

00:02.57

astudyincrime24

David, welcome to the show.

00:04.99

David

Scott, it's a pleasure.

00:06.25

astudyincrime24

Well, the pleasure is mine. I appreciate your time. I know you're very you're a very busy man. You're on, I think, about 1,500 boards. So I'm glad you have time for the podcast.

00:17.86

David

Well, it's it's really something that I enjoy doing. It's cathartic, and I hope that it's of benefit to the viewers from a substantive point of view, that I'm providing information that could be helpful.

00:29.41

astudyincrime24

I'm sure it will be. So before we talk about what happened to you and what you did, let's I want to tell me a little bit about Ephora, the company that that you founded that sold diagnostic testing products.

00:42.37

David

I founded it in a sense, but let me kind of even go back in time before that. So in or about 1995, a physician located in California was the initial founder with the concept of developing and bringing to market a rapid HIV diagnostic test.

00:46.61

astudyincrime24

Sure.

00:59.58

David

HIV at that time was ah a really significant major ah issue of concern, medically, of course. and he was able to affiliate with very well-known HIV researchers and test developers at the Maryland University of Maryland Institute of Human Virology. And that ah came to me as a potential investment opportunity as it did to many others who I ultimately later met in or about 1995, as I say. And I actually became one of the larger investors in 1995 with many of these other individuals

01:37.86

David

about 100 initial investors at that time. And over a period of the ensuing year or two that followed, we all determined that this physician, who had a very good concept, simply wasn't capable of taking the company to the next level. Didn't have the business acumen to do so. And we also found that he wasn't necessarily keeping his, let me be kind by saying he didn't keep his books and records in appropriate order to our comfort and satisfaction.

02:07.93

astudyincrime24

oh

02:08.38

David

So in late 96, early 97, they actually approached me and asked me if I would be willing to become the CEO through what's called a shareholder proxy. Shareholder proxy meaning that in excess of 50% of the voting shares of the company at that time, which they collectively controlled.

02:28.72

David

They would be able to prepare paperwork and actually serve him with it and then provide ah the, this was ah at the time of Delaware Corporation, file with the state of Delaware that there would be a change in management.

02:33.59

astudyincrime24

Uh oh.

02:41.94

David

And I would become the CEO through this proxy and he would be stepping down. And I was ah offered at the time a ah salary that was commensurate with what I was earning as an attorney at that time. And at that time, I was looking actually, if I could, to exit the practice of law, not very not being very pleased with practicing at that stage after about 15 years of practice.

03:09.04

David

And it provided me an opportunity to escape what I always like to call the golden handcuffs, meaning that at a certain point in time as a professional, in this case as an attorney, you're earning enough money to wear with a family, and I had a young family at the time. It would be very difficult to leave that profession and take a tremendous pay cut. So this afforded me two opportunities. One, what I consider to be an exciting opportunity to develop the company.

03:35.25

David

I always felt I was a very good business creator and extender, if you will, or the ability also to put together a team which ultimately I was charged with doing.

03:49.11

David

and to you know bring that company to the next level, because it was ah you know absolutely a startup at that stage. And at the same time, leave the practice of law, which I was looking to do, and earn enough money to be able to satisfy the needs of my family. So this opportunity presented itself. I seized the moment, if you will. The proxy ensued, and I became the CEO of Afora in mid-97.

04:15.18

astudyincrime24

And you ended up raising millions of dollars from investors and then we had an issue. I know the SEC has very complicated rules about what you can and can't do with investor funds. And I don't, I don't pretend to understand all of that, but I want to know, was there an exact moment that you, you crossed the line or was it gradual?

04:36.55

David

There wasn't an exact time it was and I wouldn't necessarily characterize it as gradual because we were all aware me you know most pointedly being aware that actually even before I became involved there were some SEC issues but they were very minor at that stage and what ends up happening in these situations is unless you early on complete a successful rescission offer which means you're giving the investors the opportunity to rescind meaning receive their money back through a rescission a formal rescission offer it's a set of documents that they're provided the investors are and then they can make a full and knowing decision whether they want to remain knowing what the flaws are in the fundraising process the legal flaws I guess I would call them or remain in as investors and waive the opportunity for recoupment of the

