

00;00;00;00 - 00;00;03;07

Unknown

My name is Wyatt Lazer Reed.

00;00;03;07 - 00;00;10;15

Unknown

I first, turned myself in to the, Sheridan camp.

00;00;10;17 - 00;00;37;29

Unknown

And then I stayed there for about, around almost two years. And then from there, I went over to, I went to, SeaTac, Seattle for a while, then Oklahoma City and then finally to Inglewood, Colorado, where I stayed the rest of my sentence.

00;00;37;29 - 00;00;39;09

Unknown

I'm home back in Portland.

00;00;39;09 - 00;00;45;07

Unknown

Congratulations on coming home. That's a lot of places to be transferred. Four places. Yeah.

00;00;45;07 - 00;00;49;18

Unknown

How long have you been, an artist, or do you see yourself as an artist?

00;00;49;18 - 00;00;52;09

Unknown

Yeah, I, I see myself as an artist.

00;00;52;09 - 00;00;59;26

Unknown

I guess I've been doing art since I was a kid. But, I really started taking it serious when I was in

00;00;59;26 - 00;01;07;10

Unknown

my junior year of high school and, and kind of, slowly started taking it more serious.

00;01;07;10 - 00;01;32;15

Unknown

By the time I was in my senior year, I got, accepted into, Pursuit Northwest College of Art. And, I think when I went to art school for a little while, I started kind of, taking a more serious and doing kind of gallery work and stuff like that. And then dropped out of art school to kind of pursue.

00;01;32;15 - 00;01;42;00

Unknown

I was doing music two and recorded a couple, hip hop albums and stuff like that. And, yeah, ever, ever since I've been taking a pretty serious,

00;01;42;00 - 00;01;54;27

Unknown

it sounds like creativity is really important to you. Yeah. I mean, that's always been my kind of my my, you know, my identity, you know, as an artist.

00;01;54;27 - 00;02;06;28

Unknown

But, you know, I lived in Georgia for a while, 12 to 18. And, I kind of, started kind of getting into,

00;02;06;28 - 00;02;15;07

Unknown

kind of world of crime and, that's always kind of intersected into, my life of art,

00;02;15;07 - 00;02;18;16

Unknown

And so now it's like I'm finally kind of seriously

00;02;18;20 - 00;02;26;16

Unknown

Just focusing on art is for a long time I've been, you know, doing crime stuff

00;02;26;17 - 00;02;28;06

Unknown

I it's pretty much all art.

00;02;28;06 - 00;02;35;05

Unknown

in your essay, you said you decided to get clean and devote yourself to creating art, to take you back to a meaningful identity.

00;02;35;07 - 00;02;54;12

Unknown

That word meaningful was powerful to me. Because I think identity is always meaningful. But there's a distinction here, right, about how being clean and in devotion to art is equated to like a meaningful existence. Can you tell us a little bit more about that distinction for you?

00;02;54;12 - 00;02;55;27

Unknown

I guess all my,

00;02;55;27 - 00;03;00;23

Unknown

world in drugs or in the world of,

00;03;00;23 - 00;03;02;23

Unknown

00;03;02;23 - 00;03;04;20

Unknown

I guess you could say brokenness.

00;03;04;20 - 00;03;06;28

Unknown

Has kind of now added to my art,

00;03;06;28 - 00;03;09;29

Unknown

in a lot of ways. So taking from that,

00;03;09;29 - 00;03;18;27

Unknown

I've found more meaning. And maybe when I was in art school, the technical approach of art in itself had meaning to me,

00;03;18;27 - 00;03;19;10

Unknown

but

00;03;19;10 - 00;03;24;06

Unknown

I wasn't really painting from a source, of the.

00;03;24;06 - 00;03;24;24

Unknown

why.

00;03;24;24 - 00;03;28;13

Unknown

Maybe now some need to rectify

00;03;28;13 - 00;03;31;04

Unknown

from the world of the broken or,

00;03;31;04 - 00;03;48;24

Unknown

shattered self that I kind of draw inspiration to be able to articulate that, whether it's music or, painting or, you know, but, you know, it's like I'm trying to put that into my canvas work.

00;03;48;27 - 00;04;04;12

Unknown

Where it's not just an esthetic, it's more a deeper thing that I'm trying to convey, this distorted, you know, shattered identity, scattered self, you know, roads from the broken. How to convey that message out.

00;04;04;12 - 00;04;08;25

Unknown

that's way more than anything what I've gotten into writing because

00;04;08;25 - 00;04;18;23

Unknown

through my art, you know, there's a visual sense of being able to, allow people to see what they see into the visual side of art.

00;04;18;23 - 00;04;51;17

Unknown

But when I write, I kind of can, specify on the why and, you know, zero in on, specify kind of message. So I think now that's kind of why writing has also become important to, my creative outlets, because I want to explain the why of the why people become broken or why people decide to delve deep into,

00;04;51;17 - 00;04;52;11

Unknown

I know,

00;04;52;11 - 00;04;52;21

Unknown

You know,

00;04;52;21 - 00;05;15;25

Unknown

what is the reason for escape? And, so for me, you know, and why I how I describe it or salvation in escape. When, when do you finally hit, a bottom that makes you want to rectify or explain to others or find a commonality to where someone else can also say,

00;05;15;25 - 00;05;25;11

Unknown

there's a meaning to me or that, that gives me meaning or that gives me purpose or that gives me a reason to rectify my own brokenness.

00;05;25;11 - 00;05;32;07

Unknown

So now that's why writing has become kind of meaningful to me now.

00;05;32;07 - 00;05;37;11

Unknown

I hear the devotion that's like dripping in your words here and it's really. Yeah. It's inspiring.

00;05;37;11 - 00;05;41;05

Unknown

In your essay, you talked about teaching,

00;05;41;05 - 00;05;49;03

Unknown

art class and how it was a struggle to get into that art class, and then how ultimately you started teaching that art class.

00;05;49;03 - 00;05;52;02

Unknown

do you want to talk a little bit about that? And

00;05;52;02 - 00;06;07;21

Unknown

Has this move to understanding the correlation between written expression of art and, visual expression of art come from that place, or is it somewhere else that that came from?

00;06;07;21 - 00;06;09;26

Unknown

I guess first,

00;06;09;26 - 00;06;13;12

Unknown

I also taught my creative writing class as well.

00;06;13;12 - 00;06;19;26

Unknown

I think I, I found the difference from the writing class to the art class.

00;06;19;26 - 00;06;23;23

Unknown

Was that the art class people, most people were

00;06;23;23 - 00;06;32;18

Unknown

finding a need to create because they were trying to become technical enough or,

00;06;32;18 - 00;06;43;28

Unknown

have a reason to create because they wanted to be seen or some aspiration to become famous as an artist or something.

00;06;43;28 - 00;06;59;18

Unknown

It was just a need to create, find an outlet of expression. But the writing class, I found that because I was in a camp in the beginning, of this around, I'd say, you know, more than 50% of the people there were white collar criminals.

00;06;59;18 - 00;07;01;26

Unknown

And I think there was

00;07;01;26 - 00;07;09;21

Unknown

the theme that most people were trying to create, like this Wolf of Wall Street biopic.

00;07;09;21 - 00;07;12;24

Unknown

and so

00;07;12;24 - 00;07;14;09

Unknown

kind of in that,

00;07;14;09 - 00;07;16;07

Unknown

category or that group,

00;07;16;07 - 00;07;22;03

Unknown

I saw a need for creative expression to find identity, like the ego identity.

00;07;22;03 - 00;07;24;08

Unknown

And the visual thing,

00;07;24;08 - 00;07;31;13

Unknown

was finding an escape of trauma like a more of an art therapy. And

00;07;31;13 - 00;07;41;07

Unknown

because I was, like, at a camp, in that, level of custody of it was it's not.

00;07;41;09 - 00;07;44;27

Unknown

fenced so there was a lot of stuff going on.

00;07;44;27 - 00;07;47;06

Unknown

I've had two identities for a long time.

00;07;47;06 - 00;07;58;29

Unknown

and so I myself was kind of finding my own path and that's what I guess I took from the writing class to the art class, that because I myself

00;07;58;29 - 00;08;13;19

Unknown

was kind of trying to find my identity in my path, in more of my purpose through it that what writing became because of teaching people who wanted to be able to tell some ego identity biopic.

00;08;13;21 - 00;08;16;08

Unknown

And I was trying to write for a different reason.

00;08;16;08 - 00;08;20;27

Unknown

writing for me, it was just like I was writing a lot of screenplays. And,

00;08;20;27 - 00;08;28;29

Unknown

whether I was ever going to do anything with them or just to do them just to be a creative outlet, there really was no deeper meaning.

