

Transcript for Justin Wren | Fight for the Forgotten (Episode 608)

Full show notes found here:

<https://theartofcharm.com/podcast-episodes/justin-wren-fight-forgotten-episode-608/>

JUSTIN: They had a say. It wasn't us coming in and saying, "We have the answer. Get out of the way, we're going to do this for you," it was, "Hey let's come up with a solution together." We say Tamika Pamoja (ph) in Swahili which basically means, "Let's work together on this."

JORDAN: Welcome to The Art of Charm. I'm your host Jordan Harbinger. Today we're talking with my friend Justin Wren. He's an MMA athlete who fights for the forgotten. That's literally the name of his charity. He's made a family of Pygmies enslaved in the Congo. I didn't even know that those were a real thing until he told me and showed me on YouTube. He's buying them land with his fight purse winnings and drilling wells in the jungle so they can have clean water. And his own story of coming back from addiction induced retirement and finding purpose in helping others is not only inspiring but super interesting. I am really glad to have you here with us for this episode in the show.

And by the way if you're new to The Art of Charm we'd love to send you some top episodes and the AoC Toolbox. That's where we study the science of people and discuss things like reading body language and having charismatic nonverbal communication, the science of attraction, negotiation techniques, social engineering, networking and influence strategies, mentorship, persuasion tactics, and everything else that we teach here at The Art of Charm. Check that out at at theartofcharm.com/toolbox or in our iphone app at theartofcharm.com/iphone. Also at theartofcharm.com you can find the full shownotes for this and all previous episode of the show. We're glad to have you with us here today at AoC and enjoy this episode with Justin Wren.

Well thanks for coming out by the way.

JUSTIN: Hey thank you for having me.

JORDAN: Yeah.

JUSTIN: This is awesome.

JORDAN: Yeah I mean you really do fight for the forgotten. We can talk about that in a bit, but I watched the fight this morning which is -- it's weird fighting MMA in the morning. I don't know what it --

(laugh)

JORDAN: It's kind of like having a beer in the morning.

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: Where you're like, I don't know this feels too early for this somehow. It's like I'm eating oatmeal and watching you just nail this guy with pink hair in the back of the head over and over and over. The commentator said, "This is a far more aggressive Justin Wren than we've seen."

JUSTIN: Mmm.

JORDAN: So were you not as aggressive before because I feel like the line between not aggressive and aggressive in MMA has to be pretty fine.

JUSTIN: Yeah. So I had taken five years and two months off from the sport. So I started fighting professionally at 19 years old, did really well, and I was always that guy that you saw -- this last fight that you just watched. So I was always more aggressive. But then coming back after the layoff, it was a learning process because I had had five years off, the muscle memory was gone, there was ring rust, and I was just trying to win.

JORDAN: What's ring rust? That sounds -- I mean it's probably what it sounds like but explain that.

JUSTIN: Yeah, ring rust is probably where it just -- there's the loss of muscle memory and just everything is a little slower, and you're trying to work out the kinks and get back in it. You know these competitive fighters are fighting two, three times a year, sometimes four, and then they're training five, six days a week, two to three times a day. And so that muscle memory is just firing. And then when you come back after a long layoff -- even a year is long layoff in that five years off.

JORDAN: So this is --

JUSTIN: Most guys don't come back after five years off.

JORDAN: Yeah it sounds like you retired and then just unretired --

JUSTIN: Right.

JORDAN: -- versus taking a break in your training.

JUSTIN: Yeah absolutely. And so coming back and then -- those five years off I wasn't training at all. I was going back and forth to Congo, living there for a year. And I rushed back. I mean I had basically six weeks of fight camp to get ready for a professional fight again on a big stage. I tried to out-box the boxers and I'm a ground guy. I'm a wrestler and a Jiu-Jitsu mixed. And so I was striking with these guys that grew up striking and I had to beat them at their own game. And so the aggressive part -- trying to beat a guy at his own game, if I made a mistake, you're going to pay for it, especially at the heavyweight division. So anyways, I got back to my roots and it just started to flow again.

JORDAN: So you kind of slipped back from unconscious competence. Things are firing automatic because you've trained so much versus ring rust situation where you go -- all right, you're sort of thinking about a plan at some point instead of just going on,

I don't know, animal instinct that's been beaten into you literally in the dojo or the training arena.

JUSTIN: Yeah absolutely, and what was really great this last time was I was really able to focus. We have a team around us now. And so I'm able to do what I need to do in the gym. And the first two fights back I was writing a book. The second one we were doing a documentary. I was spreading myself too thin and not being able to focus in the fight game like I should. That can be very dangerous for a fighter.

JORDAN: Yeah it seems like you can only do one job when your job is to not get hit or hit somebody else more slash harder than they hit you. You should probably try to specialize in one thing. The commentators also were saying things like, "This is the fastest he's started," and, "Think about the pressure involved in that, every dollar goes towards a cause you've devoted your life to," and I kind of was hoping you weren't actually thinking about that in the moment. Because it seems like during the fight, you might get a little bit of motivation thinking, "Wow I better win because if I win, I can drill five wells," or something like that. But at the same time, you kind of wouldn't want to be thinking, "I better win because I can drill five wells," when you should be maybe not thinking about anything.

JUSTIN: Yeah absolutely and to be honest the first fight back -- having a short fight camp, and then having that pressure and that weight knowing, "This time I'm fighting for a real reason. For a cause, for a people, for -- for -- Yeah to drill wells. To knock out the water crisis." That's what I want to do. And so I had that weight on my shoulders and this last time, this third fight back, man that just felt like that weight was lifted off of me. I just need to go in there, do what I love, perform at a high level, and if I can't do that -- if I can't prove that to myself on the third time, I can still hang with these guys, and not just that I can outpace them, I can outwork them, I can put them away, I can finish, instead of going to the scorecards, the decisions, letting the judges decide. I need to put this guy away. And so it

was just great to have that feeling back. You know, hey I'm back so --

JORDAN: Yeah, it's got to be a lot of pressure to put on yourself and it seems like that would be useful during training when it's like, "Oh, I really want to nail it in for the last couple sprints because I'm tired." And it's like okay push yourself because of the, "Think of the Pygmies," or whatever --

JUSTIN: Right.

JORDAN: -- but it -- in the fight itself, it's like just -- that stuff probably needs to be packed away and you've got to rely on your training, otherwise there's just too much going on upstairs.

JUSTIN: Yeah, you're right about that. But I also like pressure. My thrive normally under pressure. The first two, they just weren't ideal circumstances for a professional fight and fighter -- the training that I was getting in. So having it all -- knowing -- I was able to go in with so much more confidence knowing that, "Hey I do have the reason and the purpose and the passion but I also have the training to back it, the skillset to back it, and I put in the time and effort and hard work." And so almost as a fighter you need to stack up the chips and stack the deck in your favor, so that way you know going in there like -- When the going gets tough and you have to dig deep, because you're pushing this guy, he's pushing you, you're each trying to break each other --

JORDAN: Yeah.

JUSTIN: So, I've got to have more things that I can pull out of my hat and or pull out of my heart, my fighter's heart, and say like, "I deserve this win. I put in the work," like not just the cause because that's not going to win you a fight. Like I put in the work too to back it up.

JORDAN: Do your emotions ever get in the way and or help during a fight? And you see in movies, stupid stuff like, "Think about the

reason for this," and it's like, well is that just Hollywood or are you really thinking about the cause at some point when you feel like, "If I get punched one more time, I'm going down," or is that just all something that gets in the way and is extraneous but that point?

JUSTIN: During the fight, I'm not actually thinking about it. But before the fight it helps me get more motivated and so even my walkout song is some of the Pygmy music from the forest and the Congo.

JORDAN: Yeah.

JUSTIN: Which nobody else probably gets and probably wonders what -- "What in the heck is that?" It sounds like this kind of yodeling and tribal music and I know the sounds and I know who they are, so that pumps me up, it gets me excited. But once I'm in there, I'm there to do a job. I've got to win. And when I get to win, I get to talk about the cause then. So before I'll do it, but during the fight, put that all on the shelf --

JORDAN: Yeah.

JUSTIN: -- and then after the fight get right back to it.

JORDAN: What is that instrument? I saw that in one of the videos that you have in the Pygmy camp. It looks like a guitar but there's like a curved branch coming out of it with little knots and -- it's almost like a weird guitar slash harp?

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: What's that thing?

JUSTIN: If I can remember back to that specific instrument -- and they're so ingenious and innovative and they can make things from nothing. The kids are carving, you know -- while we're out there with our truck, they're carving out of wood trucks with our symbols and our logo and everything on it. So they --

they can do so much stuff. This instrument was half of a bow and arrow that broke and then they used one of our spare tires, one of our tires that blew out, and then they ripped the rubber apart and got the metal like, strings that line inside the tires, so that they could make guitar strings out of it.

JORDAN: Whoa.

JUSTIN: And then I think it was a coffee can also.

JORDAN: There is resonance from the strings right?

JUSTIN: Right.

JORDAN: That's incredible.

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: Because it sounds pretty good --

JUSTIN: Sounds pretty good.

JORDAN: -- for something that is made out of an old tire and some sticks --

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- essentially.

JUSTIN: Absolutely.

JORDAN: Yeah. It was interesting to watch these guys and the whole village. And you showed these nail knives --

JUSTIN: Oh, yeah.

JORDAN: -- where I guess they're taking a metal nail and hammer it down and it looks like a pocket knife.

JUSTIN: Yeah. Absolutely it's so cool.

