

STORIES OF HOPE AND HUMANITY

Versiti Podcast: Season 2 - Episode 9 (Part 2)

Host: Edgar Daggett

Guest: Simon Osamah

INTRO CLIP

SIMON: What I would say happened in Uvalde was the simple fact matter is that went across the guidance that a hundred percent of the law enforcement departments are being told is when there is an active threat, you go in and you eliminate that threat as quick as possible.

EDGAR: How do we stay safe as individuals? How do we keep our families safe? And then you also go on the B2B side and how do we keep our businesses safe as well?

SIMON: Well, and quite often we say, Well, someone's already doing that. Someone's in that space. Someone's got the same podcast as me. Someone's got the same YouTube channel, someone's got the same business idea. But I think we need to turn it around and say, Well, if not me, then who?

EDGAR: You actually put somebody behind bars and ended up being friends with them. Tell the viewers. That's a story!

SIMON: You kept the good stuff towards the end.

EDGAR: Yeah.

BUMPER

Versiti Ep 9 Sub

Just say, whoever created me, they're trying to communicate someone to me. What is it that I'm trying to be communicated with? And then take positive action. One of the things that we often do and I relate this as to where to sit and don't have your back to the door, is that we will often feel that we're judging someone or we're being rude, we're inappropriate, but someone gave us these emotions and feelings. So it's really important that when your body is communicating potential harm to you, but you acknowledge it, just reflect and say, What does this mean? What's being said to me right now? And maybe it's, I need to face the door or someone's walked in that I feel uncomfortable with and we're going to leave. Again there's no rudeness, but, you know, a situation is developing. I don't feel right. We're just gonna leave. And we're gonna go to another restaurant. Those are the type of things that keep you safe. Rather than saying, Oh no, now I'm getting these emotions and feelings. But you're just dismissing it. Or that person's not harm. I'll give you an example I've got. So during COVID a couple of years ago, I went to a car place. So I think I needed something for my license plate. And I walked in there and behind me in the line, in the queue, was a young guy, most probably 20, 21, and he was open carrying. So he had his firearm visible, which in Minnesota, where I am, you can do that. And just something about me said this just does not feel right. He was stood behind me and it just... he just didn't fit with the environment. So I didn't dismiss it and say, Okay, no, he's not gonna be an active shooter. He's not gonna do anything bad. Am I judging the person? All I did was I stepped outside of the queue and on that time, I decided to stand behind him.

EDGAR: Okay.

SIMON: And cause I didn't necessarily feel like I needed to leave, but I just felt uncomfortable. So I stood behind him and he actually sort, like, turned around and smiled at me and I said, I just feel very uncomfortable with you open carrying. And then we had a brief conversation. We weren't going forward, so I wasn't gonna hide behind it. But I told him I feel uncomfortable because I did want him to know that I'm not gonna be a victim. There's just all these, and I could talk about this for hours, but there's just all these templates that I try and give people to, like I said, not live there, but train there. But if you need to do something, you are ready to take action.

EDGAR: Yeah, definitely. So this year there's been filled with shootings. Do you take those examples and try to teach people, organizations— or what are some of your thoughts about shootings?

SIMON: Correct, correct. Yeah, so most of what I've told you is around sort like personal safety, but there's a big concern for workplace when it comes to active violence, sort of active shooter, the big concern is really around the workplace. And the statistics still show that most active shooters occur in the workplace because that's where people spend 8, 10, 12 hours a day. That's where the biggest conflict is, and that's where you know the person is gonna be ... perhaps wronged you. They've terminated you. You're unhappy with them, so the workplace is still one of the largest places. So we work with organizations around their physical security as to how to keep your building open door, welcoming, but also safe and secure. How can you lock down your building? Do you have the right cameras, the right card access? Is your building laid out to the right way? There's a new design called CPTED (Crime Prevention for Environmental Design). An architect will do a great building, but is it designed to help security measures keep people safe? So we look at the physical security, and then we'll come in and do some of those educations that I mentioned about. Here's your plan. If something does happen, what does that look like? You take a lot of things. I did a teaching at a synagogue a few weeks ago, and we talked about if you need to fight, what does fight look like? And people said, Well, you know, I'm gonna pick up a fire extinguisher and I'm gonna throw it at the assailant. I was like, Yeah, but that's a good thing to do. But have you ever take— gone to wall, picked up a fire extinguisher off the wall, and then had to throw it? And they said, No. I said, Let's do it. Let's go and do it.