00;08;28;29 - 00;08;33;06

Unknown

They all had the same kind of, theme, of

00;08;33;06 - 00;08;37;19

Unknown

some kind of Tarentino-ish crime story or whatever.

00;08;37;19 - 00;08;42;00

Unknown

And focus on dialog, learning dialog, but then

00;08;42;00 - 00;08;51;11

Unknown

seeing how many people want to identify themselves as something that gives them identity and, as a creative outlet or having a creator,

00;08;51;11 - 00;08;51;25

Unknown

statement

00;08;51;25 - 00;08;54;00

Unknown

I kind of looked at it as

00;08;54;00 - 00;09;15;08

Unknown

are you guys writing about something that here's my papers and here's how I want to be seen as having a purpose because of my great crimes committed? Or is there a redemption story? And so that got me to, in my own internal dialog, as I, you know, I'd like to write,

00;09;15;08 - 00;09;23;16

Unknown

differently than, like, a screenplay, writing about redemption kind of themes and to understand

00;09;23;16 - 00;10;11;22

Unknown

The way I wanted to write, I figured I could begin to work on a memoir and be utterly honest. And so I've been, you know, for a while now writing this kind of memoir, when I when I'm writing other things, they come from that vein of how I'm trying to write the way I am trying to express, like the way I paint and colors and and textures and, and to be able to do the same thing with words and to create, texture and, color field kind of feeling of emotion and, and for me, that comes out of being able to write about my own internal storyline of the whys and the brokenness.

00;10;11;22 - 00;10;49;11

Unknown

And so everything else I write and, you know, and what I got out of teaching the art class, because all these guys were looking for a different form of escape, they were looking for a positive form of escape and something that was like therapeutically healing. And so how would I write something where it could still be humorous, it could still be dark, but I could still constantly underline this inner turmoil, struggle to find sense, you know, and so, yeah, that's that's basically what I got out of that whole experience.

00;10;49;11 - 00;10;50;20

Unknown

So when I talk about,

00;10;50;20 - 00;11;06;19

Unknown

what that educational purpose of finding identity was for me, you know, and what I think for most people who are really doing, like, the internal work, that's that's what it is, that's like the deeper form. And, you know, when I went to, Inglewood,

00;11;06;19 - 00;11;16;10

Unknown

I found that when I took, I took a writing class there myself, and it was a Pan America, you know, themed syllabus writing course.

00;11;16;12 - 00;11;34;23

Unknown

And, and we all got books from Pan American, the whole thing. And so I kind of, like, internalized, like, oh, wow. No, no, I'm actually in prison with this writing workshop that is based on people from prison. And people have gotten out and written, you know, themes of, you know, like Orange is the New Black or whatever. Yeah, right.

00;11;34;23 - 00;11;58;05

Unknown

And they're all memoir and it's all the same story, right? Like we're all pulling from the same vein of telling our own personal stories, but thematically they're all very, you know, similar parallel of the same story of redemption. And so when I was writing into, and in that class when I read things I was basically trying to get,

00;11;58;05 - 00;11;59;19

Unknown

feedback from people who are

00;11;59;19 - 00;12;05;29

Unknown

shared in the same experience I was and does what I'm writing, convey that.

00;12;05;29 - 00;12;38;00

Unknown

And, you know, I think a lot of the people, they're like, wow, you know, they're really being able to kind of in a different, a different form of writing, express this same type of storyline, in a different way. So, yeah, that's probably when I got from all of what, you know, that education of identity could be is identifying yourself so much so honestly that someone else can see in their own struggles, turmoil.

00;12;38;00 - 00;12;38;23

Unknown

What that is.

00;12;38;23 - 00;12;59;21

Unknown

for a lot of them, you know, they were learning to get honest, real, deeply honest with themselves. And that was giving them inspiration to go deeper and deeper and deeper. And, you know, that's that's kind of what I got from what writing was, especially in that atmosphere, is, you know, oh, how honest can you be to yourself, you know?

00;12;59;21 - 00;13;03;23

Unknown

And then what will you get from that beyond the writing? And then,

00;13;03;23 - 00;13;06;15

Unknown

for myself, okay, this is how far I want to go.

00;13;06;15 - 00;13;25;05

Unknown

And so no one reads it to me like, Holy shit, this guy's being like, utterly fucking honest. Yeah. With everything. So there is, you know, you know, the transparency there is, you know, almost, humbling because he's humbled himself to be completely,

00;13;25;05 - 00;13;26;28

Unknown

there's a grit and a grime of it.

00;13;28;20 - 00;13;33;21

Unknown

I think, T.S. Eliot wrote,

00;13;33;21 - 00;13;40;01

Unknown

the dog barked backwards once, and the man thought about when he was a pup. I think living in that kind of like, utter,

00;13;40;01 - 00;13;48;27

Unknown

nowness Yeah. It's such a hard, thing for human beings. Right? He also wrote,

00;13;48;27 - 00;13;51;09

Unknown

human beings can only take so much truth.

00;13;51;09 - 00;14;05;16

Unknown

Yeah, right. So that kind of thing, like becoming sick with experience. Okay. Tell me more and yeah. Like, you know for a long time I even look at like crime for me

00;14;05;16 - 00;14;08;29

Unknown

wasn't necessarily about how I wanted to be identified.

00;14;08;29 - 00;14;17;03

Unknown

I mean like most people I got to a point where I was stockpiling shoes and Louis Vuitton bags and that kind of stuff.

00;14;17;04 - 00;14;38;23

Unknown

But for me it was excess. Everything. And whether how I did my crime, how I did my drug addiction, everything, my form of escape was excess and I was realized till later. I hadn't realized that it was me. I was

00;14;38;23 - 00;14;44;26

Unknown

sickening myself with experience and I didn't have a place. Well you know, my art was that place.

00;14;44;26 - 00;14;59;19

Unknown

But at the time there was, conveying excess And now it's like, I'm kind of unwinding what that is, being sick with experience. You know, that at some point,

00;14;59;19 - 00;15;15;11

Unknown

you drown and drown and that, you can only become so experienced in life before it just kind of becomes to strangle you with your own, levels of need and more.

00;15;15;14 - 00;15;22;05

Unknown

And now it's like I'm trying to unpack that and, you know, in my actual life,

00;15;22;05 - 00;15;38;26

Unknown

take in more, which is, you know, as a daily chore for me, because I'm still, I don't I don't operate like I used to, but a lot of my instinctual need for more is still there. And so, you know, constantly.

00;15;38;26 - 00;15;58;12

Unknown

So when I write, it's like I'm unpacking that art. You know, visual art does, a little bit, but not the same way writing does for me. I think maybe writing more than my visual art, like maybe I don't know if I would ever look at my writing as something that I would want to be the main thing.

00;15;58;17 - 00;16;33;22

Unknown

Like I want to be identified with my visual art, but writing allows me to unpack it. And if there is, an outlet for me to be able to share that and then, you know, more the better. But but for me especially right now, what what that is. So when I write, sometimes when I even put it out into the world, it's like, I want to, either share for feedback or share to say, well, you know, am am I in being able to express my own honesty within.

00;16;33;24 - 00;16;57;03

Unknown

Powerful. A lot of people, don't think so intentionally, especially in this age of like, social media posts about what they put out in the world. I think it's, a nod to your character that you think so intentionally about what and how and where these things will go.

00;16;57;03 - 00;17;02;14

Unknown

I want to circle back to, a couple of things that you've said to me today.

00;17;02;14 - 00;17;07;25

Unknown

One of them is this dualistic nature, this idea that there's two people residing

00;17;07;25 - 00;17;17;10

Unknown

in your self and how those sometimes ideals might, go to war each other or support each other or,

00;17;17;10 - 00;17;25;05

Unknown

just now you said that there's some things that in, in light of this escape into excess that are your,

00;17;25;05 - 00;17;30;28

Unknown

instinctual mode of being and how you, how you're watching that.

00;17;30;28 - 00;17;32;22

Unknown

Can you tell me more about

00;17;32;22 - 00;17;40;02

Unknown

how you see that, that dualistic nature, coming out in your work or in your relationship

00;17;40;02 - 00;17;53;10

Unknown

especially right now because of my environment. Yeah. You're in a place of transition. Yeah. I'm still surrounded by,

00;17;53;10 - 00;17;55;20

Unknown

people that are a lot like me,

00;17;55;20 - 00;18;01;22

Unknown

excess of like that and wanting to remain there, which

00;18;01;22 - 00;18;06;08

Unknown

is a struggle for me because one side of myself is always wanting to,

00;18;06;08 - 00;18;08;13

Unknown

be drawn back into it or

00;18;08;13 - 00;18;10;06

Unknown

have similarities there.