JORDAN: It's so impressive.

JUSTIN: Yeah it's awesome man. That's chief Leome (ph). I love that dude. Then yeah, he goes out there and there's a lot of illegal deforestation out there --

JORDAN: Mm-hmm.

JUSTIN: -- you'll see like a ladder and they'll find some nails, pull them out of the ladder after they're done logging, and then he makes some knives for the village.

JORDAN: Mm-hmm. Do they just figure this stuff out? I wondered where they'd gotten that metal in the middle of the jungle. That explains it but how do you know, "Oh, I can hammer this down and make a knife out of it."

JUSTIN: Yeah I think they just learn from what they need and what they see. And so -- originally their best arrows that they have -- now they use scrap metal to make some metal tipped arrows but they'll sit there and ask you, you know, "Which one would you use on a bird and which one would you use an antelope or a wild hog?"

JORDAN: Mm-hmm.

JUSTIN: And they have this one that's just sharpened wood and they have one with a wicked looking, I don't know, scrap metal ones that they made. And it looks sharp, it's bigger, heavy duty, and that's what we know here, so I'm like, "Oh, you use that one for the bigger one and you use the little one for the bird." They're like, "Uh-uh, because on the one that we sharpen, we put poison on that." and so --

JORDAN: Mmm.

JUSTIN: -- mash up these roots and these berries and these leaves that are all poisonous and make this like black tar looking stuff and that's what at the tip of their arrow. And so over the years, they just found out the perfect mixture from the different things --

JORDAN: That's wild.

JUSTIN: -- that are right there.

JORDAN: That's crazy. I saw when they were walking through the jungle and they have -- I guess it's like a root net that they use to hunt.

JUSTIN: Mmm. Yeah.

JORDAN: A net made out of roots.

JUSTIN: Right.

JORDAN: And they're carrying it on their head and then he's got that spear with that flayed metal tip. And I thought, "If I ran into that guy in the jungle, I would be," -- I mean if I'm already in the jungle alone there's a problem. But I would be freaking tripping out. It's the stuff of nightmares except then you see them laughing and having fun, so it kind of cures that whole thing.

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: But it -- they look really scary. I mean it looks just like you would imagine some tribal folks who don't have a lot of other Western contact.

JUSTIN: Right.

JORDAN: And we'll link -- we'll imbed some of these videos in the show notes --

JUSTIN: Oh, cool.

JORDAN: -- so people can see what's going on there.

JUSTIN: Absolutely.

JORDAN: But it is -- are you using just your iPhone or a GoPro or something in the jungle there to film everything?

JUSTIN: Yeah normally it was my iPhone and then once there was like a little short film made of what we were doing. People called for it to be a documentary and we threw it up on Kickstarter and got it funded.

JORDAN: Wow.

JUSTIN: And yeah so now we've been filming over the last three years, having a documentarian named Derek Watson. He's an Emmy award winning filmmaker and did a documentary with Forest Whitaker, and so it's just really cool to see what it's turned into from a couple of iPhone videos to then a GoPro, to now like this professional being able to come in. And really he's developed a deep relationship with the people, learning their story. Like with my book, it was my attempt to give them a voice. That was my first promise to the chief. He asked, "We don't have a voice, can you help us have one?" I said yeah. And so then when the book happened, that was my attempt. But now, the video or the documentary, that's going to be them having their own voice, telling their own story, so I'm just so stoked about that.

JORDAN: What's the dance that you do after the fight? That's related to the Pygmies. I mean I saw that and I thought, "Okay and if you don't know he's doing a Pygmy thing," -- and they call you the Big Pygmy actually --

JUSTIN: Right.

JORDAN: If you don't know that he's doing a Pygmy dance you might think, "What the hell is this guy doing?" It's like dancing in the endzone --

JUSTIN: Right.

JORDAN: -- except looks like a little person dance because of how close the foot movements are but you're the -- how big -- or how tall are you?

JUSTIN: I'm 6'3".

JORDAN: Yeah so 6'3", so you're --

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- about twice the size of probably a Pygmy I guess.

JUSTIN: Right the average man's height is only 4'7" out there.

JORDAN: Wow.

JUSTIN: Yeah so they're a bunch of little dudes with great big hearts and yeah those little footsteps -- I never would have thought of that though. Maybe it's because they're smaller guys but --

JORDAN: Maybe.

JUSTIN: -- they have kind of this little Conga line or Congo line I guess --

JORDAN: Yeah.

JUSTIN: -- but the men and the women are in their separate lines and the men are over there and that's just the dance that they do with -- around the fire.

JORDAN: And we'll embed the fight video from Bellator in the show notes. I think even during your victory speech you said, "I hope that doesn't look cocky, it's a Pygmy dance."

JUSTIN: Yeah, absolutely.

JORDAN: Because I was like, "What is he doing?"

JUSTIN: The first two I didn't have anything to dance -- first two comeback fights, I didn't have anything to dance about, you know? It was a decision, had to wait for the judge's decision. Once you finish a guy, yeah it called for a little celebration or dance.

JORDAN: Well let's go back to the beginning, why did you start fighting in the first place?

JUSTIN: Ooh, I started fighting because I grew up actually getting really heavily bullied.

JORDAN: I take it you were not 6'3" with a viking appearance --

JUSTIN: No.

JORDAN: -- during that time.

JUSTIN: And that was my former fight name was the Viking.

JORDAN: The Viking, I can see that.

JUSTIN: Yeah absolutely.

JORDAN: Yeah.

JUSTIN: So --

JORDAN: It does match better than Big Pygmy, but --

JUSTIN: You're right.

JORDAN: -- you know, you've got to roll with the current branding.

JUSTIN: Yeah. It was something that I wanted to do since I was 13 years old. It was something that actually kind of gave me hope when

I was going through a lot of the bullying. I know a lot of people get bullied and I really feel for them. I think it's made me even more compassionate person, growing up that way.

JORDAN: Sure I would imagine. Or it would make you a bully as well.

JUSTIN: Yeah absolutely. You know I think you have, you know that crossroads that you come to.

JORDAN: Well now you've got the best of both worlds because you can help the Pygmies and you can also beat people up when you want to.

JUSTIN: Right.

JORDAN: You can just sort of flip between those two things as therapy calls for.

JUSTIN: Right. Yeah, well I just remember -- I just remember sitting at the lunch table sometimes, all by myself and getting pelted in the back of the head with like chocolate milk spit wads --

JORDAN: Gross.

JUSTIN: -- and names being thrown at me and going to the high school homecoming thinking that -- or actually middle school, thinking that, you know, this date said yes to me and I get there and it was actually she was going with another guy named Justin.

JORDAN: Ugh.

JUSTIN: A guy came up there and took her away or yeah I have this one time in eighth grade where this girl named Jennifer, she asked me to come to her birthday party and I knew that she loved Transformers and that her dad worked at Dr. Pepper and their house was even decorated with Dr. Pepper stuff.

JORDAN: Oh, wow.

JUSTIN: And so I made myself head to do into a Dr. Pepper Transformer
--

JORDAN: So romantic.

JUSTIN: -- Out of cardboard boxes, right? Just a young dumb kid that wanted to impress this girl that was my crush. I got there -- duct tape -- I was from a country down. Like kids in the country, we seem to use duct tape a lot.

JORDAN: Yeah.

JUSTIN: So yeah, made that, went there, went to the back yard, and whenever I got there, the whole -- all the cool kids were there waiting and I got met with a couple of flashes of light and people laughing and it was a big set up. It wasn't a costume party at all, it was just for me seeing if I would come.

JORDAN: Oh, no.

JUSTIN: Oh, yeah.

JORDAN: That's awful.

JUSTIN: Yeah so Jennifer said, "I can't believe you thought you were cool enough to come to my party."

JORDAN: What a biotch.

JUSTIN: And then --

JORDAN: Jennifer.

JUSTIN: Yeah. And then one of the guys said, "You know what? You're worthless," I felt worthless. Another guy said, "You should just kill yourself," that was the --

JORDAN: No! That's terrible.

JUSTIN: Yeah so at 13 years old, you believe the things people say about you --

JORDAN: Right.

JUSTIN: -- and so I felt worthless. I actually went into this like spiraling depression that I was even clinically diagnosed with depressing from the doctor. And so, that was tough for me but when I found the UFC I was 13, I was walking around this like flea market, there was this like -- some used VHS tapes and I was just --

JORDAN: Yeah I was going to say, you're 13 -- how old are you now?

JUSTIN: 29.

JORDAN: Yeah so I'm 37, but even then UFC was maybe available on VHS --

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- somehow, maybe.

JUSTIN: Whenever I found it is was actually illegal on Pay-Per-view. They had banned it because it had been advertised as a blood sport and as human cock fighting --

JORDAN: Right.

JUSTIN: -- and as the modern day gladiators and no rules. You know, anything goes.

JORDAN: Right that was --

JUSTIN: Groin shots were legal.

JORDAN: I remember when I first started watching it, it was also VHS. This is probably 2000, 2001 --

JUSTIN: Right.

JORDAN: -- or maybe even 2003. And they were like, "Oh, yeah, no fish hooking because yeah you just don't come back from that as quite the same."

JUSTIN: Right, no eye gouging --
JORDAN: No eye gouging, right --

JUSTIN: No biting, that was basically the rules.

JORDAN: Yeah no biting, no eye gouging and no fish hooking because --

JUSTIN: That was the three rules.

JORDAN: -- you just can't compete against again.