[00:05:38]

EDGAR: Mm-hmm.

SIMON: So I said to the facility's manager, I said, have you got one that we can use? And then these people went up, practiced lifting it up and then trying to throw them and it went everything from like two feet, to one guy that threw it 15 feet. But I can tell you the time to say, can I pick up a fire extinguisher and throw it at a human is not the time when you're in the moment, you know?

EDGAR: Yeah.

SIMON: So they say the body can't go where a mind hasn't been. So it's all about playing these templates and having to sort practice the theory if you like, to make sure that you're not then thinking about it. You are then doing this. While others are thinking you are actually acting to try and keep yourself safe.

EDGAR: And do you provide these scenarios for people in the area in Minneapolis?

SIMON: Correct. Yeah. And actually, my company is Kingswood Security Consulting. So we go across the US... I mean, I've got clients as far east as New York and as far west as Oregon. So yeah, we...

EDGAR: Oh, wow.

SIMON: We help them on the physical security. Risk management, Edgar, is really the sort of the umbrella that it comes on, the how do we best manage the risk that an organization has and what are those controls that we can use to try and mitigate it? Not all risk can be mitigated; it can only be managed. So yeah, so we travel the country. [00:06:55]

EDGAR: Oh wow. That's impressive. So I have to ask, okay; it's a little bit of a touchy subject, but Texas; there was a shooting in Texas where the shooter targeted elementary schools. And I wanted to go on your thoughts or your opinion, cuz I know, probably a lot of our viewers and listeners are thinking right now on what should have happened.

SIMON: Yep.

EDGAR: And you provided... I believe it was hide.

SIMON: Run, hide, fight.

EDGAR: Run, hide, fight.

SIMON: Run, hide, fight. Yep.

EDGAR: The police officers decided to wait. What were your thoughts? What were your thoughts on that? Should they have gone in knowing that the safety of children would fight or did they do the correct and just wait it out?

SIMON: Yeah, good question. So the first thing I would say, you're getting this tone from me. Your listeners by now should know that I'm gonna say that you own your personal safety.

EDGAR: Mm-hmm.

SIMON: In 2022, you own your personal safety. You are responsible to it. So to that end, my nine year old when he goes to school and does his run, hide, fight drills and they turn the tables over and hide. My nine year old knows you do what it takes to keep you safe. You don't listen to the teachers, you don't listen to anyone else. You do what you feel is necessary to keep you safe. If that's throwing a chair through a glass window and then jumping out, you do it. If that is you running out and going to another room, you do what you feel is necessary. So no matter where the person is, I would always say you have to own your personal safety. It is not anyone else's responsibility. Own yours. That's the first thing I'd say. But second thing in relation to Uvalde. Is that post Columbine, post Virginia Tech with these active shooter situations at schools and colleges; schools have hardened their environments, meaning they've got more security measures. It's more difficult for people to get in schools in theory, unless it's an insider. So the mindset changed from the police officers turning up to a scene of a crime, if you like, waiting for a SWAT team, waiting for a group of people, and then going inside the building and finding out where the threat is. And people will say, Eliminate the threat. Eliminate the threat. Is a played down word for kill the bad guy. That is what people used to do before some of those major incidents, Columbine, Virginia Tech — get a SWAT team, all go in together. It changed because when seconds count, the police are only minutes away. When seconds count, the police are only minutes away. So now when those incidents happen, what you have to do is remove the threat as quick as possible. And the guidance changed that the first officer on scene goes in alone. Now, that person could be going in against automatic weapons. They could be going against five or six people. Statistically, they're never gonna be going against five or six people. Generally it's like one person. One bad person, bad guy with a gun. But they've gotta go in as quick as possible, find where to threat is, and eliminate it. What I would say happened in Uvalde was, I mean, we could talk about the moral compass of the people. [00:10:06]

EDGAR: Mm-hmm.