05:29.16

David

In this particular case, the problem became, and it became magnified even further over time, that we never had enough funds to actually proceed with the rescission offer. The problem became, though, that as the monies continue to be raised and these SEC violations continue to occur, and when I say SEC violations, for instance, the major one was, companies that are private who are operating what what is called um private placement offerings need to go into what's called six month minimum, six month quiet periods, meaning periods for those six months where they're not raising any funds. And because we didn't have any

revenue, we were unable to do that. So by continually to the continuous raise of funds was a major violation or was a violation. But the more major violations were

06:26.23

David

We had too many what's called unaccredited investors which means investors that didn't have a sufficient net worth or a particular net worth and income? To be able to invest in what's considered to be a risky investment such as this so the idea here was while we were aware of these violations the idea or the thought was that that these, if they were ever to become actionable, would be remaining a civil SEC matter, and that's actually what began.

06:58.06

astudyincrime24

Right.

06:58.57

David

In the year 2000 or 2001, the SEC filed a formal complaint against the company and myself for SEC violations. That's how the case actually began.

07:09.61

astudyincrime24

I know the FBI ended a braiding for in 2001, I believe. and

07:15.04

David

Yeah, about a year after the SEC instituted the case, civilly.

07:18.80

astudyincrime24

Okay. And I find this hard to believe. I mean, I believe it, but it's just crazy that the FBI was surprised to learn that the diagnostic testing products were actually legitimate. They weren't fake. Why would they, why were they thinking and they were fake?

07:31.89

David

because at that time they were interviewing certainly four employees and what ended up happening was my partner at the time had read a book on how Home Depot became Home Depot and an admission by the ah CEO of and chairman of the board of Home Depot that early on when they were giving tours of the facility to potential investor groups they actually had boxes that were empty on racks throughout the facility at that time. So one of our employees in an interview with the FBI or and or the SEC indicated that these were empty boxes. And then the narrative began that they were fake boxes. Well, I mean, there's no

such thing as a fake box. A box is a box. It was an empty box.

08:22.26
astudyincrime24
Right.

08:22.88
David
But actually, we had meetings with Abbott Labs, who was considering using us as a primary third-party contract manufacturer, a very exciting moment. My partner came to me and said, can I do what Home Depot did and put the boxes on the shelf?

08:36.59
David
And I said, I don't see a terrible problem with that, you know really. I mean, there were boxes that were full, and then the preachers added more boxes.

08:44.38
astudyincrime24
Yeah, I don't think that's a big, should be a big deal.

08:44.48
David
But that narrative took hold. The narrative took hold. And then what ended up happening is, That became a central theme in the case. In fact, and we'll talk about this in a minute, in subsequent Chicago Tribune and Chicago sometimes Sun-Times articles following the raid, the false narrative was magnified by saying the company's a fake company. Meaning, and this was actually specifically stated in these articles, that the tests were fake when it couldn't be anything you know farther from the truth, which

09:22.50
David
both the FBI agents and the government knew very well for two reasons. One, because they came in during the raid and demanded that our scientists provide testing in their presence.

09:34.86
David
And I actually not too long ago spoke to one of our chief scientists and he said that they were in shock and made the remark, I can't believe these tests are real. One week later, approximately after that raid,

09:46.62
astudyincrime24
I'm gonna.

09:50.16

David

There was an article in the Chicago Sun-Times calling our tests fake. So one of the things I want to focus upon in our discussion today is the fact that this type of narrative, once again, once they can establish the government, that is, that there are any type of legal violations, they'll oftentimes go to great lengths to expand that narrative into false falsities to benefit them with the prospective jurors should the defendant ultimately want to go to trial in a criminal case. And that's why I believe these articles were written in that fashion knowingly false because they're making basically a statement to the defendant at that point. If you're even giving any thought to going to trial, think again.

10:40.45

astudyincrime24

It reminds me of, as you're as you're talking about this, I'm thinking of Theranos and their Edison machine, which was also a diagnostic testing, which never worked. So in that case, it was fake. But yeah, no, when the media gets hold of stuff, it it burns like ah like a wildfire.

10:58.46

David

And of course, the average person reading those newspaper articles, and and I'm not being critical of those individuals, believes what they read.

11:06.43

astudyincrime24

Yeah, I believe you have all of it, yeah.

11:08.18

David

Right. So, and and and because there's no ability legally to push back formally or otherwise against the government, or the media for that matter more broadly, it's a very dangerous, ah slippery slope.

11:22.02

David

And I have to say to you, I don't ever see it changing sadly.