JUSTIN: The three rules, groin strikes were all right.

JORDAN: Yeah it's just, I remember thinking, "There's kind of no way to get around that, because if you just can rail someone in the balls over and over and over, it's going to be a short fight even if you have a cup."

JUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah there was actually a fight, I think if they -- someone YouTubes it, just it's Joe Son and he fought in there and he took like 20 groin shots in a row. Just absolutely brutal, from I think Keith Hackney.

JORDAN: Mmm.

JUSTIN: And that was on one of those VHS tapes that I bought.

JORDAN: And you're like, "I've got to do this!"

JUSTIN: Well --

JORDAN: "It hurts less than being dressed up as a Transformer and getting laughed at."

JUSTIN: Right. Absolutely, I was like, "I want to give someone some of those." No but I -- I saw it though and what I actually fell in love with from the sport was how it as taking these Olympic sports -- the Olympic sport of wrestling, boxing, Judo, Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu as well and putting it into one sport. And so I looked at -- first thing that drew me to it was I bet these guys don't get bullied and they can defend themselves.

JORDAN: Yeah I bet they don't.

JUSTIN: Yeah I bet they don't get bullied, they can defend themselves, they're probably not the laughing stock of the party, maybe they're actually invited. Yeah and then I just fell in love with the sport. It's like a human chess match and I loved how strategic it was and I think I saw through the bad marketing that they were doing at the time because whenever you see some of those fighters, how disciplined they are -- this guy's an Olympic gold medalist or he's an Olympian. Like, he's not some knuckle head street fighter, bar room brawler, drinking a beer wanting to fight.

JORDAN: Yeah. It seems like the original marketing back then, they were like, "We need the wrestling crowd except we want the wrestling crowd that's more adult and already knows that wrestling is scripted in some ways," -- and I don't want to say fake because it's real athleticism but it's not real hit striking.

JUSTIN: It's entertainment, yeah.

JORDAN: But they need the adult version of that which is always -- when you're a kid and you find out wrestling is fake you're like, "Well where's the real version?"

JUSTIN: Right.

JORDAN: So they marketed towards that and the initial branding was, "Drunk rednecks are going to love this," right? It wasn't like the whole world is going to be watching this stuff.

JUSTIN: Yeah then after that, got into wrestling. Fifteen years old -- I mean I was just really fortunate. My two high school coaches were both Olympic gold medalists. They were instantly champs for Oklahoma State wrestling which is just like the best wrestling club ever. Yeah it was Kenny Monday, Kendall Cross -- learning from the best right from the start. And they just started -- I was young, I was -- I would say almost fragile with going through the depression, going through the bullying. I had to transition out of the school I was at. My parents sent me from the public school to a private school to get me away from that. And then yeah, these guys just invested in me. They saw a desire to want to learn and they said, "We can work with that."

JORDAN: While you were still in high school they were doing this?

JUSTIN: Yeah, absolutely.

JORDAN: How did they find you, through the wrestling team? Through the wrestling program?

JUSTIN: Yeah. Kenny Monday and Kendall Cross were the high school coaches at the school --

JORDAN: Gotcha.

JUSTIN: -- and so it's just very fortunate. There wasn't one other Olympic gold medalist at any high school coaching and yeah --

JORDAN: Yeah what are the odds?

JUSTIN: Yeah, we had two at the same school.

JORDAN: Jeez.

JUSTIN: And so it was just a powerhouse. It was a Texas wrestling school which -- Texas isn't known for wrestling but there's come to -- or ours -- Bishop Lynch High School. We were the best in the state but then we were the second best in the country, and -- Yeah because we had great coaches and a lot of us were coachable and we'd listen.

JORDAN: Go figure. Yeah.

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: And then you ended up on The Ultimate fighter, the reality show, yeah?

JUSTIN: Yeah so out of high school I went to the Olympic training center. And then from there, started battling drug addiction, because I had this elbow surgery right here.

JORDAN: Oh, yeah, that's a nice little scar you got there. How did that happen?

JUSTIN: I was wrestling an Olympic bronze medalist, world champion and I was 18 and he was like 30-something.

JORDAN: Oh, that's safe, what could go wrong?

JUSTIN: Right.

JORDAN: Yeah.

JUSTIN: ANd he was just -- he was just great. But I was two time national champion in wrestling. I went out there, wanted to compete, wanted to test myself, and just in a freak accident, snapped my arm. It was a one point move, it wasn't anything crazy, it was just the way that I fell --

JORDAN: Yeah.

JUSTIN: -- and broke it --

JORDAN: Oh, man.

JUSTIN: -- dislocated it, tore the ulnar collateral ligament and then living at the Olympic training center -- I wanted to be able to compete again and the doctors were telling me I only had a 30, 35 percent chance of competing again. So --

JORDAN: What's going through your mind at that point? Like "Crap, the only thing I like is now ruined."

JUSTIN: Yeah. This is the one thing that has given me a sense of purpose and identity. Growing up feeling worthless, bullied, to then going to wrestling, having success, finding friends on the wrestling team, and then becoming successful at it -- the best in the country, and then yeah wanting to pursue the Olympics, living at the Olympic training center. Then also they say you might not ever be able to do this again. You only have a 30 to 35 percent chance of ever competing again. Man that rocked me because it send me right back into that depression --

JORDAN: Yeah.

JUSTIN: I think wrestling helped pull me out of it once the only thing I liked and -- the only thing I was good at was maybe ripped away from me. Yeah I spiraled right back into that depression and I got hooked on narcotics really badly.

JORDAN: The pain killers --

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- from the surgery?

JUSTIN: Yeah so they wanted me to go to a mainly an ankle doctor who did knee surgeries for my elbow.

JORDAN: We're talking about your elbow, yeah.

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: Okay.

JUSTIN: Yeah and he had to petition with our insurance company and even right letters and we had to go to an appeal process so that I could get an actual elbow doctor to do my elbow surgery.

JORDAN: I was going to say, "Where's the elbow doctor in all this?"

JUSTIN: Yeah. Exactly so luckily going through that process I got the best guy in the country -- one of them at least. But at that time, I had to wait four months. So during that four months all they could give me was like Oxy --

JORDAN: Yeah pills. Oh.

JUSTIN: Yeah just pills. My ulnar collateral ligament was completely severed.

JORDAN: What is that?

JUSTIN: It's the inside so it's --

JORDAN: On the inside.

JUSTIN: Basically the surgery I had was the Tommy John surgery that a lot of the professional baseball pitchers get. And they took a tendon out of my hamstring. There's three like hamstring tendons and they took one of those out, the center one, and they replaced my ligament in my elbow with it so --

JORDAN: So are you one tendon short on that side then?

JUSTIN: I am, yeah.

JORDAN: That doesn't sound safe either though.

JUSTIN: Yeah no actually they said it's the one that -- the other two will strengthen up and basically -- the doctor was telling me -- he was a good salesman I guess. It was great because he was like, "We could give you a cadaver but you know, you're a big strong guy who wants to compete. We don't know how we're going to find that. So a tendon is stronger than a ligament so we'll put a leg tendon into your arm so it'll be like you're kicking people in the face when you punch them."

JORDAN: Oh, yeah so you got upgraded.

JUSTIN: Yeah, I got upgraded, yeah.

JORDAN: Okay.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

JORDAN: So how did then translate to you getting on the show? I think I jumped over that with the elbow injury.

JUSTIN: Yeah so I started fighting, 19 years old, professionally. Once I was able to see I'm going to be able to compete again, I wanted to get paid to do this professionally.

JORDAN: Mm-hmm.

JUSTIN: Because wrestling there wasn't really an opportunity except for MMA was growing -- really growing. And so that's where a lot of the wrestlers go. So yeah I took my first pro fight. At 19 years old I was actually coaching. I was -- wasn't even supposed to be in there and my guy got hurt and couldn't compete and so the day before they threw me in there, ended up winning at about a minute and a half.

JORDAN: That sounds horrifically ad libbed and -- or hodge podged or winging --

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: Talk about winging it. Like, "Hey your guy's injured. I don't know, the fight's tomorrow, do you want to do it?"

JUSTIN: Right. This was in podunk Oklahoma. Now they have a boxing commission there, State Athletic Commission, but they didn't at that time.

JORDAN: Yeah.

JUSTIN: It was unregulated. Second fight was kind of similar. The third fight was in Iowa at the -- Ames, Iowa, where Iowa State University is. It was their county fairgrounds.

JORDAN: Seems legit.

JUSTIN: Yep. And I was three beers in and I was in the stands just watching. I had a button down shirt and jeans on and dress shoes. And a guy gets in there and says "My opponent didn't show up. He weighed in yesterday but he didn't come today. If there's anyone that's heavyweight," --

JORDAN: Get out of here.

JUSTON: -- "wants to fight today," you know, "Raise your hand."

JORDAN: "We're looking for a big guy who's still much too drunk that they can't walk and can fit into this pair of shorts."

JUSTIN: Right, absolutely.

JORDAN: "Who qualifies?"

JUSTIN: This was back in the old school days. Not as old school where there weren't rules but this was when it was still developing and taking off. Now it's more mainstream, it's regulated and everything else. But yeah, so it started getting much better and I got on The Ultimate Fighter TV show, which was -- my ultimate goal was to be in the UFC. And so not the ultimate goal but one of the big goals in fighting, you want to get there.

JORDAN: So you beat the guy who challenged you while you were in the stands?

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: Just thinking --

JUSTIN: That was my quickest fight ever actually.

