

The Maverick Show Episode 26
Host: Matt Bowles, Guest: Bill Manassero

Matt Bowles: Hey, everybody. It's Matt Bowles. Welcome to The Maverick Show. My guest today is Bill Manassero. He was elected to public office at the age of 18. He became a corporate VP at age 21 and then started his own business and gravitated into the tech space where he was eventually hired by the legendary CEO Meg Whitman. If you don't know who she is – among her many accomplishments – she's the one who took eBay from a \$5.7 million revenue company to an \$8 billion revenue company in just 10 years.

And then when the tech bubble burst in the late '90s, Bill pivoted again and became a professional musician, dropped three albums, and toured the world with his family – eventually moving with his family to Haiti for 12 years, where they established Child Hope International, which was comprised of medical clinics, orphanages, schools, and entrepreneurial training. Bill also now hosts the Old Dawgs REI Network podcast. He has been a real estate investor since 2014 – buying his first property at age 58. His podcast and his work today back in the United States – where he's currently based – is focused on providing education to seniors on how to build wealth through income properties. Bill, welcome to the show.

Bill Manassero: Hey, Matt. It's great to be here with you, buddy.

Matt: So good to have you here, my man. We are – just to set the scene for people – we are in Venice Beach, California and it's good to be back. I was in LA for about seven years – one of my favorite cities in the United States for sure. I was even specifically on Venice Beach for part of that. So, it's good to be back in the old hood and I know you're a Californian as well.

Bill: You bet. Yeah, born and raised.

Matt: That's awesome, man. So, I'm super excited to do this episode. You've got a lot of amazingly interesting things in terms of your life stories, but I think where I want to start is to just – I know music has been a huge part of your life throughout all of the different choices and pivots and life experiences that you've had, music has really been a constant for you. And I was wondering if you can just maybe start to talk about that in terms of what does music mean to you? What has it meant to you? And maybe just start talking a little bit about your life story with regard to music.

Bill: Well, sure. Yeah, definitely. I mean it is an integral part of everything I've done for the most part, but it actually started – actually, it was a traumatic incident in my life. My mom passed away when I was 13 years old and so I was the youngest of four kids. It was a really hard thing for me to deal with and part of my way of dealing with it is I was just sitting in my room and just trying to cope with, “Why? What happened?”

And I took up guitar and I started writing little songs that just kind of helped express the way I was feeling and it really helped me to deal with this crisis in my life and I was just self-taught and I just started playing and learning to play and – as time went on – I started to interact with people with music and enjoyed singing with people. I got into bands. It was the '60s and everybody wanted to be a rock and roller, you know? So, I just kind of evolved into this rock and roll guitarist and that's kind of how I got started. It just kind of went on from there.

Matt: So, let's talk about that. I mean at different points in your life, we mentioned in the bio you got elected to public office at 18 and then you went into the corporate world and rose very quickly to becoming a corporate VP, and then you gravitated into the tech space.

Maybe you can talk a little bit about that in terms of what that experience was like when Meg Whitman approached you and you had the opportunity to work for her and I know you mentioned to me that you had, at times, rubbed elbows with Mark Cuban and some of those kinds of folks who were really enormous and coming up in the tech space at the time. So, maybe you could talk a little bit about what that was like and then that was right on the verge of the tech bubble and then what happened when that burst and what you did.

Bill: Right. Yeah. Well, first off, I wasn't actually approached by Meg Whitman. She was part of the team that founded this organization. I was recruited, though, by the CEO. It wasn't Meg at the time. She was on the board, but I was approached and asked if I could come in to help them with the marketing aspect of this new business portal that they were putting together. At that time, I was also heading up an organization in Southern California that was comprised mainly of software companies in the Southern California region and the internet was just really starting to happen

at that time.

So, a big part of what we were doing was putting together these great software companies – which were becoming internet companies or some division of their software company was moving into the internet – and we were putting them together with venture capitalists and helping. We wanted to grow that whole industry in Southern Cal because Silicon Valley had everybody and everything was happening there, but we were trying to build this core here. And in that process, this new business was happening.