11:26.31

astudyincrime24

Well, speaking of the government, and since you're an attorney, I knew you were, know you're very aware of this. The the government, the US attorneys, the prosecutors, they have something like a 95% conviction rate. And I think only something like two to 3% of cases actually even go to trial. Most people settle. My question to you is, did you end up

going to trial? Did you take a plea? What would happen in this regard?

11:50.29

David

I ended up pleading for two reasons. One, because at that particular time, it was at the same moment that ah Bernard made often a couple other very large Thomas Petters in Minnesota. And then I'm forgetting the name, an individual who had a very large case overseas.

12:10.61

David

These guys were getting 50 and 100 year sentences.

12:13.65

astudyincrime24

Yikes.

12:14.54

David

and yeah Although the sentencing guidelines are the same today that they than they were then, judges were very influenced at that time by that. And given my age and what was happening in some of these similar cases, I was urged and I also very much agreed that that I had no choice, absolutely, other than to plead guilty because of the potential exposure, if I went to trial, where I would almost certainly lose because many people don't know this, but actually

12:45.29

David

And technically, to lose a case like this, all it takes is the establishment with evidence by the government of one falsehood. And you know the old saying, you know who doesn't lie once, or at least can be said to have lied once during a 10-year period running a business.

12:57.20

astudyincrime24

Sure. well

13:03.06

David

So as a practical matter, I really had no choice. The difficulty became during the plea negotiation process, I went through, I think, 10 drafts.

13:14.17

David

where again, false narratives abounded in the document. We did redraft, after redraft, after redraft, and finally the government turned to me and said, look, Mr. Graski, you'll either sign this now

or you'll go to trial. And I signed it. And at that point, there were maybe 20% still you know gross falsehoods. And sadly,

13:40.11

David

you know, this becomes a public document that people could read and then say to themselves, Oh, okay. So you're agreeing. You really are a fraud in all of these areas, not really realizing that, you know, in the end you have zero leverage and you're going to have to sign a document that you may not be comfortable signing and you're going to sign it under oath. And yet as a practical matter, again, you have no choice. You just have to, because if you go to trial and lose,

14:09.31

David

Sadly, my 14-year sentence could have become 20 to 25 years.

14:12.56

astudyincrime24

Oh, yeah, they would hammer you for sure. The charges were mail fraud, wire fraud, money laundering. Is that what they ended up being or how did.

14:21.80

David

Now, my co-defendant was the money laundering one. For me, it was the wire and mail.

14:24.73

astudyincrime24

OK.

14:26.31

David

There was no money laundering. in my There was no count for me. There was a count in the case, but that wasn't applying to me.

14:31.95

astudyincrime24

OK.

14:32.03

David

It was another defendant. But the wire and mail fraud for those who don't necessarily understand the distinction. Wire fraud is if i if I was directing that a wire transfer of money would be paid to any of the brokers who were bringing in the funds, you know you're utilizing the wire communications throughout the United States for the moving of money, that's a wire fraud count.

15:03.17

David

Mail fraud is using the mails. So in other words, when we were mailing packages of documents to any potential perspective or existing investor, ah that would constitute mail fraud if there was any theme to be falsity within those documents.

15:19.31

astudyincrime24

We're gonna talk in depth about all of this some more, but first, let's take a quick break and I'll be right back.

15:29.41

astudyincrime24

And I am back with David Groski. We're talking about US versus Groski, speaking of which that phrase must've been very daunting to see that. You have said that in our conversation before we got online that government prosecutors had made some false allegations, maybe perpetuated a false narrative about you and Afora. Tell me about that, because I understand that's not just, it wasn't just about you. They have a tendency to do that in other regards as well.

15:56.32

David

Well, at least that's my belief, Scott. I mean, I believe that certainly it's not limited to me. Why would it be?

16:02.71

astudyincrime24

Right.

16:03.19

David

The concern is, again, as I said earlier, because it's a practical matter and it is actually a formal legal matter, there is no recourse that you can take against the government if they're going to perpetuate what I'll call not necessarily a purely false narrative, but a greatly exaggerated and in certain respects, knowingly false content um to the case.

