I lost my father.

I never knew my father, so that makes me want to be a greater father.

You know, like, when you learn that pain or that grief can actually turn

and make you fulfill you with strength in those spaces that once were empty,

I think that then allows you to figure out why we're here in the first place.

If I was a fly on the wall in your household during that period, what would I have seen?

A lot of silence from me, at least.

When I'm dealing with stuff, I get real quiet.

I don't talk, I keep to myself.

Therefore that makes the whole room uncomfortable because everybody else has to be quiet.

Especially someone like me who is loud, you know, especially in my own home,

when it becomes an eerie silence.

And, you know, it's internalizing, it's thinking, it's taking the time,

it's being appreciative of the time, of the energy.

But you see a lot of love, a lot of compassion, but a lot of silence.

We have a closing tradition on this podcast where the last guest leaves a question for the next guest, not knowing who they're going to leave the question for, and they write it into the diary.

I don't get to read it beforehand, Jack does, he just checks it's not completely crazy.

So here we go.

Okay, I'm going to have a guess.

Okay, so I've got this thing, then what's the next word?

Okay, this thing you're upset about, but you're hanging on to,

that you've been ruminating about, resenting,

what would happen if you just let it go?

If you just never thought about it again and let it go?

Did you interview my therapist last night?

As much as I may like internalize things and like overanalyze,

because I would say I'm a perfectionist on one.

And I'm also fly by the seat of my pants, carefree, whatever happens, happens type of person.

So in therapy, I have to figure out which box I'm going to put my issues in.

Because there are the ones I overanalyze about and, you know,

those usually have to deal with like my children and, you know,

relationships based off of like wanting to be the best me in that space.

And then there's this stuff that I can't control that, like whatever,

like and those things that keep people up at night and you just lost how many millions of dollars? I don't care.

So to answer that very insightful question,

nothing would happen.

It would be very similar to, and that's what I've learned.

Like the things that I overanalyze and stress about,

usually the same result happens when I'm carefree and don't really put too much emphasis on the issue.

But is there anything that you could let go of that you think would have a positive impact on your life if you just let it go?

Not really. I mean, because I'm kind of that type of person.

Like I don't let things...

There's not an idea or a resentment or a grudge or an experience.

Maybe before, you know, I think I'm kind of doing the work.

So I kind of know that about myself.

But I'm also... I've never been one to take life seriously like that.

And it's almost to my detriment, you know, sometimes.

I need to take something seriously, like my health or, you know, even some certain relationships.

But I used to care what people thought about me, you know, because we're in an industry of that.

We'd be lying if, like, I still pay attention to what people say about me,

but I don't allow it to, you know, make decisions for me.

So I don't deal with that anymore.

And that's what I said. Now I'm probably at this space to where even if it's the small things,

you know, I kind of know how to compartmentalize even for the moment.

I spent enough time on that, you know, we got to move off it.

As a father, I mean, I'm pretty sure I'm going to learn so many more lessons with all of my children having to...

They're all going to deal with things in a completely different fashion.

So hopefully whatever their hangups are, don't necessarily become my hangups.

Because I know as a parent, we do that, you know, that's the compassion of parenting.

You got any kids?

No, yeah.

Yeah, that's the thing they don't tell you that their problems become your problems.

How do you mean?

Me, whatever they have an issue is now your issue.

If they got diarrhea, you got diarrhea.

Like if they're crying, you're crying.

If they can't sleep, you can't sleep.

And it happens forever.

If they have a problem getting in, if they're stressing about school, you're stressing about their school.

I'm right there.

I'm about to have kids.

Yeah.

I imagine I've got a partner, we're settled down, we've got a place together, we're talking about it.

What advice have you got for me?

Do it.

Yeah, I mean, but it's because it's what life is all about.

Like it's like, you're going to do it the way you want to do it.

Like I said, the one other thing, I never, and me having so many kids, I'm like, man.

So many.

Are you going to say this?

12.

12 kids.

Yeah, yeah.

The oldest is 12.

The oldest 12 year old twins.

12 year old twins.

Yeah.

And every, all of their problems, they come, they're my problem.

There's a lot of problems.

Yeah.

Like it's not, and they don't care about their siblings problems.

You got to deal with this one right now.

Dad, my chameleon has an eye infection.

We have to rush to the vet now.

Like what?

It's a lizard.

All right.

Like other things, and it's life or death.

The chameleon can't die.