So, for about six years, I was helping software companies and internet companies come together with venture capitalists and trying to help them grow their businesses. So, in that process, I met these folks that eventually hired me away on this startup and I was anxious to move on at that point. So, I was looking at the stock options that they were offering us and I said, “Okay, this is my opportunity. I get the stock options, I put them in the bank, and I can do whatever I want to do” which is kind of like every entrepreneur’s little dream, right, you know? You’re going to get that big nest egg or that cash flow that’s going to allow you to live your life the way you want to live it.

And so that was the motivation here, but surprisingly I was committed for a year to this organization. I figured after that time – and I was just watching the stock options just go through the ceiling – and I go, “This is exactly what I wanted.” And then the bubble burst and my stock options weren’t even good for toilet paper, basically. It was like, “Okay, all right, back to square one.” That’s where that went. And then that was a real shift in a lot of the things that I was doing.

Matt: Well, I think that’s a really important lesson and life experience to have. For example, I can relate to that to the extent that I decided to start a real estate investment company in 2007, Bill.

Bill: Ouch.

Matt: That was a great idea. I was like –

Bill: Good timing.

Matt: I was like, “Wow, look at this. The market’s amazing. Everything’s incredible. This is going to be great” you know? And my business partner – Valerie and I – left our jobs and founded Maverick Investor Group and then 2008 happened.

Bill: Oh, man. We’re really good with the timing here.

Matt: Yeah, exactly. So, but I think the way that people handle those things and the way that you assess the situation and say, “Okay. Clearly, I need to pivot or I need to adjust what I’m doing” and then you make your next move and that, for me, is always really interesting to learn about how people handle those situations when all your eggs are in and then – all of a sudden – the bottom falls out and then what do you do next?

So, I’ve had a lot of pivots in my life – whether it was away from my job and going the entrepreneurial route or different stages in the real estate cycle – or all that kind of stuff. So, I’m super interested to hear about your next move though. So, the tech space bottoms out, the bubble bursts, everything goes south and then what did you decide to do from there?

Bill: Well, it was a major shift. Just to work up to that point, I had been on the corporate side like you mentioned I started very young. I was very involved in corporate organizations. Then I went entrepreneurial and I started my own advertising/public relations. So, I’d done a lot of things sort of prior to that happening and there was just a real shift and a lot of major changes in my life – one of which was that I just really had to take a look at what was the meaning of life, period. That just kind of changed me a lot.

I ended up looking at the things that were going on in my life and I went into fulltime ministry after that happened. I had been a musician – as I mentioned – since I was 13 years old and so I had been doing a lot of children’s music and things like this and children’s concerts. So, part of what I was thinking of doing before this tech bubble burst was to take those funds and be able to go out fulltime and do our music ministry. Plus – with some of the companies I was working with – we helped launch the Infinity division of Nissan and I was traveling a lot.

I was away from my family. I wanted to do something that I could do with my family and – by this time – I had had about five kids.

So, it was like they were adding up and I was kind of going, “You know I don’t want to be one of those absentee fathers.” My daddy was a great man, but he was one of those guys he was always gone, you know, and it was really tough on us as kids. So, moving into this music ministry, I was able to actually take my family on the road.

We got a 40-foot RV and we had a whole band – I mean not everybody in the family. I actually had to bring in musicians and stuff – and we traveled all around the US and then we also flew to other countries to do concerts for kids. So, that was a big focus of that next phase in our lives, yeah.

Matt: That’s amazing and I want to go a little bit deeper on that if you can talk about that because I interview a lot of people in the digital nomad space and a lot of people that are itinerant world travelers and really put a high priority on that, but I believe you are the first person that I have had on The Maverick Show that has actually done extensive, long term travel with your family, with your kids.

And that, I think, is amazing and I want to go a little bit deeper on that and sort of just ask you about that. I guess both logistically but also if you could just describe how that experience was for you and the kids and the family and what they got out of that and maybe let’s break it into the domestic versus international because I actually want to talk about those separately.

Bill: Sure.