16:27.23

David

It's very concerning because and maddening because how do you push but you know what do you do about that? In this case, through documents that they seized during the raid, as well as you know the testing that was done on site to prove that the tests were real,

16:45.42

David

but But over and above that, there were there were peer review

publications and very highly regarded medical journals about the efficacy and legitimacy of our rapid HIV diagnostic test as a world class opera performing test. And in fact, the indictments came right after the FDA did not approve our application for approval for sale within the United States of our test, not because the test's efficacy was failing, but because the document um preparations were faulty in certain respects that had more to do with our HIV consulting company failing in that regard, as opposed to the test not being real.

17:30.96

David

And so and I won my question whether had we received that FDA approval there would have been an indictment because again the timing was such where it came right after that failure. But in any event it is concerning because the question becomes how can that change or can that change when there again is no real practical way to fight back or hit back at that the government prosecutors or the US Attorney's Office or the SEC when perpetuating knowingly false positions.

18:08.15

astudyincrime24

Well, when you have the power and might of the US government against you, that's you're certainly it's certainly David and Goliath, that's for sure. So all of this happened, I think, in 2001, 2002, but you didn't report to prison until 2008. And pardon of my alliteration, but what was it like living in legal limbo for those years?

18:32.21

David

I would have to say more difficult than being in prison.

18:35.37

astudyincrime24

Really?

18:36.40

David

It was a different kind of prison and a more severe one for me. I can only speak for myself.

18:40.50

astudyincrime24

and not knowing.

18:42.77

David

Well, in a community where I've never had had experience with anyone else in my community being incarcerated, you know, imagine the thoughts of those, you know, family and friends who are looking at you with scants if they're looking at you at all.

18:58.41

David

You are so scarlet-lettered at that point that there's really, you know, you feel alone on an island and no one's talking to you, no one's giving you any consideration. Is it really a human being in many respects?

19:11.55

David

It was almost a relief reporting to prison, I have to say, which I ultimately self-surrendered in September of 2008. Walking into that prison for the first time was a relief for me.

19:27.17

astudyincrime24

Really.

19:28.83

David

after all those years of stress and strain.

19:33.11

astudyincrime24

Did you have any kind of support during that time frame? I don't know if you i don't know if you were married or or what the situation was, but did you have anything of a support?

19:39.64

David

I mean, I had family support. My children were young. It was a very, very difficult time for my wife. She did the best she could, as did my family. And my mother and sister had a hard time with it. My dad had a very difficult time with it.

19:53.13

David

And so, no, I mean, everyone does the best they can, but how can anyone expect any human being to do, quote unquote, well in that situation? It's not realistic. I didn't necessarily feel I had a lot of support, but how how could you really expect it during that? There's so much confusion and um about what happened and why it happened, and everyone's looking within themselves in that respect. and We just had to do the best we could to take care of one another. And it's you know that's a very, very challenging time to be able to try to do that.

20:28.21

astudyincrime24

A few episodes ago, I interviewed Mark Virachi, and I think you

probably know who he is. He also, yeah, he's a great guy.

20:33.23

David

I actually personally know Mark well.

20:36.84

astudyincrime24

He went to prison for securities fraud, but he echoes the same kind of experience that you had being in this legal limbo for, I think in his regard, it was something like seven years, it may have been longer, but it was it was just difficult, the not knowing and and how family and and even friends, all the friends disappeared, things like that.

20:57.31

astudyincrime24

So how long was your sentence?

20:58.29

David

I was lucky enough. I was, I would say I was lucky enough, uh, two of my closest friends, uh, actually three, one passed away very sadly, but two of my closest friends visited me on average twice for all of the 11 years. And that was not an easy thing because as it wasn't, as it was equally difficult for my family during those years, because two of the three pris federal prisons I was at were a plane ride away, not a drive away. So that was very, you know, challenging.

21:28.36

David

financially and otherwise. But thankfully they visited me twice a year and my family and my children and my mother and sister ah visited me two to three times a year for all of those years. So that was a tremendous blessing and really helped me get through this I have to say. I mean without that it would have been very very daunting on top of what was already a difficult time.

21:54.45

astudyincrime24

I'm sure you find out who your friends are when you face something like that. That's for sure.

21:58.91

David

Well, what you find out, and I know that's ah that's a good statement. to I mean, I don't disagree with it. I do agree with it. But I think what I really learned from it, Scott, is that certain people have the ability, the inner constitutions, however you want to state it, to be able to deal with an individual during that point in time in a particular way and there's others who under the guise of well I just

didn't know what to say just disappear because it's too uncomfortable so many of these people who disappeared I knew for 20 years intimately and they just disappeared I'm talking about mainly family friends in the neighborhood type of groups and

22:27.68
astudyincrime24
Mm hmm.