Like, or to, you know, you know, that's, that's what's fun and silly.

But, you know, taking us back to Zinn.

And what we're talking about, like those are my issues.

Those are my problems.

Those brought out things that I never thought I would ever have to deal with.

Because as I watch my five month old sit here and deal with life.

So it's like their problems become your, and what you think about, um, for me, and I was thinking about this this morning, you're just grateful for them.

It's like, wow, there's no problems right now.

It's quiet.

Everybody's good.

Let's embrace this moment.

And then, you know, when problems are issues, challenges, obstacles arise,

we all deal with it as a family.

And that, you know, so that's, you appreciate life for, you become a problem solver.

You become an individual who every day wakes up and overcomes whatever challenges in front of them.

Sounds like a lot of a big weight to carry.

It's, but it's life.

It's fun.

It's, have fun with it.

Whatever that challenge is, whatever issue that that child brings, have fun with it.

Find the story in it.

Find the lesson.

What's the, what's the happily ever after to this?

Cause it's happily ever after every day.

You just got to focus on it.

Don't, don't, you know, even the villains have happy ever after.

Like it's like, you just got to figure out at the end of the day, how am I going to say,

I learned this or I got this out of this, even though I went through the fire to get there.

I'm going, or I'm still going through it.

It's, you got to find the enjoyment in the journey.

Do you care about legacy?

I thought I did.

I had to define what it was.

I'm still defining what it is.

I realized that my children aren't my legacy.

My children are my children.

My children aren't necessarily mine.

They're their own.

I've been giving the stewardship and the privilege for a certain amount of time

to be able to guide them to the best of my ability for 18 to 25 years,

but they're their own people.

So I've learned that that's not my legacy.

What we can build together as a family can become a legacy.

So what's your legacy?

My passion, my gratitude, which then probably then turns into my humility,

which then turns into my humor, which then turns into my comedy, which it turns into my art form.

I mean, that's built into the compassion and stuff as well too.

So to be able, people say, man, he made the world a better place by making people smile.

And if I could do that through my humor, my music, my art, my movies, my finances,

I just want to make people smile.

So hopefully even when I'm gone, the things that I left behind make people smile.

I certainly believe that's the case.

You've made me smile over the years.

I started watching Wild and Out on MTV and then on YouTube throughout my entire life.

MTV felt like the only show in my household growing up in Plymouth

and seeing it was kind of my window into hip hop culture and comedy and all those things.

And in every respect of the word, not only have you put countless people on

that you'll never get credit for, nor do you really care about the credit clearly.

But you've been a pioneer in so many different art forms

and created this wonderful platform to put other people on.

And that's something that I look at and I really aspire to do with my life as well.

Like if I'm able to help people reach their full potential in the way you have

for so many people that people have no idea about across comedy and entertainment and music, then I think that's a life worth living and a life worth while.

It's exactly what you have.

So thank you. Thank you for doing that.

That's another title. I'm Life Worth Wild.

Sounds like a book.

Let's get that trade.

Let's keep that IP. Thank you so much.

Appreciate it, man. This has been beautiful. Thank you for the experience.

Pleasure to meet you. Thank you, Nick.

Likewise.

As you know, Zoe is a sponsor of this podcast and I'm a big investor in the company.

You guys know I'm rarely sitting still because that's just the nature of my life.

So whether I'm in a business meeting with my investments or I'm recording this podcast,

I'm always running from A to B.

But the one promise that I made to myself is to fuel my body sufficiently.

And Zoe has been really the key part of me succeeding in that mission.

For those of you that don't know, I've been a Zoe member for about a few months now,

ever since I had Zoe's scientific co-founder, Professor Tim Spector, on this podcast.

Zoe helps me to understand how to make better food choices for my long term health and it's all personalised to me.

Eating the right food is essential for me to keep me going

because some of my meetings are often later in the day

and so I need to ensure that I keep my energy levels up.

And Zoe allows me to understand which foods work for me and which foods don't.

Eating the Zoe way, I don't get that dreaded afternoon crash and I feel great.

So to get started with Zoe, go to zoe.com slash steven

and use my exclusive code C-E-O-10 for 10% off.

So many of you have been asking me for a discount code, here it is. C-E-O-10.

Go to zoe.com slash steven and use my exclusive code C-E-O-10 for 10% off.

And if you already use Zoe, send me a DM and let me know how you're getting on.

Thank you for watching.