Matt: So, the domestic RV experience, can you talk about how that was for you and the family?

Bill: Yeah. Well, that was definitely an education. Somebody actually bought this RV for us. So, we thought that was really cool. We thought it was really, really nice – and it was nice – but we also had a lot of mechanical problems with this thing. So, we thought our ministry was to kids, but we found out that most of our ministry on these tours was to mechanics. So, we spent a lot of time working with a lot of mechanics. I mean major things happening you know drive trains, things like this that were dropping out of this thing as we were driving along. I mean it got us where we wanted to go.

We had a trailer we pulled behind this thing— like another 10-foot trailer – with all of our gear in it. So, we just had a ton of experience, but it was great. I mean it was fun. It was crowded in there and we all – I don't know – to us, it was sort of a dream. It was fun. I'd always loved music. I'd always loved travel. Even when I was single, I traveled a lot. It was just a part of me and something that I just I wanted to do with my family. We started homeschooling our kids pretty early on in anticipation of the fact that we were going to be moving around.

So, we're going to teach them on the road and that's really what we were prepared to do. We had all their books. Everything was in the RV and we did that on the road. So, it was a great adventure.

Matt: That's amazing. How long were you doing the RV thing? How many years did that take?

Bill: Oh, gosh, probably about two or three years, yeah, of on the road and we would also – during that time – we'd take off and fly to places – so the international trips that we were doing – but we would always mix it in. That's the cool thing about homeschooling is you could – like a geography lesson when you're on the road – is just great because you can talk about a place that you're going to be in a couple of weeks. We'd teach all about the founding of the country. We'd do Washington, DC, the Grand Canyon.

I mean we could study how these things formed geologically and everything and – when we got there – the kids were like, “I know about this. I know what that is.” We would talk about these things and it was really fun so the kids could learn from the things that we saw on the road as well.

Matt: That's amazing. And then when you started doing the international trips, what types of places would you go and what types of experience did you and the kids have there?

Bill: Well, it was always something different. For example, we went to Africa. We went to West African and we went to a school there for missionary kids. That one was just my daughter and me. My daughter, Ariana, she was a very integral part. She sang with me. She also did hand motions along with our songs because it was a kids program. So, we got them interacting with us on our songs and so forth. So, it was a great experience. We ended up meeting

these people that just were fascinating.

In fact, I came back with this handmade drum that this guy that makes these djembes that are unbelievable. He's a surfer. He surfs and he sells these drums to pay for his surfing as he surfs all around the coast of Africa and it was a beautiful thing we took back with us, but a wonderful experience. We also went to Russia. Russia was intense. We went to orphanages, we went to schools. But the thing that hit me the hardest was going to a children's prison and there are children's prisons over there, which just kind of broke our hearts. But we got to interact with the kids.

They allowed us to really spend some time with them – not just to sing for them – and that was just very powerful for both of us. My daughter and I, we'd always have to work with somebody before we came there to translate parts of our songs into the language – the local language – and we went down to Georgia – not Georgia like in the US here, but the Georgia that was a part of Russia – and we thought they would be singing in Russian and we just got an education really quickly. No, they don't like Russia. They don't like people to speak Russian. You've got to learn their language.

So, we were constantly just working on practicing our songs, trying to get as close to the actual language that we could – even though these were not languages that we were trained in. It was pretty crazy.

Matt: That's amazing. So, you would travel around and you would play primarily children's songs and did you say that your daughter would sing with you?

Bill: Yeah.

Matt: At the performances?

Bill: Yes.

Matt: What age was she?

Bill: She was like I mean she started with me when she was like six or seven years old. Her sister was two years younger than her – actually three years younger than her – Vienna, and so they would both get up there and they were just part of the team, part of the

band, you know? She kind of grew up on the road so it's kind of interesting. Not only did they get the experience of the education and the stuff that we were doing with the homeschooling, but they were part of the band.

So, they were hauling equipment. They were roadies. They were like everything. We had a merch thing so we were selling t-shirts and we had all this other stuff, so they were part of that. It was very much a family deal. It was an experience like a lot of kids don't get to know. I mean playing for audiences of thousands sometimes just being up in front of people and being very comfortable doing that. It was pretty cool.