SIMON: We could talk about what happened and they're using hand sanitizer inside the school when the shooting's going on. The simple fact matter is that went across the guidance that a hundred percent of the law enforcement departments are being told is when there is an active threat, you go in and you eliminate that threat as quick as possible. Whether you're one person or 20 officers, you go in and eliminate the threat. With Uvalde, for whatever reason, that did not happen, and

that's what's gonna come out in any sort of public inquiry that they have. That they, I can say categorically 100%, they went against the guidance of any training by not going in and trying to find that that bad guy.

EDGAR: No. So thank you for sharing all that. That's something that a lot of the viewers and a lot of people wanted to know... from a response from a professional. What's the reaction? Should they have played the correct role? And I think, you got some ... there's some like, okay, this is what should have happened. And what I did like that you shared was how to keep safe. And your children should be able to defend themselves to a certain mark. And if any of you guys have any questions, we'll have some of his assignments links for his organization where you guys can get help. Because safety is a big role that we play in today's world. How do we stay safe as individuals? How do we keep our families safe? And then you also go on the B2B side and how do we keep our businesses safe as well? So I appreciate that sharing for it, you know, and continue — so is that the main... So currently your role, this is your baby, this is your business. Is this what you do currently? Today? Is this what?

SIMON: Yeah, and I think... like I said, I'm a hard person to work out, but so safety and security, property development are sort of things I do to sort of make money if you like. But what I also do to fulfill me is actually have a podcast called "Who I Became."

EDGAR: Mm-hmm.

SIMON: Where I've always been fascinated. I think the listeners might be starting to learn a bit more about my personality here, but I've always been fascinated with people's backgrounds as to how they became who they became. So just before Covid, I started with podcasts. Seemed to have taken off. We got two, 3000 downloads every episode. And it's all about people sharing their stories. I love a good conversation. I love to listen and learn from people's lives. I believe so much that can be learned in other people's stories. And "Who I Became" podcast talks to people about their not the... you might see the end result and everyone's like, Wow, this is amazing. This is where this person is. But it's like, I want to get to the backstory as to how that person became where they are. You know, you all start to unpick my story here a bit today. So it's always fascinating to work out. Well, yeah, this is where you are, Simon, but tell us how you got there.

EDGAR: So what are some of... did you have some interesting guests that you can share that told where they started? It's completely different from where they are today? Can you share a little bit?

SIMON: Yeah, well, I can tell, so I mean, some of the cool people I've interviewed are Joe Foster, who's the founder of Reebok. Carole Baskin from Netflix "Tiger King." A guy called Jesse Iwuji; there's two African Americans in NASCAR here in the US and Jesse Iwuji is one of those African Americans. And then Karlton Dennis, who is a YouTuber. He's got like half a million followers on YouTube, does tax strategy. Really cool. Young entrepreneur. And I think what I love about those stories, or what I love about those people is that they're just very authentic conversations; and the power of podcasting, like the conversation me and you were having is that power of connection that we lose in today's world. I mean, Joe Foster as an example, I got to Joe Foster just by nurturing a relationship; talking to him and then trying to say, Hey, would you be interested in coming on my podcast? But to put into perspective for the listeners, I don't know how big Reebok is as a company now, but Joe Foster, I think he's 87 years old, English billionaire. He sold Reebok for, I think it was like 3.6 billion pounds in 2006 to Adidas. Incredible wealth and stature. And I said to him, as an entrepreneur, you often have a business idea and you think this isn't working out. I should probably move and stop and try and do something else. So perhaps someone in your family's saying, Simon, give up that dream. That business is never gonna happen. It's never gonna take off. And I said to Joe Foster, I said, Do you ever have any moments like that and how did you know to persevere through? And this is an 87 year old who's now worth like \$4 billion. He said Simon— and pretty much everyone in the world has owned a pair of Reeboks at some point in life. [00:15:05]

EDGAR: Mm-hmm.