JORDAN: You got like corn dogs in your belly and you're like, "I can do it."

JUSTIN: That's right.

JORDAN: "How hard can it be?"

JUSTIN: I actually had to go backstage, borrow another fighter's shorts for the [00:26:51] --

JORDAN: Yeah.

JUSTIN: I had to get a unboiled, unfitted --

JORDAN: Mouthguard.

JUSTIN: -- mouthguard--

JORDAN: Yeah.

JUSTIN: -- from back there. One of the rules is you do have to wear a cup and so I --

JORDAN: That's probably a good idea.

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: So you took the sweaty cup from the other guy?

JUSTIN: Yeah, I -- yeah I won't ever do that again.

JORDAN: Yeah your wife loves this story, doesn't she?

JUSTIN: She --

JORDAN: Like, "Take a shower before you get back in the car."

JUSTIN: Right. Maybe it was motivation to get in and out because it was only about 16 seconds of a fight. But after that I decided, "Man I -- I think I can be good at this. I need to dedicate myself."

JORDAN: Yeah.

JUSTIN: From there I just started setting my goals and what I wanted to accomplish in the sport and as a person and -- and yeah start trying to rally around that.

JORDAN: How did you kick the Oxy habit after taking it for months and months.

JUSTIN: I didn't. It was a six year battle. So--

JORDAN: Wow.

JUSTIN: -- it was a six year addiction and it started before my fight career did. So that was one of the main reasons for my five year layoff from fighting was I got kicked off my fight team. I think I was 12 and 2 or 13 and 2 and I was fresh off The Ultimate Fighter, I was the youngest heavyweight in the UFC. Everyone else was normally in their thirties, mid-thirties and I got on there 21, 22. I had that opportunity and even on The Ultimate Fighter, I was sneaking in pills. I was battling that addiction the whole time.

Whenever I finally came through it, I was like, "Okay I need to really set a firm foundation of like sobriety. And this life has always been about me and it's always been about what I want," which can be good if it's a positive outlet but whenever -- it

was just all about me and my significance and identity and self worth came from my success as a fighter or as a wrestler and it's a rollercoaster ride of like if you win, things are good, if you lose, things are terrible and awful.

JORDAN: Right.

JUSTIN: And then -- Yeah even if you win though and you're battling an addiction -- like now you have an excuse either way to use. You know, you want to celebrate, party, have fun, and then if you lose, you just want to numb yourself and forget that it ever happened.

JORDAN: So you're fighting against the addiction, you're fighting against the ghosts of these bullies from your past. Essentially you're fighting against yourself, your own mind at this point. And then you kicked the addiction. Did you kick it cold turkey by just going to Congo? I mean I'm trying to put the timeline together in my head.

JUSTIN: Yeah so, man I had tried different stuff. Tried a little quietly, you now tried to keep it under wraps.

JORDAN: It's hard to do that with addictions that make you look sloppy or --

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- make your speech slur or make you pass out in your own spit.

JUSTIN: Absolutely. I would be there for my fights training, but then after they helped me get ready for a fight, they have a fight coming up, I would just disappear. I would go off on a 6 week, 8 week long binge.

JORDAN: Oh, man.

JUSTIN: One of those times, my best friend left me a voice mail and on the other line he said, "I can't believe you missed my wedding."

JORDAN: Oh, man.

JUSTIN: "I can't believe my best man didn't show up." And so, I was just a hurt dude, that was hurting people, I was jacked up. I basically broke every relationship that I ever had. A lot of them to where it was almost beyond repair but I've been fortunate, you know now things have really changed around.

JORDAN: Yeah.

JUSTIN: It's been a learning process for sure. I'm still a work in progress, that's for sure. But yeah it's been six years and 10 months and 15 days that the life has just completely changed around.

JORDAN: Did he ever forgive you for missing his wedding?

JUSTIN: Yeah absolutely.

JORDAN: That's great.

JUSTIN: We were actually texting two days ago.

JORDAN: Okay because you hate to see something like that. Because weddings are important, I'm having one really soon as well --

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- but I think if my best man was hooked on a substance, I would be more worried about him --

JUSTIN: Mm-hmm.

JORDAN: -- than pissed off. I mean I'd be pissed, don't get me wrong.

JUSTIN: Right.

JORDAN: But I'd be much more worried because your wedding is one day but an addiction is hopefully not for the rest of your life, right?

JUSTIN: Yeah. And he was a great guy, supportive the whole time. But yeah, at that time in my life, all I saw was the dark cloud that I left over that special day of his. And so, right after I heard that voicemail, I turned right back to the drugs. So --

JORDAN: Of course, yeah, right.

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: It had the opposite effect probably that it intended.

JUSTIN: Right, absolutely.

JORDAN: Yeah.

JUSTIN: So --

JORDAN: So you're headlining in Vegas to 23, you're fighting against people. I mean this is big time stuff, it's not just like the local --

JUSTIN: Yeah this was the main event at the Hard Rock Casino in Vegas where The Ultimate Fighter, getting 6.8 million viewers on average during that season, it was the biggest season of The Ultimate Fighter ever. And yeah, being able to fight guys that were the IFL champions were. Roy "Big Country" Nelson who now has the -- won The Ultimate Fighter, [00:31:05] a very controversial decision. Yeah he's got the knockout of the night record in the UFC right now. So I was fighting some big name guys.

JORDAN: Yeah. It's good to lose to somebody who goes on and just crushes it.

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: Sucks when you lose to somebody and they're like, "Whatever happened to that guy that beat you?" and you're like, "Yeah he never -- never made it anywhere."

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: Then you just look like you're one rung below that schmuck, right?

JUSTIN: Right.

JORDAN: You might as well lose to the really good fighter who's killing other people too.

JUSTIN: Right.

JORDAN: Yeah. Tell me about the Pygmy connection. How did you go from, "All right I'm going to fight, I'm going to be a pro athlete," to the jungles of the Congo?

JUSTIN: Yeah so that was a crazy process. But I just wanted to get started doing something. Something with my life worthwhile, and so I started locally. A lot of times I get [00:31:46] "Why do you go over there? Why don't you help here?" It's like, "Man well if you have ever been there and seen the suffering that they have, it's on another level." But I believe in helping here, there, and everywhere and so that's what I started doing at the local juvenile detention center.

Then I went through all the classes to become an official volunteer at the children's hospital, and then -- so I just tried to look for places I could get involved -- homeless shelter, you know, serving meals and going there and hanging out with guys and seeing what I could do, what I would feel kind of called to that I could dedicate my life to. And so that was fun, it was great getting involved here, and I was trying to do something where -- not to put a system on it, but hey I can do something every week. What can I do and what can I start with and I was like, "I can do something every week locally. Maybe I

can do something once a month, nationally. Like look for something to get involved in. And then once year, maybe I can go internationally, make a difference."

And so that's how it kind of all started and developed and then man, it goes back to what really helped me with my sobriety and just changed my life, but just kind of my faith, personal life -- I always have believed in visualisation -- just seeing the match in your mind before you ever go wrestle. See the fight in your mind before you ever go fight. The first two comeback fights, I wasn't doing that and I suffered because of it. This third fight that you watched, I visualised that fight happening basically exactly the way it did. But this happened effortlessly, I just said, "What do I do with my life?," and I had this vision that just lit me up. Basically I had a movie in my mind and I saw myself in the forest. I was walking down a footpath, I didn't know where I was, but I get close and I hear this drumming and then I meet these people and I hear the singing. I get my heart just crushed once I met then where it was like --

JORDAN: This is in your mind still?

JUSTIN: This is in my mind. Yeah sorry.

JORDAN: Okay. Because I'm thinking, "What the hell are you doing in the jungle?"

JUSTIN: Yeah I thought that I was tripping out or had some sort of mental break [00:31:46]

JORDAN: It does sound a little bit like LSD at work.

JUSTIN: Yeah, absolutely. And man, dude, I've experimented with plenty of psychedelics and it was similar to that but this was more real and more vivid. It was just natural or kind of effortless where yeah, I saw these people that had their ribs poking out -- knew that they were hungry, I knew that they were thirsty, they didn't have clean water, that they were poor and sick, and I knew that they were slaves. Like that they had

been enslaved by people. And I didn't know what was going on but like, the thing that struck me was that they felt forgotten. Dude I cried a puddle of tears this big and I've never done that before, but I was like hyperventilating crying when I came out of the vision. I felt nuts for three days, didn't know what to do with it --

JORDAN: Right.

JUSTIN: -- but I wrote it down.

JORDAN: Yeah you're like, "I don't know who I should tell about this because I'm just starting to get my shit together."

JUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah. It's even weird to talk about now to be honest. But because of what's happened since, it's given me a little more confidence to share it.

JORDAN: Yeah.

JUSTIN: But I mean, there's crazy stuff that happens, you know? And this was the craziest thing because I could have never dreamed this. I didn't know who the Pygmies were --

JORDAN: Right.

JUSTIN: -- or where the Congo was. And so three days later I told a friend of mine -- actually I'd just met him, his name was Caleb, and I knew he was friends with like Bear Grylls and Man Vs. Wild, he was a survivalist --

JORDAN: Oh, yeah, those crazies.

JUSTIN: -- kind of guy, right.

JORDAN: Yeah, yeah.

JUSTIN: So I'm like, "If there's a guy I could tell, maybe it's him and he won't think I'm too crazy. And if he does, oh, well. And then I won't tell anyone again."

JORDAN: Right, yeah, lesson learned.