Matt: Wow. That's so amazing. So, looking back on it now, how would you describe what travel – international travel and all those cultural experiences and everything – what did that mean to you and what do you think it meant to your kids?

Bill: Well, it really opened their eyes. Sometimes people feel – especially in a situation like that you're homeschooling, they're sheltered – but I think our kids got more exposure to the world and the people that live in different parts of the world that they have an understanding and a depth of understanding that very few people have, let alone children. And I think that was something that really changed them in many regards. I mean we saw a lot of things that were also really tough things to see.

We went to some really difficult parts of the world and they saw people die. They saw people that were suffering. They saw a lot of things that were pretty tough for a young kid, but I look at who they are today. I see their hearts and I see that these are just amazing young men and women that just have sort of a global perspective, which is really interesting and I think it's really neat that they had that opportunity. That's one thing that they share with me a lot too is, "Dad, I would never trade those years for anything."

Matt: That's amazing. And then from there, what brought you to Haiti?

Bill: Well, it's interesting. I have seven kids. I had five around that time – two of which were older and were actually with us when we were on the road all the time – but one day I just went to my daughter. She had just this jar of coins that she had been collecting

and I wanted to find out what this was all about. We used to partner with a lot of organizations when we did these concerts like World Vision and Compassion International and groups like that. She ended up sponsoring a child with Compassion International and it was a child from Haiti.

I told her I said, “You’re going to sponsor the kid, you’re going to have to support him and do it yourself. So, whether you do little chores to earn the money or whatever it is –” I wanted her to really feel the depth of it and she just totally got into this and started researching Haiti, finding out about Haiti. She went on these websites. She would look at orphanages and she’d see the kids that were in these orphanages and memorize their names. I mean she was just obsessed with Haiti.

And one day I asked her what this jar of coins was and she said, “Dad” and she was kind of reluctant to tell me because kids they don’t want to have somebody make fun of what their decisions are and what have you but she just said to me, “Dad, I’m going to build an orphanage, a hospital, a school, a church in Haiti.” I said, “Really? Okay.” She’s nine years old, okay, when she told me this and I said, “Wow, that’s awesome. That’s great.” In the back of my mind, I’m a dad. I’ve seen kids go through different stages. I figured, “Well, next year she’s going to want to be president. The next year she’s going to want to do something else.”

But she never waned in this and an opportunity came up for us to do concerts in Haiti and so we said, “Yeah, let’s do it. Ariana can see the place that she has a heart for.” So, we went over there. We played for schools. We played for churches. We played just all over the place for kids and families and it was such a powerful experience for all of us that we were through with the concert and we were flying back from Haiti. My wife says to me she goes, “You know what? I think the plane’s going the wrong way.” I’m going, “Really?” I said, “I’m not hearing that.”

I was moved by everything, but I was thinking, “Oh, man, I don’t know that I could live in this place. It’s a really hard place.” But all these incidents happened. I could go on about what happened, but basically, we were brought back to Haiti to work. One of the kids had really struck us with these kids living on the streets – some of them as young as three and four years old – living on the streets, okay, no parents. It had an impact on all of us. There’s this one

orphanage of street kids that we were really touched by and we heard that they were in trouble.

We flew back to try to help them out and – in that process – that’s where my heart got pulled into this place and I said, “You know what? I think you’re right what you said to me before. I think we’re meant to be here.” So, we were in the middle of all kinds of things that we were doing. We were doing another album. In the midst of all this, we just shut everything down. We sold everything we had and we put our whole life into I think it was like 14 Rubbermaid bins and we hopped on a plane for Haiti having no idea what we were going to do, but we were there to rescue a handful of kids that were in trouble.

Twelve years later, we were still there. The orphanage still exists today. We’re not there, but there are kids there that have grown up and gone on and lead great lives and so forth and the work is still going on there.