SIMON: He said, Simon, he said there was a time for three years, I was living on a mattress on the factory floor, the warehouse floor when I made these tennis shoes with my wife and I had my wife saying, You've gotta figure this stuff out. You've gotta figure this stuff out. This is not the life. But then he then persevered and obviously Reebok became the global brand that it is. So I think it's a real reminder that we see people, we've idolized them or look at their accomplishments no matter how big the bank balance, no matter how big the company, there's always a story of some type of overcoming, some type of adversity. And that was a real time... and even Carole Baskin from the "Tiger King." One of the things I say to my guests offline is, is there ever a question that you wish someone would ask, but

they've never asked you. And Carole Baskin, I think she left home at 15 or 16 years old to then start working. And the reason why I said to her, How is it that you can seem to deal with all this rumors and propaganda about you killed your husband and, you know, buried him and all this stuff? And she said, Well, Simon, I've had adversity my entire life since I left home at 15 years old. So it's really interesting, Edgar, when you pick away these people's stories. No matter who the person is, they're always very, very humbling. Jesse Iwuji, you know, one of two African Americans in NASCAR, I said to him, what is it that you wish someone would ask you about that they never do? And now, very wealthy family, got a large house in Texas. He said, My dad arrived here from Nigeria with \$200 in his pocket. And he said within 24 hours someone had robbed him and has stolen all his money. And he had nothing. He had nothing. But, you look at this guy, you Google Jesse Iwuji, he's everywhere. You know, he's one of the Black faces of NASCAR, he's got all these sponsor deals, but his life started when his father was robbed and his only \$200 — entire life savings — was stolen from him. So it's really interesting as to where people take these conversations on the "Who I Became" podcast. And I just love that they allow me to be part of their journey.

EDGAR: No, that's awesome. And he could have gone a whole different route. Like if he got robbed, he could've gone back home. He could have been like this never works. And look where he is at now today.

SIMON: Yeah.

EDGAR: And it's incredible to see the growth in certain people. And what didn't bring them down. What was ahead of them? What impacted their life? Like going from \$200 life savings is zero, completely zero.

SIMON: Yeah.

EDGAR: Something brand new. You're entering a sport that predominantly is white. It could have stopped so many things could have stopped him.

SIMON: Yeah. Yeah.

EDGAR: And now you're here. And that's what we try to tell all the viewers, the listeners, no matter where you come from, no matter how much money you have, how much you don't have, you can do anything you put your mind to. You can get anywhere you like. You can be different. And that's perfectly fine. To be different,

to try to make a new path for yourself. Everybody's going right. You wanna go left? Do it. Cuz you never know where the journey will take you.

SIMON: Yeah. And Karlton Dennis he's a big YouTuber, a tax strategist. He's got like a hundred thousand followers on Instagram, half million followers on YouTube. He was actually a D-1 athlete. [00:18:30]

EDGAR: Okay.

SIMON: His dream, his goal, was to be an NFL footballer. That's all he ever dreamed about. That's all he ever wanted. And then when that career didn't go where he thought it was gonna go, he became very content and he said, Well, actually, maybe that's just not my life. You know, the fame that's gonna come from it, the money — that's not my life. That that's just not me anymore. I'm just gonna go and work a nine till five and then just live my life. And when he gets into tax strategy, he took that same passion, that same emotions and love of football into helping people save money with a tax strategy... that's blown up. He earns like, dunno, \$20,000 a month or something stupid from his YouTube channel. He's got this program talking about tax strategy, like two, 3000 for even his program, he's releasing all this content. He's now driving the portion of this stuff. So, he didn't think that was gonna be his life anymore. And all of a sudden he just puts his heart and his soul into something else, finds a new sort of new dream. And then, wow. It just rewards him. So even him, that wasn't... being a tax strategist wasn't on his radar until his dream of being a footballer disappeared away. And then he put the hard work and effort in, and then the reward has come. So yeah, there's always stories behind the success. That's what I love to find out.