JUSTIN: Yeah. Right, lesson learned. And so he said, "Those are the Pygmies." And I said, "What? Who?," and he goes --

JORDAN: Yeah.

JUSTIN: "They're in the Congo," and I'm like, "What where?"

JORDAN: I didn't know they were still a real group of people.

JUSTIN: Right.

JORDAN: I thought it was something from like an old movie or a fairy tale or something.

JUSTIN: Yeah, well I mean, they were supposed to be the -- in the original book, [*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*](#) --

JORDAN: Yeah.

JUSTIN: The original text of the book, instead of Oompa Loompas it was the Pygmies. Willy Wonka was kind of a dark character where -- wasn't very kind and nice and yeah, the Pygmies were his slaves. Anyways, yeah, so I didn't know who they were. I don't know, he told me that and he goes, "Man I went last year and met them. Those are the people. You say forgotten, that's them."

JORDAN: How did he meet them? He was just doing a --

JUSTIN: He went on like a scouting trip. So this guy goes all over the world and does good and humanitarian effort and missions work and so he's like, "Man you want to go meet them? Come with me." And I found out he was taking a team of three other

guys who all backed out because the rebels had taken over the airport. It's chaos in Congo. They did a failed state study and they said that Congo is the only country that should be considered a non state that is just the wild, wild west. And this was, I think backed by Oxford, it was a South African university that did the study. And there's 38 different warring rebel groups -- East Congo, that's where we're going.

JORDAN: You got like minerals -- elements like coltan, you got diamonds --

JUSTIN: Gold.

JORDAN: -- and then you've got just lumber, which is also valuable, which is hard to --

JUSTIN: They're real rare hardwoods like mahogany and ebony and just different stuff out there that is really dense, heavy hardwoods that are really rare and expensive. And so, yeah the deforestation there is crazy. I think they said in the last 20, 25 years, since they started getting all the mechanical chainsaws and everything out there, that the size of Texas has been deforested in the Congo so --

JORDAN: Oh, man.

JUSTIN: -- just brutal. The town that our team -- our well drillers are based on, that used to be the rainforest, now it takes six hours to get to the rainforest.

JORDAN: That's so tragic --

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- and sad, but that whole country is kind of one long sad --

JUSTIN: -- story, yeah.

JORDAN: -- story --

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- with no happy ending --

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- so far.

JUSTIN: Yep absolutely. Ever since even King Leopold the Second. There's a great book called [*King Leopold's Ghost*](#) and it talks about that; that was the African Holocaust where Congo at the time had about 20 million in population, at least 8 but up to 10 million people were killed during the time that the Belgians came --

JORDAN: Ugh.

JUSTIN: -- colonized. And that was because the rubber boom and ivory. And so they came there and just completely destroyed the country. And it's the most rich country on the planet, they should be the most developed probably because of all their riches.

JORDAN: Right.

JUSTIN: And they're the most underdeveloped.

JORDAN: That's kind of the whole story of --

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- much of Africa though --

JUSTIN: Right.

JORDAN: -- is, "Look at all these natural resources and ancient technology," and now they still have nothing."

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: I mean they don't even have water.

JUSTIN: Yeah, absolutely.

JORDAN: Unless you've -- except for the villages where you've been, they don't have water.

JUSTIN: Right so I think it's around one percent of people have access to clean water. There's 74 million people in Congo --

JORDAN: Think about how huge that is. When you look at Africa on a map, it just looks like this hodge podge of random places that are indistinguishable.

JUSTIN: Right.

JORDAN: And to have 74 million people there, what is that -- almost a third of the United States.

JUSTIN: Right it's huge man. And even if you look up, just Google the real size of Africa, you'll see how huge Africa is. You can fit the whole united states in there plus India plus China and Japan and like I think it's Eastern or Western Europe -- you can fit that all in the continent of Africa. It's massive. It's huge.

JORDAN: And it's just small on maps because we don't really need to look at the detail.

JUSTIN: Right.

JORDAN: Right. Wow.

JUSTIN: And so it's crazy how big it actually is. And Congo is massive and it should be so rich. But yeah it's just brutal to see people living in those circumstances. The first time I went, it just -- it rocked me. Because I wasn't prepared for it. I never planned to go to Africa for any reason.

JORDAN: Right you just showed up because somebody -- a couple guys bailed on the trip and he's like, "Hey do you want to go?"

JUSTIN: Right.

JORDAN: And it's like, "Yeah sure. How hard can it be to travel in the Congo?"

JUSTIN: Yeah. And man we went and all of a sudden we're walking down a footpath and we get close and we hear drumming and then we hear singing. I get in there and I meet these people and there's these sick people that their ribs are poking out, they're hungry, they're -- they have tuberculosis and -- meet the chief and just like something hit me to where -- the first day I met them I was crying. I had to walk away so that they didn't --

JORDAN: Yeah.

JUSTIN: -- like look at this crazy, big "

JORDAN: Freaking out. "The viking's crying."

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: "What's happening right now?"

JUSTIN: In that village, they were -- actually kind of ran and hid because they had never seen anyone with white skin before or light skin there and --

JORDAN: Well yeah who hasn't tried to shoot them or something and take something from them maybe, yeah.

JUSTIN: Yeah it was really, really remote. Caleb's goal was this -- do a scout trip to see the actual worst and then that way we can work from their up. And so kind of backwards but there's even a viral video that was on like Jimmy Kimmel and The Today

Show and all this of some of the kids from a nearby town seeing me for the first time. Them all rubbing my beard and my hair and my arms because I have crazy hairy arm hair.

JORDAN: Arm hair, yeah.

JUSTIN: Yeah. And they don't have that there. Yeah but they ran, hid behind trees, whenever I came in there. I think me being a big guy, bearded, I got the hair that might look like a lion's mane or maybe I look like a vanilla gorilla --

(laugh)

JUSTIN: But walking through the forest --

JORDAN: Vanilla gorilla is not a bad fight name --

JUSTIN: Okay.

JORDAN: -- if you ever need a fallback.

JUSTIN: Okay, there we go. It wrecked me in a way hearing that they don't have a voice, hearing that they are the first citizens of Congo and that they have no land of their own. They've never owned land legally, it's all been taken from them. And then, developing relationships were it wasn't like, show up, blow up and blow out of there or, "Here we're going to give you a bunch of hand outs," like, "Hey we're actually here to listen and learn and actually live with you for a little bit." And then the next tip was like, "I need to go live with them more to understand." Like it's one thing to read about it, it's another thing to see it, and it'll last with you when you see it.

But it can go in and out of one ear when you read it, but whenever you live it, whenever you develop the relationships, whenever you suffer from some of the sickness or some of the hunger, or you know, not having clean water, having to boil your water, having to use filters that then break that are supposed to last for thousands of gallons but only last for a few days out there. And then the second trip -- man living with

them -- it was like my third to last day, there's a one and a half year old named Andibo that actually passed away. I was holding him and buried him and it just absolutely tore me open and ripped my heart apart, and -- like it would I think anyone. But not knowing that kiddos are dying of dirty water every day. That 800 a day die just because of diarrhea from the dirty water and then another 2350 children every day are dying just because of malnutrition from the dirty water so --

JORDAN: Because they can't absorb the nutrients.

JUSTIN: They can't absorb the nutrients.

JORDAN: Jeez.

JUSTIN: And so it just -- it wrecked me man and I came back and I'm like, "You know what?" It was something that I wanted to do but in a way that was different than the model that I'd seen over there, at that time at least. Saw a lot of handouts but it was like, "Isn't there a way to give them a hand up? Isn't there a way to empower them to where, if we have all the equipment to drill wells and if I can go to my kitchen sink and my shower and my toilet has clean water, I can give my dog clean water, my grass has clean water, can't someone give them the tools, to where they can do it themselves?" Like that's what they need, is the toll in their hands, a job that they can have, be proud of, go out there and do it for themselves, to where they don't have to sit back and wait for the West to come in, or the government to come in, or an NGO, or church, or anything. Like, they can do it for themselves. It's that whole difference, you know. You either give a man a fish or teach him how to fish.

JORDAN: Right, right.

JUSTIN: You know, you can feed them for a day or feed them for a lifetime. That was something that I realized like, "Man charity can be great, but opportunity is always better." And I saw charity hurting people, crippling them. A lot of the

communities that got these handouts, they didn't even want it. Like, they would take it because it was available right there, and the ones that learned to take it and learn to just -- over and over like -- it's almost like they would develop a dependence mentality of, "Hey when these people come, we're dependent on them." Their markets are crashed from our foreign aid.

JORDAN: Right because we just completely subsidize all the stuff so they can't --

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- grow their own stuff because we're giving away --

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- free corn or rice --

JUSTIN: Absolutely.

JORDAN: -- or whatever.

JUSTIN They can't compete. How can they compete with American grown rice or from China or India that is free or the market --it's cheaper than they can produce themselves. And so it puts all these farmers out of business, depletes the crops that are out there. I mean, it's so jacked up the way that aid has been done and charity has been done and there's a better way. There's a more sustainable way. Even some of the social entrepreneurship is really big right now. And I love it, I love the heart behind it. And even charity, the heart is good, the intent is good --

JORDAN: Yeah I don't think they're like, "Let's crash these mother*****'s markets right now."

JUSTIN: Right.

JORDAN: "Let's give them a bunch of free stuff and ruin their lives."

JUSTIN: Right.

JORDAN: It's like Oprah, "You get a car, you get a car," and they say like, "We couldn't afford the taxes on the car," and it's like, "Oh, that was totally not the idea behind giving away cars."