00;18;10;06 - 00;18;10;20

Unknown

And,

00;18;10;20 - 00;18;16;04

Unknown

have a connection to people like that where that is just how I identify myself. But,

00;18;16;04 - 00;18;24;10

Unknown

the struggle is constantly, you know, pulling back and, and then internalizing. Right. But this is where I need to put my focus

00;18;24;10 - 00;18;28;00

Unknown

I guess the internal struggle is, and more.

00;18;28;00 - 00;18;50;26

Unknown

I, me identifying myself as an artist because it's not about, identity of being seen for the art. It's about this is how it, it allows me in this internal struggle every day for me. Like this constant in a meeting that's going on and my art is my higher power. Yeah. So I'm able to constantly,

00;18;50;26 - 00;18;58;13

Unknown

once again, I have to do this serenity prayer to my art to my creative side, so that I win in this battle.

00;18;58;17 - 00;18;59;18

Unknown

And,

00;18;59;18 - 00;19;06;21

Unknown

most addicts will say, you know, this is this coming and baffling disease and and and it will never end.

00;19;06;21 - 00;19;09;15

Unknown

I'm constantly at times,

00;19;09;15 - 00;19;28;08

Unknown

drawing myself back into old familiar, habits and then. Oh, okay, I need, I should be, I should write now or I should provide a sketchpad, because even if I'm still in this atmosphere, this will allow me to become internal with my own process.

00;19;28;10 - 00;19;30;02

Unknown

My own struggle.

00;19;30;02 - 00;19;37;19

Unknown

But you know, I'll be out of here by next month's so I'll be able to decompress finally and this,

00;19;37;19 - 00;19;50;25

Unknown

gives way to... I said to myself, I just want to be constantly in you know, and not have triggers around, you know, people, places, things where for me is still pulls it out.

00;19;50;28 - 00;20;01;24

Unknown

Yeah. You know, sometimes it's about ego. You know, sometimes my criminal side is like. And, we do this to this and, you know, it's blah, blah, blah to get back to da da da

00;20;01;24 - 00;20;10;21

Unknown

I have to go back even more. Yeah. So it's being in an environment where I don't feel that trigger is going to be most advantageous to me.

00;20;10;21 - 00;20;31;06

Unknown

there's a lot of people as a halfway office that are in points of transition. And not everybody's at the same point of honesty or reflection where you are, you know, I was there so long, you know, I mean that, I'm 45 now. Now, you know, it's like I was there probably in more of my life devoted to that identity.

00;20;31;08 - 00;21;04;18

Unknown

And, you know, and I was always still creative in that period. But for, you know, so many for so long, especially just when I was into drugs, you know, there was a time where I was criminal, I was just an addict, you know, I got into heroin and, and I remember all my, especially my art connections, my gallery people, and they would always say, you know, because they're, they're thinking like, well, you know, here's this place you can get to and why aren't you trying to get there?

00;21;04;18 - 00;21;25;07

Unknown

You have the ability, you have the talent to get there. You're actually selling work. So what the fuck? You know? Yeah, right. And also no obligation to them. Hey, we, we want to promote you, but you seem to not give a fuck. And I think for a for a while, it was, the, not even fear of success.

00;21;25;07 - 00;21;43;19

Unknown

It was more of this, proving to myself I didn't give a fuck about the same material shit. Not even the material shit that, the life that. You know, a lot of people sought after. And so now it's like I'm making terms with that, too. So, you know, a lot of the my art connections,

00;21;43;19 - 00;21;46;11

Unknown

I want to get there now, but in a different way.

00;21;46;11 - 00;22;02;08

Unknown

And it took me all this time to kind of process what that meant for me, you know. What would you tell other people who are still in that space of not there yet, but maybe thinking about it,

00;22;02;08 - 00;22;20;19

Unknown

I don't even really know what you can say other than I guess, writing why it's important, expressing your own process or internal struggle or just being able to identify to someone that like, well, here's how deep I went, you know what I mean?

00;22;20;21 - 00;22;39;28

Unknown

You know, and my drug addiction, you know, I used to go to an AA meetings and shoot heroin before I went to a meeting, and I'd take a 30 day ketek, you know because I'd still want that attention that I'm trying. But, you know, I, I'm completely in this mode of escape. And, you know, if someone can identify.

00;22;39;28 - 00;23;17;19

Unknown

Oh, wow. You know, you were really here. You know, I still don't have veins in my body, you know? Yeah. I mean, and then as a criminal to say, oh, you know, I, I went to a federal prison. So, I mean, you know, this is something I, I did work for wholeheartedly, you know, so it's not like, you know, I don't understand that, but I would have never been able to say anything to my younger self or even myself a while ago, you know, as I was so immersed in that world, I think, so all I think it can do is, it's not easy to lead by example, because I really don't

00;23;17;19 - 00;23;41;17

Unknown

think that had as much merit as somebody who does isn't ready to commit to something else. I think you can do is I hope someone identify. And if they see in that, oh, identify with this person because they've been there and they're making a change. Then you know, by that, I think maybe that's the best way you can, say anything is just by.

00;23;41;20 - 00;23;51;08

Unknown

Oh, yeah, I've been here and this is just what I'm doing, and I'm not necessarily trying to lead by example. I'm just this is what I'm doing. Maybe someone can get something out of that.

00;23;51;10 - 00;24;18;27

Unknown

Oh you got to hit rock bottom. But I, I really don't think there's a rock bottom I don't know ever think I think death is rock bottom because you can't change from there. And I don't really think there's a rock bottom. You your next rock bottom can always be deeper and more hellacious. But but, to be able to identify with somebody like, oh, well, you know, it's a long time on was on my way to whatever rock bottom I was reading.

00;24;19;03 - 00;24;37;10

Unknown

You know this someone hasn't been that far. And they said, oh, wow. And I deeper than I had gone, you know, to say, well, how did you get back here? And, you know, that's the only identifier, I think, is someone say, oh, shit, you know, it. I will give you a purpose to live again.

00;24;37;13 - 00;24;40;28

Unknown

I don't think we talk about that enough that people need a purpose

00;24;40;28 - 00;24;41;14

Unknown

I think that's

00;24;41;14 - 00;24;56;17

Unknown

why NA is different to me than like let's say harm reduction. Because I think and it doesn't have to be drug can be anything that is an escape.

00;24;56;19 - 00;25;04;16

Unknown

And then you put harm reduction and you put damage control on that thing. And NA is so

00;25;04;16 - 00;25;18;01

Unknown

even though they say oh this isn't about God, it's like out of your understanding, I still feel like it's very religiously based. Kind of like, you know, something that got created out of the church because people that grew up in the church, this is how they found recovery.

00;25;18;09 - 00;25;25;29

Unknown

And then it becomes very black and white. And I think religion can be very black and white. Heaven or hell, you know, all these kind of,

00;25;25;29 - 00;25;31;21

Unknown

Easy to be seen kind of stratospheres of good and evil and,

00;25;31;21 - 00;25;33;18

Unknown

recovery is such a gray area.

00;25;33;18 - 00;25;36;11

Unknown

I think brokenness is such a gray area.

00;25;36;13 - 00;26;01;01

Unknown

And you know, there were times where like in NA meetings where I would bring up something really like some trauma that usually you wouldn't talk about in NA and even if it was my own experience, I would just want to see how that would play. And it would always make people so uncomfortable to talk about something that was really like, what the fuck?

00;26;01;03 - 00;26;17;16

Unknown

You know what? What are you talking about? Why are you bringing this shit up? Yeah. And I think people just want to, like, if you really want to get attention in an NA meeting and you just go in and say, you know, wow, I don't know who was at this bottom. And and I found a God in my understanding.

00;26;17;16 - 00;26;43;22

Unknown

And now I got a job and know it's like this and blah, blah, blah, and, you know, and and black and white because it's also a westernized culture disease. And it's in this deeper than the drug addiction or, our culture, there's so much in this idea of ego being perceived as I was at this shitty place, I know I'm at this great place.