EDGAR: Yeah. That's awesome to hear. Someone's like, Okay, you have one dream, but you put all your passion— you have other dreams. You have multiple dreams and maybe some dreams that you don't even know of. And then you don't know when you'll find a different passion. Even if you think a hundred percent this is gonna be your passion. 'Cause to be a D-1 athlete, you put a lot of time and effort into it. You have practice and everything like that. But, it's awesome that they found another passion, and that they found success through it.

SIMON: Well, and quite often we say, Well, someone's already doing that. Someone's in that space. Someone's got the same podcast as me. Someone's got the same YouTube channel, someone's got the same business idea. But I think we need to turn it around and say, Well, if not me, then who? If I'm not gonna do it, who is

gonna? Someone else is gonna step into my space and use my area of genius. So you've gotta step into it. You know? If not me, then who? Don't let someone else be that "who." Step into your area of genius and show the world what you've got.

EDGAR: No, and that's some of the passion that we see from some of the non-profits, some of the organizations that we work with. Cause, at Versiti we try to share the gift of blood. We try to get that donation going. All communities. And we see some individuals thriving and reaching out and knowing that what they're doing, especially in the Black and Brown communities, Hispanic communities, there's some individuals that... it's something completely different, but they know it's important and they go out there, they're spreading the message. Maybe they don't see success in a day. Or in a week, but in a month, though, like we had a drive, we had 10 units. Awesome. Nothing compared to other units. But slowly, but slowly they're seeing those drives grow. So now they're seeing the work that they're doing, the impact that they're having in the community grow. So add something that's super important and we'll have a lot of the links down below for you guys to donate blood, to learn more, to Simon's podcast, which is super amazing. " Who I Became." It's... go out there, listen to it, enjoy it. See, hear some of the stories that he's been sharing. These are just snippets of what he's talking about. But go out there and give it a like, and subscribe. And talking about difference and transforming, you were telling me before we got on that you actually put somebody behind bars and ended up being friends with them. Tell the viewers. That's a story! [00:22:20]

SIMON: You kept the good stuff towards the end.

EDGAR: Yeah. You put somebody behind bars and then Later, they're like, Oh yeah, you're a pretty cool guy. You know, how does that work?

SIMON: So it is interesting how the universe or faith, whatever you believe, can put things together. Like I said, I mean, whatever people believe is for them to believe. So I'm really respectful of that. But the universe, or God as I would say, can put people together. And in 2003 my sergeant, detective sergeant, gave me a case and said, You're gonna hate this guy. He said, You don't know who this guy is, but you are gonna hate this guy by the end of this investigation. And I thought, Oh, sarge, that's a bit harsh who is this guy? And the person was Michael Long career criminal, now spent to 20 years in and out of incarceration; white collar criminal, predominantly sort of a fraudster. And I can remember it going... We went around to arrest him at his house and do a search warrant. He said to me, he

said, This isn't what you do. I said, What do you mean? He said, What we do? He said, You ring me and I come in by appointment. I was like, Who's this criminal telling me that I'm gonna ring him up, and he's gonna be arrested by appointment. That isn't how the game works. Yeah. But that was really the start of a cat mouse game that; he was bailed from the... for the investigation. He wouldn't turn up on bail. His attorney would say, Simon, he doesn't like you. He wants another investigator. He would do everything possible to try and detract from the investigation. He even actually hired a private investigator to find out where I lived.

EDGAR: Oh, wow.

SIMON: My credit rating. Where my family lived. And when he came back to answer bail, he would say things like, How's Margaret doing? Does Margaret still live on this road? Margaret's my mother. So he was showing me that he knew about my life in an intimate way.

EDGAR: Yeah.