22:46.24
David
When I saw many of them later at a special family event, they were doting over me, hugging me, kind, so caring. And I'm thinking to myself, where were you when I needed you?

22:58.72
astudyincrime24
This was after prison?

23:00.33
David
Yeah, this is recently actually, like about 17 years later.

23:01.79
astudyincrime24
Okay.

23:04.89
David
And I'm thinking to myself, all it would have taken is for you to give me one call and say, I'm just so sorry you're going through this. Just that alone would have been everything as opposed to disappearing. So that the disappearing was very, very difficult.

23:23.55
David
yeah

23:24.80
astudyincrime24
How long was the sentence that you received and and where did you end up serving your time?

23:29.07
David
received I received Scott a 14-year sentence in a plea, ah served a little under 11. I began at FCI Loretto in Loretto, Pennsylvania, ultimately moving to to FCI Morgantown in and West Virginia and ultimately for the last almost six years was at Milan, Michigan, not far from Ann Arbor.

23:54.86

astudyincrime24

And I understand that you were extremely busy in prison. ah what tap i mean What were you doing? that you were ah I would call you a jailhouse lawyer, but that's not really the the real term because you are a real lawyer.

24:07.70

David

Well, but in the context of being in prison, you by definition are a jail house lawyer then because again, remember I did, I wasn't licensed at that stage, but two weeks after I arrived at Loretto, when people learned I was an actual attorney, I became busy very quickly and I became even busier quickly because my choice was not to really charge any meaningful money.

24:11.90

astudyincrime24

Right.

24:31.22

David

My common line was. Before I review your entire file, if you could please just offer me a cup of coffee, that was the concept. Now I was, the idea for me was to make enough from this work, not to have to ask my family to send me any money, because a lot of people don't realize this.

24:49.08

David

These prisons do have what's called a commissary. It's a store where you can buy snacks and your your hygiene items, etc.

24:51.70

astudyincrime24

Sure.

24:56.40

David

You're allowed to spend up to \$300 a month. I probably never spent other than the first week I was there where I had to buy clothes and sneakers, etc. I don't know that I ever spent more than \$50 to \$100 in a month ever. But I always had what I needed through that and that that was the goal.

25:13.58

David

um There are jailhouse lawyers, sadly, who charge five, \$10,000 to individuals in their families without disclosing that the chances of

success in these criminal appeals is two to 3%. I'll never forget at my land, there were two, you know, jailhouse lawyers who, you know, were not real attorneys who were very busy doing a lot of the work and making a lot of money.

25:39.75

David

And I was in the library speaking to a group of guys and saying to them, the chances of success on these types of appeals is two to 3%. And they turned to each other and kind of smiled. And then they turned back to these guys and say, this guy Kirovsky doesn't know what he's talking about. Do not listen to him. He's a civil lawyer. He doesn't know criminal.

26:01.61

David

And what I wanted to say to them, but I bit my tongue was why don't we all go walk over to the legal the law computer, the law, uh, Lexus computer and let's all examine together the cases and let's tally the victories and the losses and let's see who's right and who's not right on that question. I didn't do it because I didn't want to, you know, you don't do those kinds of things in prison. Uh, but I really wanted to.

26:25.94

astudyincrime24

Yeah, you don't want to make anybody angry.

26:28.78

David

No, you never know who their friends are in there that could create a problem. I wasn't worried really about them, but there could be problems with others.

26:35.31

astudyincrime24

You had a couple of ah very tragic events happen while you were in prison, i and I assume being in prison was hard enough. But during that time when you were serving your sentence, your father died, and you were diagnosed with cancer, which is like a double whammy. And I can't begin to understand how difficult that must have been for you.

26:55.54

astudyincrime24

but

26:55.91

David

Well, on both scores, you're alone. This is this is the major problem.

26:59.06
astudyincrime24
Absolutely.

26:59.36
David
a lot look Well, I lost my father in 2009.

26:59.42
astudyincrime24
yeah Tell me about the two events and how did they affect you while you were there.

27:05.00
David
He made one visit to Loretto, and I lost him. And I'll never forget you know being contacted by the prison chaplain.