00;26;43;22 - 00;27;11;00

Unknown

I had no car, no money, and no one liked me. And, now everyone likes me. I have a car and I have a house and I've had people giving me attention, you know, and I think Westernized culture is so much about, you know, a reason to be, having a position in the world that is, some material gain

00;27;11;00 - 00;27;29;11

Unknown

I usually have never seen anyone come into and NA meeting and say, well, you know, I'm still a millionaire, and I still, ship around on heroin, but I have a Lamborghini out front, and I have this, you know, I mean,

00;27;29;14 - 00;27;56;28

Unknown

I have a supermodel girlfriend, and I have this house I still own. I think it would be harder for people to identify. Oh, fuck. What's the problem? You know, it's always, you know, and, you know, I was staying in this roach motel smoking crack, and I had nothing. And now I have these new and Jordans on, and I have a job, and, it makes it easier for people to identify as a symptom.

00;27;56;28 - 00;28;05;20

Unknown

Seems to be the material gain from this rather than the gain from being broken. You know?

00;28;05;20 - 00;28;25;23

Unknown

Especially in this world, you know, the institutional type of justice DOJ system of what, what is wrong with, addiction or criminal?

00;28;25;25 - 00;28;51;05

Unknown

You know, no one's really thinking there's a problem with the guy who is the wolf of Wall Street guy, right? He still goes to the camp, and he. Oh, well, I realized that, you know, I was rich. There really is no punishment. And I came out and still impressed people, even though people thought I was a rotten person that I, you know, didn't do the internal work.

00;28;51;08 - 00;29;23;10

Unknown

And I'm still materially successful and I'm still achieving the kind of aspirations most, you know. And so I think that side of broken is really hard to identify because especially now with our president, Elon, and this world is, very, you know, that 1%, how do you even, how do you even, dismiss, the brokenness as somebody who.

00;29;23;13 - 00;29;30;09

Unknown

Well, I, I still, you know, have all this, you know. So,

00;29;30;09 - 00;29;52;04

Unknown

I think it's really hard when you look like societal success to identify emotional and growth, success. Internally. Yeah. It, it's masked. Well and I think that's why so many people have like midlife crisis is like this dissonance in you, you know, like sometimes I think

00;29;52;04 - 00;29;56;01

Unknown

if I achieve some level of success in the future.

00;29;56;03 - 00;30;00;07

Unknown

And the first stuff I wrote about, the first stuff I did

00;30;00;07 - 00;30;10;01

Unknown

and people identified with it or saw merit to it and became, you know, it allowed me to achieve success. And then I got to a place where,

00;30;10;01 - 00;30;23;10

Unknown

whether I was writing about my own personal or I was writing a story or I was doing art, and I was saying, you know, and, I still decide to choose to be a rotten person.

00;30;23;12 - 00;30;46;16

Unknown

I just don't do drugs anymore, but I achieve and make characters or, and, narratives to all my work is that I enjoy being a sociopath. You know, I think most people would honestly, you know, me and my mom talked about this to say, you know, in ways, you know, because of the

00;30;46;16 - 00;30;59;00

Unknown

dual identity kind of world you've been in, you know, you, you, you almost borderline sociopaths without, you know, having the emotional context to dictate what that actually is and not be a sociopath.

00;30;59;03 - 00;31;26;01

Unknown

But there would be merit in going that honest to say, well, you can articulate it. And most people aren't even able to articulate or want to be honest with what that is. And then, if I imagine, and if I was able to do that, would anybody in the future, if I achieve success say, oh, I still like this guy

because he can be that honest with all this crazy shit, but he hasn't changed. He doesn't plan of change.

00;31;26;01 - 00;31;48;21

Unknown

So I think that's also a thing. Is that, in how do we see brokenness and there's someone is still, gaining or achieving success and then say, well, I choose to still be broken, but I've gotten to this place and I don't do drugs anymore, but you know what I mean? So, you know, what are your reasons to want to change?

00;31;48;22 - 00;31;58;27

Unknown

And is it actually, you know, your own internal reason? Not because, you know, people attach this idea of redemption

00;31;58;27 - 00;32;34;00

Unknown

to this thing, and you become a brand. So you have to project that, you know, or. No, I choose to brand, you know, psycho artist. And I'm still achieving I'm doing well to this thing. And so people, you know, so so I think that's now I like where I'm going is like the internal struggle is to say, well, you know, if you can still achieve it, especially in this westernized culture like this, what would be your real reasons to need to change?

00;32;34;00 - 00;32;53;04

Unknown

Other than just not fucking yourself off? I, you know, doing the drugs you like to do. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Because drugs don't have to be drugs at all. They could be whatever you put your time into to escape. I think that's a really powerful definition, that you've provided us,

00;32;53;04 - 00;32;56;28

Unknown

Teaching inside is not something that

00;32;56;28 - 00;33;16;11

Unknown

people who are currently incarcerated often get to do in a lot of systems. Right. Do you think that there is value in being able to, one, be in a class, regardless if it's creative writing or art or whatever the medium might be?

00;33;16;11 - 00;33;29;08

Unknown

being able to give that back in that way, to then teach the next class, I think, and then what would you say to the people who say that it's not safe or

00;33;29;08 - 00;33;35;10

Unknown

you know, there's a lot of policies that there's no peer to peer facilitation of programming allowed in some of these places.

00;33;35;15 - 00;33;42;05

Unknown

So what would be your argument for a pro and a con for that? Because I like to think about all sides of things.

00;33;42;05 - 00;34;13;08

Unknown

I would say a pro would be to take first out of, I guess straight because I think maybe sometimes writing and art, or, you know, visual art, it comes out of this kind of even though it's very expressive, it comes out of this kind of straight, college educated world, you know, nice people don't have experience in the criminal underworld as far as, you know, prison and this and that.

00;34;13;08 - 00;34;32;06

Unknown

So it then becomes this unknown. But I take it out of context of that and then saying, well, what if you taught something that was culturally relevant to a group of people that pretty much same in or out, and that would be the tattoo culture. And people or tattooing in prison just as much as they are on the outside.

00;34;32;06 - 00;35;04;28

Unknown

So then what if you started an apprenticeship. And people from outside who are still in the same culture of criminal outlaws, tattooing, rebelling against society. The art form itself is kind of a fuck you, to straight society or what is becoming very, you know, commercialized. And then you took that to prison and, and apprenticed people. And then it became a positive light, because now guys who didn't really know how to change you gave them the outlet, which was still familiar to them and then allowed them to learn how to tattoo.

00;35;04;28 - 00;35;17;25

Unknown

And then all of a sudden someone says, oh, now you're tattooing an outsider thing for you on, on and made the conversion easier. But it didn't. It didn't go out of their comfort zone. Yeah, actually,

00;35;17;25 - 00;35;38;04

Unknown

the the Missouri Department of Corrections just started a, apprenticeship program with a tattoo shop inside. Yeah. So, yeah, because I was hearing about, you know, the emergence of

programs like that, I thought, you know, wow, it took them all this time to see, you know, something where there are transferable skills.

00;35;38;04 - 00;36;06;15

Unknown

And so if you took that same thing where it's like, all right, what if you took the white collar guys that were in prison who had experience in prison and taught them fucking skills to become a real estate person or taught them business skills or whatever, you know what I mean? And they themselves. So you're kind of you're you're, transitioning the people in teaching it who actually, you know, I mean, I have experience in both worlds and then taught them an actual trade.

00;36;06;18 - 00;36;08;22

Unknown

And so I think at times,

00;36;08;22 - 00;36;31;17

Unknown

in the conversion process is not the the mode. I think the mode is found. Anybody who is looking for education to have a skill set to transfer over here or offense and just be as technically proficient at anything you can learn, you know what I mean? And I think you can learn everything and you put your time into it like 10,000 hours.

00;36;31;21 - 00;36;50;13

Unknown

That anything will make you a master of that thing. Right? But the problem is the transferable to the actual world in itself. And I think that's the problem because it's like you have to then I even myself, it's like, well, and,

00;36;50;13 - 00;37;02;26

Unknown

how can people from this unfamiliar world to criminal or prison accept what I'm doing as an artist or in this, and you have to turn yourself into a brand?

00;37;02;28 - 00;37;40;06

Unknown

And I think the emotional understanding of that transferable skill to making you a commodity is the difficult part, because everything is still so black and white in prison. And you understand well, as some guys, you know, becoming a jailhouse lawyer and he's learning everything about law. And blah, blah, blah. How can he transfer his side of this thing to turn himself into a brand of something that, you know, personifies, redemption, or you can achieve anything.

00;37;40;06 - 00;38;01;18

Unknown

And then. So how would you go into a prison and teach not just the skill set, but this is how you have to sell yourself to the world now. So I think that's the difficult thing and I think that's what square society doesn't want to deal with. The emotional baggage of these guys aren't going to be able to fucking sell themselves you know.