SIMON: And he became... during that investigation, he became my nemesis. But what it did for me was it made me more determined to get him. I was like, I wanna get this guy and I'm gonna lock this guy up. And I did. I think it was about an indictment with like 60 indictments, something like that. He got five years imprisonment. And then when he came out, he'd often be arrested. He'd have my home address in his pocket, or he would say to the officers that he knew me. And people would ring me and say, Michael Long's just been arrested. This is what he said. He knows where you live. And I said, He's always done that. He's my nemesis. This is just what the guy does. And then fast forward a few years, when I moved to America in 2011. And in 2016, a good friend of mine sent me an article. So Michael Long spent 20 years in and out of incarceration. A good friend of mine sent me an article that Michael had come outta prison. He had found faith and he was started this homeless charity where he was converting a red bus into like a homeless shelter and was gonna drive it around. 500 people to stay in there. My friend was saying Simon this is a scam. He's ripping people off. This isn't real. And I thought, well, I know Michael Long better if than he knows himself from doing the investigations like, Well, I can't see the angle. And for whatever reason they go, I'm not too sure why. I still don't know why. And it was 6:30 in the morning. I went online, I researched Michael; managed to find the phone number. I'm not gonna say what tactics I use, but I'm an ex detective. But, I found a phone number

for him. And I decided to ring him. And I called him, so England, sort of six hours ahead of America. So I called him, it was like lunchtime, their time. And I said, Is this Michael Long? And he said, Yes. And I knew it was straightaway cuz I recognized his voice. And I said, Well this is Simon Osamah. I said, You might remember me. A few years ago, I put you in prison for five years. And he paused and said, Yes, I f-ing in remember you. He said, What are you ringing me for? And I said, Well, Michael I said, I'm out of the police now living in America. I assume you mostly knew I was in America cuz he always used to stalk my life. And I said, I'm living in America now. And I said that I saw this article... friend sent me this article and I'm just ringing to say well done. I said, I always knew that if you could harness that mindset you had for good. You didn't need the crime, you could be successful at whatever you put your mind to. I said, I'm just ringing you to say well done. And he said, Hang on a minute, I'm driving. And he pulled over to the side of the road. And when you know someone's authentic, you know, I heard that cracking in his voice. And then I could just hear that he was in tears and he said, Simon, I can't believe that you would ring me to say that you are proud of me. He said, I don't know what... I dunno what to say. And then we spoke, he was at the side of the road. We spoke for about 30 minutes. And then when we hung up, he sent me a text message, very simple text message, and he just said, Simon, can you forgive me for all the things that I did to you and to your family? I don't know if they knew what I was doing. And I just text him back and said, Michael, said, You don't need my forgiveness. I said, Just keep walking towards the light. Keep doing the good thing. I said, Whatever happens. I said, I'll be there for you. I said, I'll step in. If not you, then who. I'll step in that void and be the person that can be your guidance. And then we sort of, over the next few weeks, we sort of spoke more on the phone and text messages. And he sent me a book. He said, When I was in prison, he said, I wrote a book and it was always my goal to publish a book. And the draft is called: "There Is A Way Out." And then you're talking, now 16, 15, 16 years later, and he said, Can you proofread the book? I said, Look, I'm an ex detective. What makes you think I'm good at English? I'll take a look. But I don't know, my English isn't amazing. But I looked at the book and in the opening forward, said in there, it said, All ever wanted was to feel validated and accepted by my father. And it never came. And boom. But within an instant, I knew what that connection, what that chemistry was between me and Michael is that we were both the same, just in different lives. We were both two scared little boys seeking the validation of a father, that never came. You know, Michael had a father in his life who wasn't present. I didn't have a father in my life. So we were different worlds, but we were two men, but were scared little boys seeking validation from a father that never came. And since then, I just sort of, really stepped into him and said whatever happens, I'll always be there to help support and guide you. And

we've built a very strong, strong friendship. We need as that story with Melvin Young; someone stepped into my life, it's now my responsibility to step into other people's lives and help them see the good inside them. Yeah. So that's the Michael Long story. I think it should be a movie or a book in that really at some point.