27:17.66
David
after I had already spoken to my mom so I knew he had passed but I mean what happens is in the prisons the chaplain or the representative from the chaplain will notify you of the death and it's a very cold you know cold-hearted experience and The biggest, there are two big issues related to it. Number one, after you're told of this, you have no one really to talk to. And remember in this particular case, I was so new to prison life. I really hadn't, not that there's many people that would ever become my friends in this setting, but I always had one or two individuals I became at least friendly with. But again, you're in housing units and you're almost never with that particular individual during the evenings, let's say.

28:02.99
David
So, and then the second piece of it is you really have no practical ability to gain closure. I couldn't attend the funeral. It was, it is not allowed in a lower medium or high security facility scenario. So you can attend the wedding. I'm sorry, excuse me, the funeral. And it was just a very, very difficult time, needless to say. And in my case, I was really, really close to my dad. I mean, before he passed.

28:30.78
David
We were probably talking on the phone five days a week while I was in prison. And, you know, before I went to prison, we talked every day, pretty much my whole life. So we were very, very close.

28:42.07
David
That was a very, very difficult time. And I wasn't able to gain

healthy closure through that experience. The cancer scenario where I received the diagnosis on my 50th birthday in 2011, initially came as a shock.

28:57.64
astudyincrime24
Happy birthday.

29:01.51
David
because it was a fatal diagnosis initially. The doctor simply said you have prostate cancer and there's an 88% chance it has already spread to your brain and bones and a 12% chance that it hasn't.

29:18.22
David
So about two weeks later, while shackled and handcuffed to a gurney in the same hospital, I was scanned and immediately after the scanning, the technician, a radiologist said to me, do you want me to give you a thumbs up or a thumbs down on the results? A thumbs up would mean you're clear. A thumbs down would mean it had spread to your brain and bones. So I decided to allow him to tell me. And, you know, seconds later, he gave me the thumbs up that I was clear. So I was in that 12%. And from that moment on, I focused upon a couple of aspects of this. I said to myself, life is an interesting thing. I could have easily just had an SEC civil case and never gone to prison, not lost my freedom.

30:17.51
David
not lost my family possibly very possibly, et cetera, and yet still been diagnosed with cancer and in that same moment had the thumbs down and died because a stage four prostate diagnosis is pretty much a death sentence within years and not many years, generally speaking. Or what happened, happened to me. I could have received this very difficult prison sentence which I thought was unfair under the circumstances.

30:50.92
David
Very unfair under the circumstances, which we can talk about in a moment. Or, or and I could receive the blessing of life with the diagnosis I received.

31:04.70
David
And today I have to say, I'm thrilled, Scott, to say that I'm in remission for 12 years.

31:09.55

astudyincrime24
Excellent.

31:10.28
David
Unhealthy.

31:12.58
astudyincrime24
Yeah, 50, certainly too young.

31:13.48
David
So I would take the latter scenario any day of the week.

31:17.19
astudyincrime24
And I will say that people do confuse weddings with funerals, but that's a whole nother podcast.

31:22.16
David
Okay, well that was, ah wouldn you call it I wouldn't call it a Freudian slip, but it was a slip nonetheless.

31:24.13
astudyincrime24
So I got to tell you, I was

31:28.07
astudyincrime24
Just a slip. um i yeah I was in the military. I served, I only served four years in the army, but I had a little bit of a difficulty adjusting to civilian life afterwards. and I know the army isn't like, isn't prison, although it felt like it sometimes. But after, after almost 11 years behind bars, what was it like for you to go back to the, quote, real world? Did you feel institutionalized? Did you have any difficulty kind of getting back into the swing of things?

31:56.51
David
Very much so and still do, Scott. Studies have been done on those incarcerated for five years in excess of 10 years and in excess of 20 years. Those in excess of 10 years who have been incarcerated have the beginnings of what is the equivalent of ah PTSD. In fact, and we'll talk about this in a moment, my involvement at the Hindu Institute, there's a course being created to discuss what is that analogous diagnosis in released incarcerated inmates who have been incarcerated for these periods of time, who are experiencing similar symptoms to PTSD sufferers after military life or experience in war.

32:43.04
astudyincrime24
Really?

32:44.20
David
Very different, and yet there are similarities. I don't know that that would have pertained to me particularly, but the studies show pretty much by definition, after the 10 year mark and more extremely after 20, that your brain chemistry has changed in particular ways. Of course, it's an individualized analysis, but you're not the same person you were. And for me, and whether I call it institutionalization or not,

33:14.91
David
The bottom line, and I commonly tell people this, is I oftentimes feel out of sorts. I can't explain it, but I'm just uncomfortable. And that's not a good feeling. And it persists to this day. I do the best I can to you know feel normal, I guess you could say. But that has to be related to some degree on 11 years of that different world life versus what real world life is back home today.