JUSTIN: Mm-hmm.

JORDAN: Yeah.

JUSTIN: It's like, "How do we do it in a," -- even social entrepreneurship to where the whole buy one give one -- that can be really good, if it's when you give one, you're actually giving one by creating jobs in their country to where then they get to make it themselves and sell it themselves and then they get to put money in their pockets or put their kids into school or buy some food or invest in themselves. But if you just buy one here and then you go over there and you just give it away, now you're hurting the guy -- if you do that with shoes, you know you're hurting the cobbler or the shoe salesman. But yeah, so it's just how do you do it in a way that is more appropriate for the people there, their country, their context, their culture, to where it makes a long lasting impact. I heard this thing where someone was saying that the short term disasters around the world, often times because of the foreign aid, turns into a worse long term disaster.

JORDAN: Sure I can see that because of the things we just mentioned --

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- markets crashing and -- if the farmers go out of business instead of being temporarily bolstered by the aid, then as soon as the aid dries up, they're like, "Oh, crap, now we can't even grow food. We don't even have people doing this."

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: How did you end up there for a year? You went once and then you just went, "I'm going to pack a backpack and live in a hut."

JUSTIN: I went there twice, beforehand, for about a month and stayed and lived with them and that's -- the second time was when Andibo happened and I was just like, "You know what?" I came back and I was in -- my parents had some land, like two or three acres, and I was at Home Depot and I was on a website -- Don't go try to drill a well this way but it's, Howtodrillyourownwell.org --

JORDAN: Yeah. We'll link to that just so you know what not to do.

JUSTIN: Yeah. And so I was getting parts from Home Depot and trying to see if I could just go drill it myself and then go over there and teach them how to do it. First off, I didn't think I was going to be able to fundraise for a half a million dollar or a million dollar drilling rig -- and then the roads that you go on, I mean it's dangerous, there's rebel groups, their bridges collapse -- and then the villages are in the trees, I mean in the forest. And so how do you drive a truck out there?

JORDAN: You don't, right?

JUSTIN: Yeah you don't. It's just not possible. And so where the most need was, it wasn't possible to do it in the standard way. So we got to be able to have these tools that we can hike into the forest. And so luckily I came across an organization called Water4 that we partnered with. Our nonprofit initiative Fight for the Forgotten -- we told them what we wanted to do, that our vision was to empower the locals, that I already had, over those two trips, found some great guys.

We had four guys that were just outstanding. They're just sitting there waiting for the opportunity. They were all college educated with community development degrees. Some of them were working at the market selling meat, and another guy was selling SIM cards. These are guys that were just -- had great hearts, that loved the people we wanted to serve, but they

needed an opportunity to have a job to do it. And so it was just really cool how Water4 trained me up to go over there to train them up. And then, yeah it's been really awesome to see it take off where in that year that I was there -- I mean, I helped drill the first 13 water wells, but now the next year, when I came back -- people think like when you leave -- a lot of the charity mindset is, "If I leave, it's going to all fall apart."

JORDAN: Yeah.

JUSTIN: Well it will if it's dependent on you.

JORDAN: Right so you've got to teach them how to fish.

JUSTIN: Right, exactly.

JORDAN: Right.

JUSTIN: And so the next year, I did have some fears and insecurities or just, "Are we sure that they're going to be able to do it?" Not really because they were still rock solid, but still you want to be part of it and you want to be a big part of it. And so I went from almost a leader to I guess I could say cheerleader, you know? Like I went from showing them how to do it to then being in the background and cheering them on, saying, "You can do this." And yeah, they were able to crank out 20 water wells the next year. This last year they did 29. And so we're up to 62, which has just been incredible. Three thousand acres of land for the Mbuti Pygmies. They have land of their own.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

JORDAN: Are you buying the land with them? For them?

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: From the state?

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: Or from these other tribes or something?

JUSTIN: Right, absolutely, from both. From either like land that doesn't have titles on it, that we could relocate them to, or from the locals there -- that benefits them for selling the land. And so it actually helps both sides of the community to where we buy land back that is legally in the name of the Pygmies so that they have land for the first time. They get to go live on it, they get to have clean water -- both sides, and then we get to come in with a farming initiative to where they're able to learn to grow their own food for the Pygmies for the first time.

And now in Babofi, they're able to go to the market. And they weren't able to make it there the first couple of times but they have their own banana trees and their own corn fields. And they had surplus, they couldn't eat it all and didn't have a place to store it really, so they'd go to the market, and on the roadside, people were all buying it from them on their way there. So it's really cool to see what they've been able to do from that, make money, and invest in themselves. You know, be able to buy clothes for their kids and be able to send them to school. It's the first time the Pygmies in that area, or maybe ever in Congo, have been in school, paying their own school fees --

JORDAN: Wow.

JUSTIN: -- and everything else. So it's just been kind of transformative what water can do. Water changes everything.

JORDAN: So you're drilling these wells. How deep is the water? How deep do you have to drill?

JUSTIN: It's different but in the rainforest, it's not as deep as some other parts of the world, but 60 to 90 feet deep is our sweet spot.

JORDAN: Okay that's much more shallow -- because it looks like in some of the videos, it's a glorified coffee can picking up this light

colored clay out of a whole that's, I don't know, maybe a little bit thinner than a telephone pole.

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: And they're just going in and up, and in and up, and in and up and it must just take --

JUSTIN: Get down 10 to 12 inches at a time.

JORDAN: Yeah how long does it take? Weeks? Days?

JUSTIN: Some of the countries that Water4 is in, they can do 3, 5, 7 days and drill a new well. Us in the Congo, because of the circumstances --

JORDAN: Yeah.

JUSTIN: -- and it being in the rainforest and getting out there, and going really deep and hiking everything in -- sometimes where just to get from the truck to the forest, it can be an hour hike, two hour hike, three hour hike, to unload our equipment. So to take it in and come back and pick it back up, and -- can be a six hour round trip to the truck.

JORDAN: Oh, man.

JUSTIN: So it takes 10 to 16 days in the Congo to drill.

JORDAN: Yeah, it's obviously well worth it. So you're drilling these water wells in each village and how many people live in a village and how close are these villages to one another?

JUSTIN: It all really varies but the average Mbuti Pygmy village is anywhere from 85 to 150 people but all of ours are more around 300 because there's just more opportunity there.

JORDAN: More opportunity to help more people with a single well.

JUSTIN: Right.

JORDAN: Right.

JUSTIN: And they have land ownership for the first time and so some of the chiefs are saying you know, "My grandchildren are going to be able to say this was my grandfather's land," --

JORDAN: Mm-hmm.

JUSTIN: -- to their children and grandchildren. And so the Pygmies have been semi-nomadic. You know they are hunter gatherers so they travel around, but whenever they had the opportunity to get land for the first time, they just settled. It's been great to see.

JORDAN: But water is not the only problem. I mean they're enslaved by another tribe?

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: Or other tribes in general?

JUSTIN: Yeah, so not just one tribe but we could just say the Makapala, which means the non-Pygmies, in the Pygmy language.

JORDAN: Oh, I thought, "These bastards!"

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: This tribe is all enslaved but that just means --

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- like outsider.

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: Okay, gotcha.

JUSTIN: Basically because we don't want to villainize one tribe -- there's over 200 tribes in the Congo and there's several that are doing it but then some of those tribes are outside of the Congo, where the Pygmies don't even live. And so if we say these are the people doing it, you know the people in Uganda or Kenya, or wherever --

JORDAN: Some guy in New York is like, --

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- "Bro, I've never had a slave, I swear."

JUSTIN: Yeah. Never even met a Pygmy --

JORDAN: Right.

JUSTIN: -- they're not even in our country.

JORDAN: Exactly.

JUSTIN: So, we just go with what the Pygmies say which is non-Pygmies. And that was a process and we've been able to help 10 villages in that way. So we've drilled 62 wells but only 10 of them we've been able to see like a peaceful, pretty awesome transition. It's even being sponsored now by the local governor of that state. It's like man we need to have the Pygmies to have their own land for the first time. So we're coming in on the local, state, and national level and sponsoring this, and so we have all the legal documents, where we come in and yeah, buy back the land for the Pygmies, but it's in their name, they get to pass it down from generation to generation. And so we've seen about -- over 1500 people transition out of a life of slavery and into a life of freedom. But then they are able to go back and still work for them but now it's for pay instead of just for scraps.

JORDAN: Speaking of pay, you're throwing your fight purse -- if they still call it that, to what? Land and wells?

JUSTIN: Land, water, and food initiatives in the Congo so --

JORDAN: So when you fought, talk about finding purpose --

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: That's a big task.

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: So instead of spending on Oxy, you're spending it on a well. More rewarding.

JUSTIN: Yeah, absolutely. Much better outlet. And basically a fighter gets a show amount and a win amount. And so the show amount, we live off of, and the win amount we give. So it's about 50 50. And I just love that and the sponsors that I have -- we've transitioned everything to where it's like, "Hey you want to sponsor me? Let's sponsor wells."

JORDAN: Mmm. Which is better for them, right? Because they can maybe write some of that off --

JUSTIN: Yeah, absolutely

JORDAN: -- and then maybe give a little bit more instead of paying for some shorts.

JUSTIN: Yeah and so, I'm learning on the business side of things. And that's what we do in the Congo, is start up social enterprise, where you know, they get to have their own business and they're their own boss and to have employees, and it can run you know, by itself. It doesn't need us. If something happens to me in the ring, right? They're going to be able to keep doing this work.