[00:29:19]

EDGAR: That's what I was gonna say. That sounds like a movie, but it's like...

SIMON: If there's anyone listening that works in films who wants to get more about story. It should be a film.

EDGAR: From two different sides. Where it takes you and how you guys met up again. That's incredible. I'm surprised he didn't hang up the call. I be like, Wait, how long did you put me? No. That's gone.

SIMON: Exactly. Yeah. Yeah. I think he's most intrigued to see what I had to say. And I think one of the things about the story is... so in 2017, it was either 2017 or 2019? Not too sure, but a couple of years after talking back and forth, I was back in England and I had like a small window said, Look Michael I'm going to get this hotel in London. I said, If you wanna wanna meet. I said, I'd love to see you. And he said, Tell me the location. I'll be there. And then he drove to this hotel, me and him spoke for a while, and then my wife and two sons came down and then we sort of went to leave and Michael said, I can't believe you did that. I said, did what? He said, I can't believe that you let me meet your wife and two sons. Is there anything I need to know? Will like these men with cameras gonna come in and attack us and stuff. But it really reminded me in that Edgar, that. For him being a career criminal, he most probably, some would say might not— He didn't deserve this, but it really showed me that no one had ever really had trust in him. That every time someone did for him, that was anomaly. I mean, me saying, Edgar, I'm coming into town, you know, can we meet up for a coffee? My wife and family are there. For him was, Well, Simon's gonna be judging me. This isn't right that someone actually trusts me. And like I said, part of it for him, it could be, but did he really deserve that trust? But again, you gotta place faith in someone. There's good in all people if you really go looking for it. But it showed me that he wasn't used to people trusting him. And that's a sad place to be for a then sort of 40 something man.

EDGAR: And that could impact you drastically. I know... when you feel, it's almost like being left alone. It's like...

SIMON: Yeah.

EDGAR: You feel like you have no one around you and it makes you make decisions ultimately that maybe you agree with or don't agree with. But it's an incredible story how basically 360, it was 360, completely changed, doing better things for the community. And it just shows like no matter where you are in life, you can do whatever you want again. And, just because you made a couple bad decisions in the past. That doesn't have to stop you. You can still change and you can still go wherever you put your mind to, but that's an incredible— Wow. And to have somebody... that storyline for both of you, that's an incredible, an incredible person. [00:32:00]

SIMON: Well, and I tell you so well, here's an interesting thing. I think sometimes you might look at the story and say, It is more impactful on Michael Long than it was me. But it was also very impactful on me because a couple of years later, I went to in London and I was— I'd met some friends cause I was back in my homeland. So I met some friends. It was like 11:30 at night. I'd had a couple of drinks, so I was leaving a bar late at night and I got off a subway of — the Underground — in London and this homeless person approached me and asked for some money. And normally it's the type of thing where I mostly just brushed him off and said, No, sorry I don't have any money and kept walking. So I was thinking, am I gonna get robbed? What's all these things? But it came into my mind, what I used for Michael Long, and I said, If not me, then who? If I'm not gonna talk to his homeless person, who then is? And I spoke to this homeless person and he told me about his life, how he'd got addicted to drugs. His older brother had given him drugs. Then he got gangrene in his legs and one of his legs had been amputated and he was living on the streets and no one in his family cared for him. And no one was really helping for him. And he was isolated and all alone. All this type of stuff. And at one point the guy looked at me and he's like put his hand on my sort of shoulder. And he sort of started to cry and we'd been talking for like 30 minutes at this point. And I said, you know, why are you crying? And he said, Well, you are the first person today that's actually made me feel like a human being. You are the first person today who's had an interest in who I am. You're the first person today who's listened to me. And that all came from me saying, the Michael Long, "if not me, then who?" If I'm not gonna talk that homeless person then who is? And that was really impactful for me, seeing this young guy cry because no one treated him as being a human being. So I think there's two sides to the Michael Long story. There's how it's changed his life, but also how it's then impacted me and how I look at other people. But again, for adversity or in difficult times.