33:45.86
astudyincrime24
Absolutely. Yeah, that's ah ah something you can see in the Shawshank Redemption, which, as you know, is the greatest prison movie ever made.

33:54.56
David
To me, it is far and away.

33:55.63
astudyincrime24
Oh, it's wonderful, wonderful film.

33:56.16
David
I loved it. Yeah, no, it's it's a great, great film.

33:59.73
astudyincrime24
So in the end,

34:00.11
David
And it does it does focus on that issue. You're right, actually.

34:03.82

astudyincrime24

So in the end, speaking of redemption, your story is is a story of redemption validated by what you're doing now with your life. So tell the listeners, what is the Hindu Institute and what is your role? What have you been doing?

34:18.54

David

So yeah I'm a full-time sales manager and and employee of a company in Buffalo Grove, Illinois that specializes in emergency mass notification equipment for places of worship, camps, schools, et cetera. With all the active shooter scenarios, it's been a very successful business operation. I'm thrilled to be involved in it. But I spend a lot of time as well ah on behalf of the Hindu Institute, where I was on the board of directors. I'm now on its legal board of directors with attorneys and paralegals, et cetera. And we assist primarily Jewish families and their incarcerated loved ones, helping them through those difficult times. I teach a course on post-release adjustment. We have a number of very renowned speakers on mental health issues,

35:15.31

David

being able to access a bank account and rent an apartment, all different types of issues of importance for those leaving prison. This course is published on tablets throughout the state, Illinois state prisons right now. Very proud to be involved with that for several years and look forward to continuing with that. I also deliver meals to needy Jewish families on Passover.

35:41.34

David

And ah generally assist you know with fundraising. I'm on the phone trying to you know assist them in their fundraising efforts as well. But basically it's the legal assistance. And in addition to that, I'm still helping inmates through around the country who can't afford and an attorney. And I am simply their eyes and ears and scribe assisting them with legal motion preparations and appeal filings.

36:09.26

astudyincrime24

You want to tell us the website for the Hindu Institute?

36:13.37

David

I believe it's www.hindainstitute.com.

36:19.07

astudyincrime24

You know, speaking of which, um I was wondering, did you have a difficult time getting a job after you got out of prison? I mean, you weren't a violent offender, so it's ah it's a lot it's a lot different, but did you have a difficult time?

36:29.45

David

Everyone that I know, Scott, who has the type of case I have is either delivering pizza, driving an Uber, or working at DoorDash, essentially.

36:40.98

David

It's a very, very difficult thing. I became incredibly fortunate that I was hired by this company I mentioned in the emergency notification system business right before I went to prison and had a level of success and became close to the CEO. And he rehired me when I came out. Not that that was not that that was my plan. I came to see me actually for a letter of recommendation, not assuming I could come back to work from 11 years later.

37:09.59

David

But a combination of the timing being right because he wasn't very thrilled with someone in the role that he wanted me to take on again. The timing was right for him to make a change and he brought me on and it's been a blessing, no question about it.

37:23.73

astudyincrime24

I'm so glad everything worked out well for you, David. I'll give you the last word. but What did you learn or what did you take away from this this entire experience that happened to you?

37:35.22

David

I think the greatest lesson learned for your viewers would be Not to allow yourself, when you're when you're involved in something of a risky nature, always realize that you're not going to be able to see it yourself, all of the issues and the risks clearly yourself because you're too close to it. You need to have, and you need to be willing and open to having a separate set of eyes or multiple sets of eyes to give you objective feedback.

38:04.58

David

I didn't have that. I wish I would have had it. I needed it because I became too engrossed and impassioned in a result that was fleeting because the risks were becoming so great that I was only focused on the end game in a rationalized way, believing that with success, at

worst, this would be a civil violation and never a criminal one. But that was not rational.

38:34.26

David

given the extent of the monies raised over this period of time without a solution, a legal solution being implemented. So in retrospect, ah one has to in these situations be able to separate themselves enough to seek and secure the right advice from advisors that are being objective that are not too close to the situation. And I wish I would have done that. It would have saved so much grief for myself and my family.