Matt: That’s so amazing. I was just sharing with you because I knew you were so involved in Haiti that we as well at Maverick one of the things that Maverick Investor Group that we do is we donate 10% of all of our net revenue before we, as partners and owners, take anything out of the company at all.

Bill: That’s so cool. That is so cool, yeah.

Matt: Yeah, we donate to causes that are important to us and a lot of those are international. Some of them are also domestic as well. We try to give back – in many cases – to the real estate markets in which we’re buying rental properties and we also donate to causes in those local areas in the US, but we also donate to international causes. So, we had donated to this one orphanage in Haiti, right, and we had done that and then – when the hurricane came through in 2016 – we had heard that it ripped right through that area and then we got word that it had actually blown the roof off of this orphanage.

Bill: Oh, man.

Matt: And so these kids basically didn’t have a place and so Valerie and I – my business partner Valerie and I – we said, “Call down there right away and ask how much money do they need to fix this

immediately.” They said, “Well, about \$7,000.00 would get the roof back on immediately and would build the whole thing back up and would be able to bring all the kids back in and then would be able to totally restore it.” So, we were just able to just fire down seven grand like that day.

Bill: Awesome.

Matt: And then they rebuilt it and had it all back there.

Bill: Wow.

Matt: But we have that history as well. My business partner, Valerie, had studied abroad there when she was in college and so we sort of have a lot of love and appreciation for all that. So, that was really cool to hear that connection. But in hearing your story, I want to ask though the story about your nine-year-old, Ariana, doing that much research and becoming that passionate about Haiti before she had ever been there is extraordinary and I just want to ask what was she like when you got there for the first time and she had done all this research and she had learned all about it and this was her passion and her focus? What was that experience like for her when the plane touched down?

Bill: Well, it was pretty amazing. We had a whole team with us. We had a group of people from our church. We had my family and we had trained them to support the music effort that we were doing and so forth but – when we got there – they didn’t have tarmacs at that time. So, you literally you take the stairs off of the plane. She walked down off of the stairs and she literally got down on her knees and kissed the ground. She goes, “Daddy, I’m home.”

Matt: Wow.

Bill: Yeah. I get goosebumps even just saying that because it still touches me to this day. It was pretty powerful. I knew that she was serious at this point.

Matt: That’s amazing. And so then once you decided to move there and to transition there and base yourself in Haiti – when went on for 12 years – can you talk a little bit about the organization that you were building and the type of work you were doing there?

Bill: Yeah. Our focus was really the street kids. And so when we first started, we had 12 boys that we had rescued actually from another orphanage that had imploded. And so we started with these 12 boys and formed a boys' home, but we were very plugged into the streets. We were on the streets every day and we were just trying to find out one, where these kids came from. Did they have any family? We're always trying to see if there's a better place. We didn't want the kids to have live in a home if they had a home to go to, but most of them they were on the street because their parents either didn't want them or they didn't have parents.

As we were out there, we also encountered little girls that were living on the streets and that just broke my heart. Some of them as young as six and seven years old and just some of the horrible things that were happening to them and they used to come up to us – because they knew we had a boys' home – and they said, “Can we come to your home? Can we live in your home?” We said, “Honey, we don't have a – it's a boys' home. We only have it for boys.” It just was breaking our hearts and my wife and I were just praying every day saying, “God, please make this happen” and somebody gave us a donation because they knew that this was something we wanted to do.

We were able to open a girls' home. And just to go back to those girls on the street and usually we would give them food or we'd take them with us and we'd go to a restaurant or something – we'd feed them or whatever – but it was always temporary and we were always scared because there was a lot of trafficking going on, a lot of abuse that was going on. So, to come back to them and to say, “Hey, we have a home for you guys now.” And it was just awesome. So, that's where it started to expand. We got a girls' home and a boys' home. Those were growing and the populations for both groups were growing.

We ended up opening a school. We opened a medical clinic – first to help our kids and then to help the community. We had a feeding program for all the kids that we couldn't take into our home and we were feeding hundreds and hundreds of kids a day every day you know just to try to help the kids in that area. Then we were concerned because there are two types of orphanages in Haiti. One's called a crèche. That's where you adopt a baby. People would go to a country and they say, “I want to adopt somebody from China or something.” It's like that type of adoption.