JORDAN: I was amazed when I heard there were 27 million slaves in the world.

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: That was shocking.

JUSTIN: Yeah

JORDAN: Because I thought -- Well first of all when you said in the video that I watched that all these people are enslaved I thought, "Wow that must be like the only slavery left anywhere."

JUSTIN: Right.

JORDAN: "In the middle of the jungle." but then you said, "There's 27 million slaves," and I thought, "Where the hell are these people?"

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: What's going on? How is that possible?

JUSTIN: Yeah so all around the world -- that stat takes from, you know, even sex trafficking -- but India, and China, and all over the place where they're, you know, working in the mines, and the quarries --

JORDAN: Quarries, yeah.

JUSTIN: Yeah but I've seen that with my own eyes in Congo in the gold mines, the diamond mines, the coltan --

JORDAN: Yeah.

JUSTIN: -- which is all our smart phones and everything else. But yeah, isn't that nuts? There's more slaves today than ever in human history on earth.

JORDAN: Which is shocking --

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- because you think, ""Gee, when there was slaves in Europe, or slaves in the United States," -- Imagine how many slaves there were in America when we had slavery.

JUSTIN: Right.

JORDAN: It's a huge country. Now there are actually more even though it's been abolished anywhere with cell phones, right pretty much, anywhere with electricity. You're thinking, "Oh, they don't have slaves there."

JUSTIN: Right.

JORDAN: But it's not true. Africa's loaded and Asia.

JUSTIN: Africa's loaded, Asia's loaded, India's loaded, and even the countries that condemn it, it's still going on silently and they just make sure that they don't highlight that it's going on in their country, so --

JORDAN: Does that count just really crappy business arrangements like I know there's a lot Filipino guest workers in Saudi Arabia that are basically slaves only they're allowed some pittance.

JUSTIN: I think it does include indentured servitude --

JORDAN: Economic slavery or whatever. Yeah indentured servitude.

JUSTIN: Yeah but it's whenever you're not getting paid. It's whenever you have no control, no power, all the power is taken out of your hands and your only way to survive is to be a slave for this person.

JORDAN: How does the clean water intersect with the slavery issue?

JUSTIN: Yeah so that's been really great. We didn't even really see it coming but whenever we sit with the community, listen to their needs, brainstorm together, include them in on that process to where they really feel a part of the initiative, of the change in their own community, like they had a say -- It wasn't us coming in and saying, "We have the answer. Get out of the way we're going to do this for you," it was, "Hey let's come up with a solution together."

We say Tamika Pamoja (ph) in Swahili which basically means, "Let's work together on this." And so both sides, the Makapala and the Pygmies, the non-Pygmies and the Pygmies, the slave masters and the slaves, were both suffering so much from not having clean water. I mean I've been to three funerals of the little guy's that I actually seen and held and everything else. Little Andibo Babo and Siku (ph). Yeah I've been to about five or seven funerals total which were of the slave master kids. The people with the power, that actually were making money. But the thing is, is they only make about \$1.25 per day. And so there's these people that do have all the power, because they're the slave master, but they're suffering immensely. They're incredibly impoverished.

So how do we come alongside them -- actually sitting down with one of the slave masters who was also the chief in this one village that worked with us. He said, "Maybe for my grandfather, this arrangement was very beneficial to him. To my father too. But it started to take a real shift and turn of events to where now it's become, you know, how do I feed my own family on \$1.25 a day? And then how do I take care of these other people?"

JORDAN: Right so, it seems like they had slaves so that they could essentially get by on the pittance that they had but if you solve the water issue, it sort of demilitarizes the arrangement --

JUSTIN: Absolutely.

JORDAN: -- where it's like, "Look, you know, you can support yourself, you'll have clean water, you'll survive. The condition is, you stop picking on these folks."

JUSTIN: Yeah absolutely and so it's all agreed upon to where they know how much they're suffering without clean water whenever they're wives, or their daughters who they can't send to school. Even if they had the money to pay, they can't send their little girl to school because she needs to go collect water.

JORDAN: Oh, that's horrible.

JUSTIN: And so walking 3.75 miles, is the average walk for a woman in Africa to go collect water. Most times it's dirty. And so -- almost all times it's dirty. So you're walking round trip 3.75 miles --

JORDAN: With a can of water.

JUSTIN: -- minimum of one time a day, but normally two to three times a day. And this is a 20 liter Jerry can or two 20 liter Jerry cans, which whenever that 5 gallons is filled, is 44 pounds. So these women and children --

JORDAN: Jeez.

JUSTIN: -- are walking --

JORDAN: Who are 4'5" or whatever

JUSTIN: Yeah absolutely. -- are walking this long walk. And even the Makapala, who are average sized people, they're walking this walk with them. And so being able to come in there and say, "Hey we can end this walk." There's over a billion work days every year that are lost because of the water walks that women have to do. And so, the time that they spend doing that -- when you come into a community and you're able to solve that problem, they are freed up in so many ways, to focus their time and energy on things that are important. And so because they

recognize that, that their suffering is going to end, in so many ways, and they're going to be freed up to focus on what's important, instead of just going and making sure you can survive that day buy drinking this dirty water and hope that it doesn't give you Typhoid or E. Coli or Cholera, or some kind of intestinal parasite that can slowly kill you, you know, it's a game changer.

JORDAN: So what's the real estate market like in the jungle in the Congo?

JUSTIN: Yeah so it's varying but if we wanted to buy in our name -- this is another reason we wanted to do it in the best way for the people, but then also the most logical way on the government kind of level. It was going to be hundreds of thousands or maybe even millions for us as a nonprofit to go buy land and hold those papers. We were working with a local university, and we wanted them to almost be the caretakers but that was still going to be really expensive. But whenever we bought it in the name of a people, in the name of a tribe, that is the most respected way to do it in Congo. So the thing that stands up in court the most. It's the most powerful thing to do because they get to pass it down from generation to generation that way. So man that brought down our acre cost to hundreds of dollars per acre so --

JORDAN: Really?

JUSTIN: Yeah, a couple hundred dollars.

JORDAN: You can buy whole farms for less than the price of a freaking jacket.

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: For a laptop computer.

JUSTIN: Yeah, absolutely.

JORDAN: That's unreal.

JUSTIN: But -- but if you do it for the people. It's not for you to come in there and do it for yourself.

JORDAN: Right.

JUSTIN: Yeah, you know --

JORDAN: Not going to put a McDonald's there.

JUSTIN: Right, exactly.

JORDAN: Yeah.

JUSTIN: With the long standing relationships with the people, if they trust you -- because it takes a while to build up the trust with the locals in the community. For them to see that, you know, that it's truly for their best interest is -- what our heart is, and that we're not coming in there -- you know even having wells drilling equipment -- you saw the equipment --

JORDAN: Yeah.

JUSTIN: It looks like you could be going for gold or diamond or coltan.

JORDAN: Yeah.

JUSTIN: And so to prove to them that you know, people watching. Are they really looking for minerals or are they really helping us with water? It's like once they see that they're really getting the water, trust starts to build.

JORDAN: I would imagine word starts to travel though. Like, "No they dug a well for this guy, they dug a well over there, they dug a well over there."

JUSTIN: Yeah and it's helped spread and our biggest advocates are chief Leome (ph) and chief Alondo (ph), who were the first two

Pygmy chiefs to buy in. And now we get to take them to the other villages, or other villages come to them and ask whenever we're not around, you know, "Hey did this really work?" And they're like, "Hey we were a part of the process from the beginning to the end of all the development. The community development, we were included in on that process."

JORDAN: Do they have their own language or you speak Swahili?

JUSTIN: So they have their own language, it's the local language and then they speak Swahili but the national language is French. Well they have five national languages and so there's a funny quote that is, "Swahili was born in Tanzania, it got sick in Kenya, it died in Uganda, and it was buried in the Congo," and so they can't even communicate with each other from Congo to Tanzania really. It's just everything's lost in translation.

JORDAN: What is the Pygmy language in the beginning where you say hi to your peeps over there?

JUSTIN: Yeah so that's just a really broken Swahili.

JORDAN: Okay.

JUSTIN: But yeah, I'm basically saying --

(Swahili audio)

JUSTIN: Basically what I'm saying is, "Hey my name is," -- everyone there calls me effayosa (ph), my family in the tribe, which means the man who loves us. But then "Mbutimong bo," (ph) means the big Pygmy.

JORDAN: Gotcha.

JUSTIN: And so that's what everyone else calls me. And then I say, "Hey I'm in here because I love you," whenever I'm -- you know after the fight I say that. And the, "Amagu, amagu," (ph) basically

means we are one, we are not different. I love that saying. You know, we are one, we are not different. Amagu, amagu (ph). Yeah, there's just so much beautiful stuff. Even their Swahili proverbs, you know, they say, "If you want to go fast, go alone, but if you want to go far, go together." Or they say, "If you think you're too small to make a difference, try to sleep in a closed room with a mosquito." And there's just so many things that are encouraging about their culture.

I've learned so much, I've grown so much, I've become a better person. I've discovered a life that I can live that's bigger than me. I get to add value to my life but to the lives of others and whenever you do good for them, it actually comes back and makes you feel really good, and it's helped me stay straight -- you know in my sobriety. And so yeah it's kind of weird because you're doing it all hopefully with the heart and intention to truly help them, but at the same time you're helping yourself. So it's a beautiful circle whenever you do it in a way that's slow and steady and strategic -- to not get too big for your britches, to not walk all over them and say, "Okay we got this thing now. I know how to do it. Here's the blueprint, here's the cookie cutter solution." and then think that that's going to work from this village to that village. You know you've got to go in there and spend the time, take the time to listen to them and learn.