00;38;01;18 - 00;38;23;20

Unknown

And the best they can do is get a job at Davis Killer bread, because they know no one is teaching people the emotional fortitude to re identify themselves. And I think that's the thing that's lacking from the whole justice process of reintegration. And even in this halfway house, most of the people here, they don't even have that emotional aptitude themselves.

00;38;23;20 - 00;38;38;17

Unknown

You know, it's just it's very black and white. Well, blah, blah blah, I don't know. Let me see your resume and what you didn't do and then the guy just figures. Well, I got to shut the fuck up unless I run into another person like, "What did you go in for? I went in for robbery". You know, "Oh, cool.

00;38;38;17 - 00;38;49;16

Unknown

I smoke cigarettes with you on breaks. You know, because that's how I'll still identify myself. Cause I don't know how to connect with these people. And the person who's, you know, blah blah blah. So.

00;38;49;16 - 00;38;57;22

Unknown

the jobs that are offered because of that are very much not giving people a chance because they don't want to deal with the emotional baggage of.

00;38;57;22 - 00;39;27;25

Unknown

"Is this guy going to remind me of somebody from fucking, you know, shot caller?". No, this guy like, holy shit, that tattoo looks real prison bound. Like, I'm guessing this guy is probably that person, and they're, you know. Or is this person going to be able to have learning the skills that that even though he's still branded in such a way that he comes off, it's like, wow, this guy become emotionally evolved on top of the skill set.

00;39;27;25 - 00;39;53;15

Unknown

emotional aptitude is something that and this, this idea of as transference of this, what skills are valued or, or even recognized. Right. But even though we've done all this work on the inside to develop some set of skills, I mean 10,000 hours on anything is such a commitment that then that, that that kind of work is not always recognized as work.

00;39;53;15 - 00;39;59;28

Unknown

when I focus on my writing, or, on the arts so much because I mean, you know, at 45 years old.

00;40;00;00 - 00;40;24;28

Unknown

The one skillset that I have, the one group of connections I have is to the art world where I don't have this giant block of discrepancy between the last job I had where I wasn't dealing drugs.

And now I'm just saying to somebody, I am someone different than what you see here on this resumé, but all of that is connected to my art world.

00;40;25;01 - 00;40;48;13

Unknown

And so for me, that's why on top of that, I put so much focus because the one redeeming quality about myself to be able to sell myself to the world again is in my art. And yes, let me get a job and let me find something in between. But I'm not looking for a career because in my honest opinion, that is not going to get me there.

00;40;48;16 - 00;40;49;19

Unknown

So I'm so honest

00;40;49;19 - 00;41;08;05

Unknown

I'm not looking to do something that for me, at the end of the day, this isn't where I want to put another 10,000 hours there, right? I don't want to become a master forklift operator. I don't want to be, you know what I mean? And I think for a lot of the the normal kind of, stereotypical,

00;41;08;05 - 00;41;21;18

Unknown

re-developing-self criminals, that is something that their ego can identify and that gives them purpose to say, you know, I mean, a lot of guys here, it's not that I have a job and I'm saving money.

00;41;21;18 - 00;41;35;11

Unknown

And as to the other kind of group look at, I, I am somebody important and these things are going to move me up and I can identify. And so I think that's the hard part too, is that most people,

00;41;35;11 - 00;41;50;05

Unknown

identify by themselves. Easy enough to, to say this gives me importance. And I think that's where the job field can, manipulate somebody into apprenticeship before they even have time to say.

00;41;50;05 - 00;42;08;12

Unknown

Well, here's what I really love to do good. Well, you know, you're at this age and doo doo do and we can train you to do this thing. And are you going to actually be devoted to this other thing. You've been a fucking criminal most of your life and a drug addict. I mean honestly.

00;42;08;12 - 00;42;42;22

Unknown

So it'd probably be better to take this culinary apprenticeship and become a cook at, you know, at Elmer's. And, and at the end of the day, I think the ego still struggles to identify, well if I'm not going to be a drug dealer anymore, if I'm not going to be able to escape any more than I think my ego is, I need to have some sense of identity, and especially in this kind of environment where you're around other people, just like you've all kind of read on on the same esthetic value of importance of, self.

00;42;42;22 - 00;43;01;18

Unknown

And they say, oh man, this guy just got a mustang with this job, only he's making 20 plus hour dollars an hour. And, you know, he's still as important as this person is. He was a drug dealer. And that's the transferable skill set. And then you know what? I just saved enough money that I might be able to get a kilo.

00;43;01;21 - 00;43;26;11

Unknown

Yeah. Because the emotional change has not happened to say. You know I just saved this money and I'm thinking about buying into this apprenticeship to do this or you know, you know I've always wanted to tattoo. So you know when I went to tattoo school that was \$5,000, you know what I mean, and get the a good equipment is is just as expensive.

00;43;26;11 - 00;43;48;19

Unknown

You know at the end of the day, before I was actually at a tattoo shop that was almost \$7,000, you know what I mean? And that wasn't even including how devoted I was or people who wanted to apprentice me and and taking the time out of my day not to to to do that. And you have to be dedicated to the new thing you want to do, even if it is.

00;43;48;19 - 00;44;18;01

Unknown

And, you know, culturally, you know, familiar, like a tattoo apprenticeship. And if it's something else that's even more unfamiliar and they say, well, you know, I got this real estate client, blah,

blah, blah, you know, but, you know, it's \$5,000. And da da da da da and we give you the certificate. And then on top of that, you kind of puts the time into... that's a big investment to where it was not familiar to somebody and without somebody, you know, and it definitely isn't.

00;44;18;01 - 00;44;53;03

Unknown

The people in this halfway house are going to be like, wow, that's the kind of goal set you, you want. Since that's so the status quo for us, let us put time into really helping you. Since we only have another 100 fucking people, we got to focus on getting them a job at Dave's Killer bread Yeah, yeah. So they have to themselves if they do have family or friends, who who is going to support them or for them just to have the faith in their own, you know, focus on what and who and what they're going to become and then say, you know what?

00;44;53;05 - 00;45;11;29

Unknown

I'm not going to buy these new Jordans. You know, I gotta say, you know, half the guys, I mean, half the guys who actually have a dollar in their pocket. You know, even in this halfway house, I got ten, 15 pairs of Jordan. Yeah, yeah. And you and you're wondering, you know. Well, is it because you like to dress nice, or is that how you like to be identified?

00;45;12;01 - 00;45;31;19

Unknown

You know, I have just as many Jordans, but for me, I look at it like, you know, I'm having to reincorporate how I see myself in the world and around, you know, similar people like me, that's not going to help me in this place. And then to focus my mind there, I might not think maybe I shouldn't buy another ten shoes when I make some money.

00;45;31;21 - 00;46;11;09

Unknown

Yeah. So you have to really define and kind of, unpack, like, you know, I do have 20 pairs of Jordans at the house, but maybe I should just grab a pair of Vans so I can identify myself as a person who's going to save every dollar I get. You know what I mean? Yeah. And yeah. And being able to then say, well, if I identify myself as being this person, you know, because you know how I look at it, even in the material world, the people who get real money, I might have a Lamborghini or a Tesla or whatnot, but they jump out of the car and they got like, you know, Walmart jeans

00;46;11;09 - 00;46;22;03

Unknown

on and a pair of converse, and they got, you know, \$1 million in the bank. So people who really got money, they don't need to identify themselves. Consumer really is a thing about ego. They can say, oh, you want to pull up

00;46;22;03 - 00;46;28;28

Unknown

So they they know internally what their worst is. And people who don't internally know what the worth is in the world.

00;46;28;28 - 00;46;52;00

Unknown

They feel the need to project that. And so it makes it harder for them to then say, well, let me value my worth this and then put my money here. And then that's where I put my money, where my mouth is. So I think that's the problem. And yeah, this is such a hard emotional transition. I just think the people at these halfway houses, they just, you know, you get the job.

00;46;52;00 - 00;47;13;24

Unknown

ad Dave's killer bread and you're not getting high and fucking great and you know, probably better than the majority. So yeah. Yeah. But it doesn't have to be our limit. Though I will say I love Dave killer bread. You know, for the record, I think the whole. Yeah. Oh yeah, thing is, is awesome. And I wish there was more places like that.

00;47;13;26 - 00;47;35;18

Unknown

Yeah. Even the story to that. But, you know, like, you know, Dave has fucked up a bunch of times. Yeah. Since. But that's not the story they're selling and I still you know, like, hey, you fucking come get Dave's Killer Bread. You can get to this place, and then you can get enough money where you can crash a fucking Escalade you know, blah blah blah you got money in the bank.