And then they have what's called an orphanena – which is what we had – an orphanage. And they don't have foster care as we know it here where kids can live with a family until they're 18. The orphanages there, the kids will grow up there until they're 18 years of age and then they have to leave the orphanage, but a lot of them were just horrible places and they were like businesses, but I mean businesses where the people didn't really care. They kept the kids sick so that people would visit there and they would get money donated. I mean it was just horrible things that were happening and we saw this and it just broke our hearts.

So, ours was that kind of place where we'd raise the kid up until they're 18. So, we tried to – during that time period – tried to do everything we could to help those kids to have an advantage. I mean this is a country with 80% unemployment. So, even though we educated them – we taught all the kids. The native language there is Hattian Creole. So, they already knew that. The schools teach in French, so they learned French in schools, and we taught them English, and my wife also speaks Spanish, so there's some that also pursued Spanish.

So, our goal was to have these kids go through here to finish school by the time they're 18, to speak four languages, to learn computer skills, can do Microsoft Word – all the Word products and Microsoft products – and to be equipped with some sort of skills so that they could have a business when they leave there. Now, they could go to college too and we would help them – support them in that effort – but a lot of times – even if you get a college degree – there's no guarantee in that country you're going to get a job.

So, not only we formed what are called microbusinesses that we launched – a bakery, a silk screener, we had an internet business, we had jewelry, we had clothing, sewing and that kind of thing – and so these were all businesses they could learn the skills and then we would teach them the business aspect about how to run a business so that they could launch off of one of our incubators, go maybe back to their village, and be able to open a bakery in their village and know how to run that bakery and they'd have the support of our home base bakery that would help them to grow it. And so we moved into a lot of different areas in this process as the organization grew.

Matt: Wow. And I know that through your work, you actually attracted the attention of both CNN and Oprah Winfrey.

Bill: Yeah, yeah. It's true. Well, it was really interesting with Oprah Winfrey, I'll tell you. First, let me tell you about CNN. CNN was there during the earthquake. Now, we were there in that devastating earthquake that happened in Haiti and it was the most frightening thing that I had ever experience in my life. I mean hundreds of thousands of people died in this earthquake and we had a little medical clinic as I had mentioned. It was just a little clinic.

The area kids would come. They had malaria or they had worms or whatever and we would give them medication and whatever. But when the earthquake happened, most of the hospitals just collapsed. People didn't have anywhere to go. So, the people in the neighborhood were coming to our clinic. I mean it was frightening. When the earthquake happened, places were collapsing all around us. Our orphanage just miraculously was untouched. Not a single person died in our orphanage or any of our employees or any of our employees' homes and we had 70 employees at that time. So, it was amazing that we were just under this protection, but it was such a difficult time if you can imagine.

We had two nurses that were at our clinic. One had just arrived a week earlier and then the earthquake happened. It looked like a scene from Night of the Living Dead. I don't know. I hate to trivialize it, but we were literally sitting at our orphanage outside and people are carrying people in limping, people missing limbs, people with heads split open, I mean everything that you could possibly imagine. And they were coming to us because they didn't know where else to go. We had this feeding program that I had mentioned earlier and we had all these tables from this feeding program.

So, we just started laying these tables out, putting sheets on them, and started to lay these people down in our boys' home. We had a little soccer field – sort of miniature soccer field – next door. It was actually a converted tennis court that we used for soccer and we just started laying these tables out and putting kids and adults and all these people on these and we had a medical triage that was set up. For the next six days, we saw over 500 patients that came

through. We miraculously got people who came in there who knew what they were doing.

We had one guy who came, knocked on our door, and in the meantime, we're just cleaning wounds, we're trying to do whatever we can. Our kids in our orphanage are there taking care of these people and these two nurses and there was a guy who knocked on our door. Again, we're just praying like crazy saying, "Lord, send somebody here." And a guy showed up with his wife and said, "Hey, our house just collapsed down the street. We don't have anywhere to go. Can we help you guys? You look like you're doing good work here." We said, "Sure. What do you do?" The guy goes, "Oh, I'm an orthopedic surgeon." I go, "Oh."