JORDAN: When you showed up in the jungle and you're like, "I'm going to stay here for a year," how did you arrange that? I can't really imagine you went, "Hey I'm going to build one of these little huts over here and I'll see you guys every single day for the next 365 days."

JUSTIN: It was similar to that. We found the team and we were like, "Hey if we come in with this well drilling equipment," -- They already went to work on the land, it looked like we were going to be able to secure that deal if we would actually be able to bring in some development, some water and some food initiatives. Maybe even housing down the line. It came about just saying, "Hey, I'll go all in if this is working." It started to

develop in a way that -- that we went -- we went with like \$15,000 of well drilling equipment there, and \$50,000 of funds to hopefully drill 12 water wells. We made the 13 there. But yeah, there were a lot of challenges along the way, a lot of sickness.

JORDAN: Yeah, did you get sick?

JUSTIN: Yeah I did, with malaria 3 times.

JORDAN: Yikes.

JUSTIN: I wish it was only once or none. Yeah the first time I had malaria, it was brutal because I got so sick. I was vomiting red and green eventually, which was blood and bile.

JORDAN: Oh, good, yeah.

JUSTIN: I --

JORDAN: I've never seen those things so --

JUSTIN: Right.

JORDAN: Knock on wood.

JUSTIN: Doesn't smell good either. Sorry I forget those listening.

JORDAN: It's gross. It's so gross.

JUSTIN: Yeah, it's disgusting. But yeah, this little mosquito almost knocked me out for good. I lost 33 pounds in five days.

JORDAN: Jeez.

JUSTIN: I lost my peripheral vision completely, it was like tunnel vision. The rest was completely blurry. It sounded like I had a bee's hive in my ears constantly. My fever would spike up to over 103 and then it would plummet down 96 something.

JORDAN: Ugh.

JUSTIN: And yeah, 65 to 70 percent of my bloodstream were parasites from the malaria.

JORDAN: Oh, that's disgusting.

JUSTIN: Yeah and so it was basically -- I was almost in a coma whenever I landed in Uganda.

JORDAN: So they got you out of there somehow.

JUSTIN: Yeah they got me out of there. Even when I left, three or four different doctors were arguing. One doctor was saying, "He does have malaria," but all the other ones were saying, "But it's not showing up on the test." Turns out the quick test they were using were expired and some different stuff.

JORDAN: Oh, man.

JUSTIN: So yeah I -- I went off to you Uganda, found out there, and there was just a great doctor, actually named Doctor Happy.
(laugh)

JORDAN: Okay.

JUSTIN: Yeah, that took care of me.

JORDAN: Ironically.

JUSTIN: Yeah ironically. And it did make me happy that she was a great doctor and was able to take care of me. They see malaria there so much that they're specialists in treating it. So as long as you aren't in that coma, they're able to normally bring it back.

JORDAN: So what do they do, they just give you a bunch of pills and an IV?

JUSTIN: An IV, constantly around the clock, and they had doctors working on me for -- I think it was at least three days giving me the IVs, but I think it was five days. And it took me two or three weeks to be able to start eating kind of whole food again because I was basically drinking juice the whole time and eating smushed up bananas because my esophagus was raw --

JORDAN: Ugh.

JUSTIN: -- from that bile and everything else. So it was brutal man, I mean I -- I've got a little scar here, I don't know if you can see that right there.

JORDAN: Oh, yeah that little brown --

JUSTIN: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- patch on your skin.

JUSTIN: Yeah that was from a scorpion out there, stung me --

JORDAN: Gross.

JUSTIN: -- it was the middle of the night, got up, got out of the hut because yeah we want to live exactly the way that they live --

JORDAN: Right.

JUSTIN: -- so that we have this heart connection of like, "Hey, we're on the same level. We're looking eye to eye with you, we understand, or at least we're trying. We're truly trying to understand. And yeah, this -- I got up in the middle of the night and it was just in the moonlight, and kicked up some leaves while I was taking a leak, and this scorpion got me. But the chief got up and rallied the troops, they went and found the leafs and I think roots, not the poison but the kind they mashed up --

JORDAN: Right.

JUSTIN: -- and were able to put on there and it was starting to suck out or dry out the venom or the poison out of me. And man I had broke out in a fever, my teeth were chattering.

JORDAN: Oh, man.

JUSTIN: I was not in a good place, my joints were aching. But they were able to put that on there and it actually started to pull that back out of me.

JORDAN: It seems like it would be so uncomfortable to be in a situation like that for a year. Scorpions, fevers -- how long does the malaria fever last?

JUSTIN: Man it's different, the last two times -- I think because I was lucky to survive the first one, the last two times have been -- I wouldn't say mild, but a whole lot better than that first one. So the first one was brutal. I actually forgot to say I didn't urinate for a full five days, and I had something called black water fever. And so, it's basically where your kidneys are failing, your liver is failing --

JORDAN: Oh, man.

JUSTIN: -- and it looks like darker than black coffee --

JORDAN: Ugh.

JUSTIN: -- whenever you finally do get to urinate and get that release.

JORDAN: Oh, man.

JUSTIN: And so it was brutal but the last two times weren't so bad. I've had intestinal bacterias and parasites and all that stuff but you know, in that moment, even the first time I got it, I was almost, in a weird way, thankful for the opportunity to understand what they go through all the time. And so it just allowed me to

have another set of compassion or empathy or understanding and be like, "Man, like this sucks."

JORDAN: Yeah. No kidding.

JUSTIN: And there's got to be a solution. There's got to be an answer.

JORDAN: So now when you fight in Vegas and the shower takes too long to warm up, you're like, "Hey no big deal."

JUSTIN: Yeah it's all right if the power is off or whatever, it's pretty good.

JORDAN: So if people want to get involved with the charity and check that stuff out, check out your YouTube videos, we'll link to that in the show notes but what if they want to dig a well in Congo?

JUSTIN: Yeah I mean, we are absolutely open to that and that's at fightfortheforgotten.org. There's all the information right there. The transformation of bringing not just the water well, but employ the people there, and then also do the wash program, that's around \$4200, but to make it a bite size amount, man \$25 a month, that changes the lives of 15 people throughout the course of a year, where they'll have clean water for the rest of their lives. Because we get to --

JORDAN: That's crazy.

JUSTIN: Yeah, we get to empower the locals. Not just to drill it but also be able to repair it if anything happens.

JORDAN: Well thanks for doing what you're doing and thanks for coming on the show today, man.

JUSTIN: Hey thank you for having me man. Love the podcast.

JORDAN: That was a super interesting show. The stories are incredible. The fact that he just went to the jungle for a year and decided I'm going to live in a little hut and make these people my

family is really funny and if you want to look up Justin's videos on YouTube, they're worth it. The kids and the Pygmy people are just really cute and endearing and he's so much bigger than them. He's literally twice the size of a lot of these people. Great big thank you to Justin for coming by today and doing that.

[He's got a book](#); we'll link that in the show notes and most importantly, we'll link to a lot of these videos that we talked about during the show in the show notes as well, including the fight that he had, his comeback -- one of his comeback fights here with an awesome speech at the end. And it's a short one, he made short work of his opponent in that one. If you enjoyed this one, don't forget to thank Justin on Twitter. We'll have that linked in the show notes as well. I'd love it if you'd tweet at me your number one takeaway from Justin Wren. I'm @theartofcharm on Twitter. And remember if you want those show notes, you can tap on our album art in most mobile podcast players to see the show notes for this episode, and we'll link to the show notes right on your phone.

If you're interested in our live programs, our AoC bootcamps, that's at theartofcharm.com/bootcamp. Join thousands of other guys who've been through the program, who will become your network for life. All around the world, we've had people backpack through Europe, working at Art of Charm, meeting up when traveling, couch surfing, even gotten jobs and formed lifelong friendships. And frankly the growth that people experience during and mostly after the bootcamp is astounding and amazing and it's just one of the best parts of running the show and the company here. That's theartofcharm.com/bootcamp.

And also if you want to dip your toes in the water, join the AoC challenge at theartofcharm.com/challenge or you can text the word 'charmed' C-H-A-R-M-E-D to 33444. The challenge is about improving your networking and connection skills and inspiring those around you to develop a personal and professional relationship with you. And of course we'll send

you the Fundamentals Toolbox that I mentioned earlier on the show, which includes great practical stuff, ready to apply, right out of the box on reading body language, having great nonverbal communication, the science of attraction, negotiation techniques, networking and influence strategies, persuasion and mentorship and everything else that we teach here at The Art of Charm. It'll make you a better networker, a better connector, and of course, a better thinker.

That's theartofcharm.com/challenge or text 'charmed' C-H-A-R-M-E-D to 33444 here in the States. For full show notes for this and all previous episodes, head on over to theartofcharm.com/podcast. This episode of AoC was produced by Jason DeFillippo. Jason Sanderson is our audio engineer and editor, and the show notes on the website are by Robert Fogarty. Theme music by Little People, transcription by TranscriptionOutsourcing.net. I'm your host Jordan Harbinger. Go ahead, tell your friends, because the greatest compliment you can give us is a referral to someone else, either in person, or shared on the web. Word of mouth really is everything. So, share the show with friends and enemies, stay charming and as they say in Swahili --

(Swahili audio)

In other words, leave everything and everyone better than you found them.