00;47;35;18 - 00;47;55;02

Unknown

You just fucking built a brand and still selling the brand. If you look on their website or, you know, the page is like all these guys who were just like Dave at this place, the brand is the brand is you can come out of prison and be a good guy again. Yeah. And that's what they're selling, connected to their bread and their bread is fucking great.

00;47;55;02 - 00;48;17;11

Unknown

The product's great. So connecting the brand to the product because like, man, you know what? I eat this fucking bread I think about all these guys who would have stabbed me in prison, and now they're like, smiling and shaking my hand and fucking so. So I wish it was more places where there was an emphasis on that, emergent, you know, kind of, hero's journey.

00;48;17;14 - 00;48;46;11

Unknown

But, I just think the hero's journey is, you know, mostly not going to be accepted in the mainstream unless it's like the Wolf of Wall Street hero's journey. Yeah, well, also, like you,

you've you've brought up redemption a lot. And like the idea that redemption is like a destination that's final versus a process that has ups and downs of it.

00;48;46;11 - 00;49;01;11

Unknown

Right? Or the idea that redemption is, like the culturally accepted idea of redemption. as like, turned away from your old ways forever and ever is like the only version of redemption that can be right. So

00;49;01;11 - 00;49;30;17

Unknown

what is your definition of redemption? My current definition of redemption is being integrated with, Joseph Campbell version of the Hero's Journey, the forever story of the hero's journey, the Jesus, Buddha, Siddhartha version of the hero's journey.

00;49;30;28 - 00;50;10;06

Unknown

Because that's I think that's for any human story. I feel that that is the internal story of identifying with the human struggle. And the one's where it is that and it is. I became broken, and I realized that all that glitters is gold. And then I became the person who's just floating the raft and people taking people up on the side and giving them, you know, transport to safer grounds.

00;50;10;09 - 00;50;35;01

Unknown

Even if it isn't that physical thing and even, you know what I mean, even if it just is. No. Such as how I live and or someone else can get to safer grounds by seeing how I operate and better, you know that that is the redemption story, is it? It's not even achieving. It's struggling to get there.

00;50;35;03 - 00;50;52;01

Unknown

And I think once you achieve it, like all it is, is story over. When is somebody finished the last page of the book and say, fuck it, they got there. Oh my God, the movie credits go up and the music in your life was fired. And you say, and then you say, you know, you know he's kicking it one dave's killer bread.

00;50;52;01 - 00;51;24;11

Unknown

They get, you know he gets high with Dave's Killer bread, they're crashing fucking escalades all over Portland. So the redemption story is the constant. Because every day when especially you achieve some level of financial success with your redemption story, I think you have the choice to, you know, and people maybe weren't judging me as much because I achieved a thing.

00;51;24;13 - 00;51;48;17

Unknown

So, you know, I think it's and then the internal struggle of order, my own reasons to stay there and the hero's struggle because every day, you know, you make an achievement by just not following the old path that's familiar. You take the road that is less travel and you say, you know, for me, this is this is what it took me today to get here.

00;51;48;19 - 00;51;53;24

Unknown

That makes sense. That's that's powerful.

00;51;53;26 - 00;52;16;06

Unknown

I guess the last question I have and then I'll just leave the floor to you, to wrap us up, is if there was 1 or 2 or some narrative that you wish you had seen or heard about on the inside while you were there, that would have,

00;52;16;06 - 00;52;22;00

Unknown

helps you identify differently with what could be.

00;52;22;02 - 00;52;41;01

Unknown

Yeah. And maybe not for you, but other people who are inside. Yeah. Like, I think sometimes the only narrative that is pushed back into these spaces of incarceration is that you'll only work a menial job. You'll never get it. You know, that you're just coming back or, you know, like. And I think that that's that's really far from the truth.

00;52;41;01 - 00;53;01;28

Unknown

There's a lot of people out here in their cycle of redemption and, and or their, their cycle of success, whatever that might look like for them. Little, big small family, whatever it is. And I think that sometimes, like those narratives that we like, we're having this conversation here, right? And it's going to be showcased on a public platform here.

00;53;01;28 - 00;53;29;27

Unknown

And that hap what would you want out of that to be pushed back inside so others can see and something different than, than that, that same loop? Yeah. I mean, you know, when I was younger, I wish someone would have been able to, you know, even out of prison, break it down to me. I wish all those father figures I had were isn't a you need to get something in the world, son.

00;53;29;27 - 00;54;11;16

Unknown

That's how you need to be. No one's gonna respect you unless you got it like this, son. You know, but I think the sad thing in, in prison is because the culture is so impoverished. I think when somebody really is showing somebody how to get it differently, you know, especially in prison, where, like, a honey bun has value, you know, I mean, I do, and like a lot of people, like, if you can walk into it, like, I don't think I ever walk into a safe place or shoot my ears or something in the air, like, you know how much I can give for those fucking Reese's Pieces on the side.

00;54;11;19 - 00;54;43;23

Unknown

So when things have value like that, I think it's so much the dog with the ball because somebody can show you this fucking Horatio Alger fucking story. This climb into fucking mecca this, you know, reaching the top of the mountain story and the hero's journey story. And so, you know, I got there just with this \$8 typewriter with it, you know, or I got there with these cheap paint brushes or whatever it is.

00;54;43;25 - 00;55;22;00

Unknown

But when someone else was saying, you know, hey son, you can't get these peanut butters in the prison, like, do you want to help me hustle because I got a bunch of tobacco and like, oh my God, look at that guy. You know, like he lives good. I think it's really hard for that story to be seen because the younger inmate, the inmate without nothing an inmate who has always struggled coming from not just a broken place, but a broken environment, and then someone who has who they also identify with, that they've had nothing.

00;55;22;03 - 00;55;40;16

Unknown

I think it's different to when, you know, people in the prison are from a privileged family, especially in the criminal etiquette. No one gives them much props because they always question like, oh yeah, you got a Benz, but did your mom help you out with that? Right on the guy. No, I said like, man, I know his mom.

00;55;40;16 - 00;56;01;26

Unknown

His mom did borrow money from him and he's got a Benz. It's the same thing in prison when the guy know, like, man, like you see his and you see his true links, commissary account, like that guy, you know, like Big Meech, the guy from Black Mafia family. He was insured in medium, you know, and we'd always hear our little passed down stories about him at the camp.

00;56;01;29 - 00;56;27;18

Unknown

And constantly, anytime people were talking, you know, about how they had it or this or that, like, hey, come over, come over. It is true links computer real quick. And he'd tap tap tap and

bring up his true links account. And everyone said it was always at \$99,999. And that's the max. You can have the thing apps you let someone know every day.

00;56;27;18 - 00;56;52;08

Unknown

No, not just like one day was like the thing that night, every day. He kept that thing at \$99,999. He wanted to let somebody know I am not without and I don't move for nobody that comes to me and people in prison retract that story more than the internal struggle or achieving something that really isn't measured, which was material wealth.

00;56;52;11 - 00;57;21;19

Unknown

I so I think that's the real hard thing. And I think the outside world of those who have versus of the have nots, they don't understand that story internally, that struggle. So for them, they see it as well. You know, these guys were just coming back out and do whatever. And I think it's hard to change the narrative inside because it's hard to change what you aspire to have when you have nothing yourself to really sit down.

00;57;21;19 - 00;57;46;02

Unknown

Yeah. And you know what I mean. So before I left, you know, I had a couple guys who were, you know, hey, can you show me how to hook up a typewriter ribbon? And, hey, when you leave, can I get your typewriter ribbons? And you've inspired me to want to write, and that's. I always see you writing, and you are devoted to this thing.

00;57;46;02 - 00;58;21;20

Unknown

And being able to telling the story. And people in the writing class were really, inspired to write better because you have shown that you can achieve this, your version of articulating this story that we can all. But I think at the end of the day, the guys who were inspired to start writing, they wanted to tell the crazy Wall Street story, their version, and the guys who are already writing, they wanted to tell their crazy version of, you know, to me.

00;58;21;20 - 00;58;43;15

Unknown

And I gotta even say, you know, honestly, some of these guys, I'd be like, you know, you should write your story like this because your story, I mean, I don't know how much of it is true, but I mean, I'm going to turn that to a screenplay, right? Because it still is a great story, but, internally, what are you getting out of it?

00;58;43;18 - 00;59;14;17

Unknown

And is it helping you get to another place? And are you finding some redeeming quality? And I, you know, that's just I mean, that's that's the difficulties I found with educating because most

people, they look at that as a vehicle to get to this place, you know, and I think the most I mean, especially from where I'm at sometimes the most humbling thing and I think similar something my mom's always,

00;59;14;17 - 00;59;20;22

Unknown

she had a lot of artist friends always tell me, you know, like, all these guys are good.