Matt: Wow.

Bill: And then everybody n the list of people that I wanted to come I mean this guy was at the top of the list, okay, because we had people that needed amputations. We had some serious things that had to be done and his wife was a nurse. So, I was just like, "This is wonderful. Come in." Over the next course of days, I mean he was treating people in our kids' kitchen in the boys' home. I mean they're amputating people. I mean there was no anesthesia. They had to use knives that we had there because he had no real surgical tools and stuff.

So, it was an intense period of time and, during that, we were getting a lot of attention. The media was coming and we had all kinds of international media and CNN was one of those and that was where Soledad O'Brien was working with CNN at the time. She showed up and wanted to know what we were doing and why were we doing this and who were we and all this.

Anyway, she just got really into everything that was happening during that time period and ended up going back to CNN and saying, "We need to do a story on this place." She came up with the name called "Rescued" and it talked about what we did at this orphanage and what happened during the earthquake and it ended up being an hour special that they did.

Matt: Wow. What year did that air?

Bill: I think it was like 2011, 2012, right around there. Along those

same lines, my daughter Ariana – early on before we even moved to Haiti – she wrote to Oprah, okay? Oprah had never been to Haiti and it was really interesting. Sean Penn had a big operation going on in Haiti at the time and she was going to come and see Sean Penn and see what he was up and everything.

Her producer was doing research and they looked in their archives and found this little email that my daughter had sent to her years before the earthquake even happened and they basically contacted us and said, “Hey, we want to meet Ariana. We want to talk to her and see the orphanage and her dream and all that.” So, Oprah came out and she had just launched this new show called the, I don't know, The First Chapter or something like that. So, she came out and did a special along with Sean Penn and us, the special on what we were doing there as well. So, it was quite an adventure.

Matt: That's amazing. So, how much time did you and the family gets to spend with Oprah in person?

Bill: Well, she sent her team over in advance and we spent a week with her team. She showed up and it was a one-day deal, but she took a lot of time to talk to us and got to know my whole family really well and was just extremely wonderful with her time and very generous as well. So, it was a great experience.

Matt: That's amazing. Wow. So, I mean a lot of people want to know what Oprah is like. I mean it's interesting. A lot of times in the lightning round on The Maverick Show I'll ask if you could meet one person that's living today – have dinner with one person, spend time with one person – a number of people have said, “Oprah Winfrey.”

Of anyone in the world, that's who they would choose and so I feel like that's a really extraordinary experience. Can you share anything about how that was, how she was, what that experience was like actually getting to do that because a lot of people dream of that?

Bill: Yeah. I didn't know what to expect because – for the most part – we knew she was just going to fly in. She was going to do that thing and she was going to do the Sean Penn thing and then leave or what have you. There was also Donna Karan I think it is.

Matt: Donna Karan?

Bill: Yeah. She had some things – jewelry and stuff – that she was making and clothing that was being made in Haiti. So, she was also the third person that visited while she was there. You know why she's so successful just when you meet her because she talks to you like you've known her forever, you know? So, it's like an old friend and that's how she – I mean even with my kids and even with the kids in the orphanage the same thing. She just comes in there like she's Auntie Oprah or something and everybody just feels really comfortable with her.

So, she definitely has a gift and it was really neat how she met my family. She interviewed all of us. She spent time with us. But never did we ever feel that it was something she had to do. She seemed like there was no other place she wanted to be in the world and I think that kind of ability to have when you're interviewing somebody – she's been doing it for so many years – you could just see it come through.

Matt: And then was it an episode that aired then where she and you were on the same episode?

Bill: Yes, yes. It was part of this "Next Chapter" is the name of it, yeah. So, it was probably about a 30, 40-minute segment, yeah.

Matt: Amazing. Is that viewable today? Can we find a link and put it in the show notes?