EDGAR: No, that's awesome. And super helpful as a person in general. And again I hope the viewers are listening and understanding like, you can make change no matter what. You are a change. How do you continue to make that change and make a difference within in your community no matter how small or how big it is? Cuz that one homeless person, that's just one person. You took maybe what, 10 minutes outta your day to talk to him. And you learn so much about who people are in general. So that's an amazing story. So I wanted to go: Where do you see yourself in the next coming years? Do you continue to do the security on a bigger platform? Spreading farther out? Cuz, not only here in the US but do you think you'll head back towards like Europe, you know, Asia? Or where do you see your journey going?

SIMON: Yeah. And I think for sure if you'd asked me a few years ago, I've said, the entrepreneur side for sure, and I will continue to consult and help organizations around safety and security. But I think the podcast is really... we've been talking over an hour. Hopefully people are still listening to this conversation as we get in. But, talking to you, the power of connection is where I see myself moving more into. I think my goal would be maybe not to get bigger guests, cause I've interviewed some really cool individuals.

EDGAR: Mm-hmm.

SIMON: But I think my goal is to keep telling these stories of hope. They're not stories of adversity. They're stories of hope where people can enhance and change their own lives. Knowing no matter what adversity, what adverse circumstances you're going through, someone has been there before. We often like to say, Oh, I'm the only one, I'm the only one who knows this because it's all happened to me. Well, so many years have passed. More than likely someone's gone through the adversity you're going before, no matter what it is. So I like to give the stories of hope for people to know that they can persevere, they can overcome. So I think my goal is to try and see what I can do more with the podcast. See what it turns into for sure.

EDGAR: That's awesome. And again, check out his podcast, "Who I Became" down below. All the links will be available for you all. Simon, I wanna say thank you so much for taking the time. It's been super humbling, super interesting to hear your stories where you came the friends that you've met on the way. It's been super impactful, at least to myself, and I hope to all the viewers and our listeners. But

before we start closing this out, I gotta ask you one thing: how do you stand out from the inside? [00:36:50]

SIMON: I think to stand out from the inside, I think I'm always authentic. Whether what I said resonates with people or it doesn't, I think I'm always authentic and step into that void. You know, like I mentioned a few times in this podcast, If not me, then who. If I'm at Target and there's a young guy on the cashier, looks like he's having a bad day, who's gonna ask him, Hey, how are you doing? How you feeling? I think stepping into that void, being authentic and truly being who you are all the time. I think Socrates once said, the greatest way to live with honor in this world is to be who we pretend to be. So I think I am, what I am is, is truly authentic and I believe that helps me stand out from others. The Simon you see on camera is the Simon that you see off camera. Good, bad, indifferent.

EDGAR: No, being truly authentic is awesome. And Simon, I once again wanna appreciate you for joining the Stand Out from the Inside podcast. Again, to all of our viewers and listeners, check out his podcast down below. Check out his website for any personal safety recommendations or any help on that for your family and friends. Guys, stay safe and we hope everybody out there enjoyed this podcast, learned a little bit about safety, learned a little bit about yourselves, and to take away, at least to find your passion, to be authentic, to be yourself — your true self. So Simon, again, once again for thank you so much for joining the Stand Out from the Inside podcast.

SIMON: It's been an honor and a privilege. I really appreciate our time today, Edgar, it's been a lot of fun.

EDGAR: I appreciate you too. Alrighty, everybody. Thank you all for listening and watching another Stand Out from the Inside podcast. I really do appreciate Simon for joining. I hope you all once again took something out of this to be motivated, to be genuine, to be authentic, and to be yourself. That's the person that's gonna take you far, no matter where you come from, no matter what you've done, you can be you and you can achieve anything you put your mind to. Again, thank you so much for enjoying part two of this two part finale. We appreciate you all. Again, like, follow, subscribe. This is the Stand Out from the Inside Podcast presented by Versiti. I'm your host Edgar Daggett. We'll see you all next time.