00;59;20;22 - 00;59;27;05

Unknown

All these people are good. But, you know, how much of them actually have a dollar in their pocket? And son,

00;59;27;05 - 00;59;41;27

Unknown

let me tell you that becoming an artist has nothing to do with money. And I have very few friends who actually sell their paintings for lots of money, but most of them are are just as good with their

00;59;41;27 - 00;59;42;15

Unknown

style.

00;59;42;22 - 00;59;44;20

Unknown

But they don't sell work like that.

00;59;44;20 - 00;59;55;06

Unknown

will you be committed to this craft, even though most likely there will never be financial success, there may never be real recognition. You may only be,

00;59;55;06 - 01;00;02;10

Unknown

held in high regard to the small group of like minded people. May be there might be a few patrons of your work.

01;00;02;10 - 01;00;24;17

Unknown

In that world of people who are not criminal and not drug addicts and even some, a lot of artists are drug addicts because they haven't come from the prison world. And that I think you just compound the fracture more and more, and you to be devoted to this thing, even though there's no vehicle to get to the other side, then you'll actually be able to identify yourself as successful.

01;00;24;19 - 01;00;32;23

Unknown

And, you know, just be this internal storyline where you're constantly trying to achieve this thing no one else is going to

01;00;32;23 - 01;00;46;21

Unknown

look at you in a group where unless you put on a pair of fucking Jordans or have a Benz outside be able to say, man why do you always have those notebooks? You know, someone might be able to say, wow,

01;00;46;21 - 01;00;49;25

Unknown

God, wow. You can really. How long you been drawing?

01;00;49;25 - 01;01;02;16

Unknown

but most of them are never saying, wow, you can really? How long have you been drawing? They're saying, how long do you have to do that to get good at it? And can I do it? Like, can I be good at it tomorrow?

01;01;02;19 - 01;01;27;11

Unknown

So so that's the thing. I always see the people who there's not really, like, unless I'm with like minded people, and people are like, is this something that maybe I can get attention with or get somewhere with it? And how long did that actually take? If I tell someone like, I just picked this shit up today, like, yeah, I just picked up this little Bic pen on the floor and I just start doing this.

01;01;27;11 - 01;01;35;19

Unknown

You mean you can do this? You know, I think that's the thing is that people don't want to invest time to anything. That's not like,

01;01;35;19 - 01;01;37;24

Unknown

you're going to get this paycheck at Dave's Killer Bread.

01;01;37;24 - 01;01;44;16

Unknown

And you might be able to with for them, you know, buy half a kilo of coke and start making real money and get a Benz.

01;01;47;14 - 01;02;13;20

Unknown

but you know what? You get out of it, and then it's, you know, the hero story. And I think I just think that's the hard transferable skill to what, what I learned in prison, the education, the people that are really doing it, the people that were teaching my writing class, the people that were doing law work, most of them, most of them who were really for a reason that was internalized, were doing it all pro bono.

01;02;13;20 - 01;02;39;14

Unknown

Were doing it because their own story line or not, even those people inside, the people connected to the whole justice system, the people I've met as volunteers of America or this or NA, the people that I know well and I have faith in their mission statement. They were doing it mostly pro bono or to make pay the bills, put braces on their kids teeth.

01;02;39;21 - 01;02;47;17

Unknown

And other than that, nothing over the top. And they were doing it because their brother died in prison and the other one died an addict.

01;02;47;17 - 01;02;48;16

Unknown

And it

01;02;48;16 - 01;02;58;04

Unknown

And I usually ask people to, in the justice system or the world of psychology or anything to do with, drug education. I say,

01;02;58;04 - 01;03;00;24

Unknown

do you have any family who has

01;03;00;26 - 01;03;26;27

Unknown

... because it right away allows me to understand if, and the mission statement is sound and something that is not to be attained because you're trying to become a psychologist like this, you can get to this place because you work in the wrong crowd. You know, or is the reason you're doing as good as you are, you know?

01;03;26;27 - 01;03;30;04

Unknown

And that was the thing when I was at Volunteers of America.

01;03;30;04 - 01;03;32;01

Unknown

Most of the counselors,

01;03;32;01 - 01;03;33;21

Unknown

and they tended to hire,

01;03;33;21 - 01;03;58;22

Unknown

good looking women and, very educated and, and a group of guys who were not well educated, who were very submissive to women, mean at the high. And it was smart. But at the end of the day, most of the counselors in a place like that, when I would really internalize something, would say and almost defeated.

01;03;58;28 - 01;04;17;28

Unknown

And in a defeatist attitude, say, well, what the fuck can I help you with? Like, you know, like your graduation day is here. Like, I like to listen to you, but what can I, you know, because it's easier to help the person we still

01;04;17;28 - 01;04;22;27

Unknown

most of them didn't have any of their own.

01;04;22;29 - 01;04;56;10

Unknown

Actually, no, I think that back, most of them who are doing it for the reason had the family member who was an alcoholic or this, and then the rest of them, it was just a stomping ground until they could get to John Hopkins Hospital or something. You know what I mean. So I think you lose, you lose the good teachers and the good, everyone in the field, especially in the justice part, you know, because if they're really good and they're educated then everything is, is a stomping ground to get to.

01;04;56;11 - 01;05;14;27

Unknown

And it looks real good on a resume. If you had something to do with the the rehabilitation world in any sense, you know, just art and drug education, it looks real good on a resume that, you know, I hope God, these fucking guy and got them to Dave's Killer Bread. Yeah. So,

01;05;14;27 - 01;05;31;19

Unknown

Well, let's talk about your mom for a second. Do you mind? I, I have had such great interactions with her. I know she wouldn't mind. Yeah. She, even sent me a picture of you as a kid with her. Said I can't include it, but it was just so cute. She's so devoted to you.

01;05;31;19 - 01;05;33;29

Unknown

I and I'm really glad that she could keep your,

01;05;33;29 - 01;05;37;18

Unknown

studio, while you were inside. I mean, that, you know.

01;05;37;18 - 01;05;39;07

Unknown

I am also formerly incarcerated.

01;05;39;07 - 01;05;41;00

Unknown

so I come to this work honestly?

01;05;41;00 - 01;05;41;09

Unknown

Yeah.

01;05;41;09 - 01;05;42;27

Unknown

Mission statement. Yeah.

01;05;42;27 - 01;06;02;15

Unknown

I truly believe access to education, in whatever form that might manifest in is, is a means to self-reflection in the in the ways that you have identified as, like, redemption and that right, that cycling of a cycle. That is what success looks like, even if it doesn't look like cultural idea of success.

01;06;02;15 - 01;06;21;26

Unknown

So I appreciate, you taking the time with us. But to your mom, I just want to say one mad props to your mom for just being that, you know, a point of stability. Even though relationships with moms are always complicated. But I also want to ask,

01;06;21;26 - 01;06;22;16

Unknown

what does,

01;06;22;16 - 01;06;36;22

Unknown

incarceration or this process of redefining yourself or, identity or, you know, art or anything you want to input in that space?

01;06;36;28 - 01;06;45;28

Unknown

Oh, that could be a word. What what does that mean in relationship to, your family? Yeah.

01;06;45;28 - 01;07;01;23

Unknown

I would just say for me, it's much easier because a lot of guys, their family are from it in some sense. But, you know, my mom's from the Bronx, 1970s, you know, like 1960s, 1970s, the Bronx.

01;07;01;23 - 01;07;18;11

Unknown

She's, you know, made her bones per se. She, she's experimented with heroin. She's lived it honestly too. She lived it and did it and had all kinds of dysfunctional relationships along the way. But. And she makes.

01;07;18;11 - 01;07;25;10

Unknown

her transparency to her, the past, and all her achievements, you know, and so,

01;07;25;10 - 01;07;28;03

Unknown

I'm able to be really honest with my mother.

01;07;28;05 - 01;07;45;03

Unknown

And so she's able to honestly see all of the messiness and the achievements very easy. And I think you have to have an advocate who you can be honest to. Because, having an advocate who's

01;07;45;03 - 01;07;51;24

Unknown

They just want to see a black and white, you know, I've been going to NA meetings or like, and I just saved up enough money to get the car,

01;07;51;24 - 01;07;59;16

Unknown

and to have someone who really, honestly knows like every day is a struggle for you and that when you're doing good,

01;07;59;19 - 01;08;03;06

Unknown

that's a monumental achievement because they know that, you know,

01;08;03;06 - 01;08;14;26

Unknown

I think, even in my writing, unable to be more honest, because my mom, I was almost like, you know, let the world know you're a borderline sociopath,

01;08;14;26 - 01;08;23;12

Unknown

because it allows you to be more honest with yourself. Yeah. And when you have someone, an advocate who even knows you have a lot of,

01;08;23;12 - 01;08;27;15

Unknown

distorted self, but, but and that's interesting and

01;08;27;15 - 01;08;36;07

Unknown

if you have the emotional ability to process and that's all interesting and it's and that's going to be a lifelong process.

01;08;36;07 - 01;08;52;12

Unknown

But you should do it and you should do it. You should do it. You know, you have to have that, advocate who's going to know you honestly and be able to tell you that, you know, there's nothing you should shame yourself about. You know, I think a lot of times in recovery in general,

01;08;52;12 - 01;09;01;27

Unknown

you're reforming a fractured thing, you know, whether it's an actual physical, a broken leg, you have to heal that thing.

01;09;02;00 - 01;09;23;24

Unknown

And so when you're not able to honestly do it, you're not honestly putting the cast on all day, and you have someone who's going to kind of say, oh, that's all right. Just take it off when you're fucking playing some basketball. Yeah. Or a person who's going to honestly believe can go like

01;09;23;24 - 01;09;25;23

Unknown

is that blood coming out of the cast?

01;09;25;23 - 01;09;35;14

Unknown

But the cast still on, no you look good like, oh, no, I'm good, I'm good. Yeah, yeah. You know, you have to have someone that you can, like, honestly say like, well,

01;09;35;14 - 01;09;45;07

Unknown

have to where it's it's still a process for the healing and the fracture is still there. And I don't know if the fracture is ever going to go away.

01;09;45;07 - 01;10;00;15

Unknown

But I'm constantly trying to heal the thing. And you have someone who's going to be an advocate to say, well, you know, I'm impressed because you're still doing more healing. And, you know, it doesn't matter that

01;10;00;15 - 01;10;07;02

Unknown

if you still have a broken leg without a cast on and you're achieving something. Oh, you just won this tournament.

01;10;07;02 - 01;10;45;11

Unknown

But, you know, like, at some point you're going to have to cut the fucking leg off. Yeah. You can't have someone who's just going to, like, respect the fact you're achieving something. Even though this fracture is not getting any better. And at some point though, you know, I mean, so I think for me, that's what my mother is because my father is, you know, at one point, my father, but never being around in my life, you know, having the most kind of distorted male relationship, you know, he wanted to build a cannabis company with me, you know, and and, and the place I'm at now,

01;10;45;11 - 01;10;52;03

Unknown

he's nowhere to be found. I wouldn't want to talk about anything to do with this. Yeah. You.

01;10;52;03 - 01;10;55;10

Unknown

especially male relationships, you know what I mean?

01;10;55;10 - 01;11;14;02

Unknown

They have that level of material kind of respect for success. And so, you know, I think sometimes keeping it harder with fathers especially for, you know, guys coming out of prison, because they don't have someone who's going to be an advocate, to be honest about the fracture.

01;11;14;08 - 01;11;15;11

Unknown

And I think in America,

01;11;15;11 - 01;11;17;12

Unknown

the American story doesn't respect.

01;11;17;12 - 01;11;19;03

Unknown

I feel like a failure.

01;11;19;03 - 01;11;20;11

Unknown

it's hard to admit,

01;11;20;11 - 01;11;28;10

Unknown

I just feel like a failure, I'm a failure or, you know, America still, like, I got the broken leg, but I won the championship, like fucking hurrah.

01;11;28;11 - 01;11;28;23

Unknown

You know,

01;11;28;23 - 01;11;35;13

Unknown

so to have someone who's going to, you know, respect your work,

01;11;35;13 - 01;11;47;26

Unknown

even if they honestly know I don't. Honestly, the odds are against you. You're probably never going to achieve what you dream to achieve. But the fact that you you strive to get there, that's that's honorable. And, you know, I, I commend you for that.

01;11;47;26 - 01;12;05;06

Unknown

You know, I think in a lot of ways, I think, you know, you have to have that because you got to have someone still rooting for you. Even if they know. Yeah. They know, the odds are really just against you. I know, especially in the justice system, you're a felon now, right? Yeah. Jeez. You couldn't have stacked it any harder on yourself.

01;12;05;09 - 01;12;24;04

Unknown

That's drug addict, or criminal, on the main line of occupation. You know, it's. Yeah. No, no, I'm going to put you back in prison, you know? So. Yeah, I think you got to have it. Yeah. It's always curious to me that we have this idea, of of, you know, the felon being the mark of,

01;12;24;04 - 01;12;27;09

Unknown

no longer being able to make it anywhere in society.

01;12;27;11 - 01;12;32;07

Unknown

Where in America specifically, I think the number is now 1 in 12 individuals has a

01;12;32;07 - 01;12;37;19

Unknown

felony record and, 1 in 3, African American males.

01;12;37;19 - 01;12;43;12

Unknown

But then again, like, whose felonies or whose - I think your nod to The Wolf of Wall Street is really pertinent in this time.

01;12;43;12 - 01;12;43;27

Unknown

But,

01;12;43;27 - 01;13;05;26

Unknown

what we see or define as these things, I think that's been the biggest part of this conversation for me, is just rethinking how we define these cultural norms as metrics of success or metrics of redemption. And, I appreciate that. Or even the idea that you go to, you go to club fed is kind of like, oh, you got away with your crime.

01;13;05;26 - 01;13;09;24

Unknown

It's like puts you in a vacation home. Like, you know, this idea that,

01;13;09;24 - 01;13;22;27

Unknown

you're still winning, you know, and especially the camp I was at and, you know, they called it shared ice, and, you know, a lot of the guys where.

01;13;23;00 - 01;13;48;24

Unknown

We were still making money. But what I found, was the norm was that none of these guys, who knew how to make money or live excessive had any real goal set. There's no reason to save money. And most of them - I don't have kids. Most of these guys, whether they're in their 20s or 30s, they all got one kid, two kids, three kids.

01;13;48;26 - 01;14;08;21

Unknown

And as soon as they make a couple thousand dollars, you know, even while still being in prison, even being in a place where, like, oh, this is still realistic and not getting in trouble and have the guards cracked down on his head like, yeah, shouldn't you be saving every dollar you get? Yeah. And then as soon as they make a couple thousand they start getting high.

01;14;08;21 - 01;14;29;18

Unknown

and it's not even like oh I'm getting high and I'm hiding it. And it was like oh let me show you how excessive I can be because now I'm just going to go off the rails all day long and show you that I'm spending money and I'm buying \$5 candy bars, and I beat you because this is how ridiculously insane I can spend.

01;14;29;18 - 01;14;43;23

Unknown

And and so anything that's still respect that, you know, that, that idea is still respected, that this guy can live excessive and still be in here. Yes. Still be a Wheeler and a dealer and,

01;14;43;23 - 01;14;49;08

Unknown

at the end of the day when, when I left there, you know, I got in some trouble and,

01;14;49;08 - 01;15;12;16

Unknown

I even stopped telling people the story of the why. Because there was for one, there was this respect, and then there was this expectation to still be that guy. Or if you can do it over there and you can do it over here and, and then I stopped identifying myself as this person and yeah I can still do these things.

01;15;12;16 - 01;15;36;24

Unknown

And yeah I understand the hows and the whys of, of the whole thing. And maybe I know it better than most, but, but this is how I want to identify myself. And what really helped me do that is that I stopped more than ever. I stopped really believing in the criminals. That really has any aptitude to turn it into anything.

01;15;36;26 - 01;15;45;19

Unknown

And I really find is that the majority of criminals will talk the big game, but at the end of the day,

01;15;45;19 - 01;15;50;27

Unknown

I didn't want to focus on doing that anymore with people that

01;15;50;27 - 01;16;00;14

Unknown

are just, this is a losing battle altogether. So in a lot of ways, I kind of lost my value in the system because

01;16;00;14 - 01;16;09;24

Unknown

I didn't find similar people like me and the ones that were were way too in it than me.

01;16;09;26 - 01;16;32;14

Unknown

They didn't have any other thing that they did to where they were, you know, with both feet and which I guess, you know, if you're going to do anything, do it with two feet, put in. But, you know, that's when I kind of start saying, you know what, I think I'm going to do this art now more serious. And I think there's going to be for a different reason so, you know, that's kind of what all culminated that.

01;16;32;16 - 01;16;33;12

Unknown

Yeah.