Bill: I know I've done a search on it and I know that you can see parts of it for sure. We have a copy of the actual whole episode and the same with the CNN one, but you can see parts of them just by doing a YouTube search for the most part. You just look up Ariana's Dream or you can look up Ariana Manassero and Oprah and then you'll find it.

Matt: That's so amazing. So, then you stayed in Haiti for 12 years?

Bill: Right.

Matt: And you mentioned that was challenging on different levels. Obviously, the natural disaster and everything you just described, of course, sounds insanely intense. But then in terms of regular life

in Haiti as well, that I'm sure was also challenging at different points. What was that like though?

Bill: It was very intense. I'm going to couch it though with this – and this is really the truth. I went there in my 50s or my late 40s and it was like the best of times, the worst of times you know like Dickens says. It was some of the most intense things I've ever seen in my life – death and disease and suffering like I'd never seen on any scale before in my life – but the people are amazing, absolutely amazing. I could talk for hours on the people of Haiti. Just a brief little story, a lady that we went into a place called Cité Soleil, which is one of the poorest ghettos of anywhere in the world.

It's a huge area that's just so toxic. I mean it is raw feces on the ground and we're walking out there to try to help some of the kids in that area and I remember handing out little sandwiches and stuff. We saw this little old lady and she just looked like she was barely alive. I mean she looked like a skeleton with skin. And we walked over to hand her some sandwiches and I saw her and she had this little tin hut that she lived in and then we just kind of moved on like we were going on and just trying to help people out. I looked back and I watched her and she goes and she sits in her yard.

I thought she would sit down and eat her food, but she just sat there and then she just starts calling the kids in the neighborhood over and – as they came over – they lined up and she took these little sandwiches we gave her and she just tore one piece off at a time – handing it to each kid as they were there. She never took a bite of the sandwiches herself. That, to me, said more about the people of Haiti and the beautiful people of Haiti that we love so much today as well. That's what that country is about, I believe.

Matt: What do you think in terms of your kids growing up there for 12 years? What impact do you think that had on them? How was their experience?

Bill: Yeah, it was hard. It was hard. Unfortunately, there was a lot of conflict in the country when we got there – a lot of kidnappings. My wife and daughter were driving and almost got kidnapped in the process of being there.

Matt: How did that happen?

Bill: Yeah, well we were visiting a pastor we knew and it was getting late and we knew – during this kidnapping time – you don't travel at night, but it was starting to get a little darker. And so our driver was saying, "Okay, we have to go now. It's time to go." My wife and daughter and then another lady was with them and they were starting to drive back on this road by the airport. The cops would always have little stops that they would do. They'd be checking cars and so forth and there was a little roadblock ahead and our driver was looking at it.

We got in this line of cars that were waiting to go through this roadblock and he said to my wife, "These guys are not cops." They were dressed like they were cops, but they were not cops. And so he just kind of let the car in front of him go a little bit further ahead and he started to inch the car up. He said, "Okay when I say duck, you guys duck." So, he starts to back the car up and then he starts backing into the street and the guys see him and so he's whipping the car out in reverse and the guy comes out and he sees them. He goes, "Stop, stop" and he just stepped on the gas in reverse – swerving the car from one side of the road to the other – my wife and daughter and the other lady lying down in the car.

And they just opened fire on us like with AK-47s, on them. Not a bullet touched them, not a bullet touched the car, but they got away because our driver – who worked with us and he was one of our guys, directors of the boy's home – his insight and this is what these guys would do. They'd pull people over and then – if they were people they wanted to kidnap – they'd either rob them or they'd kidnap them. That was the closest we came, but a lot of our friends were kidnapped and released. It was happening all of the time in Haiti.

Matt: Wow. So, reflecting back on it now, how do you kids view the whole Haiti experience and stuff in terms of their development and upbringing and everything else? How do they reflect on it?

Bill: It was hard. It was hard. Part of it is because they saw a lot of death. They saw a lot of things that were really tough, but they also had an amazing experience because they were working with us. They were working right alongside us. When we were in the medical clinic and we were helping people, they were there handing us sutures or handing us whatever we needed to help the

doctors. They were also in our feeding program – along with our other kids – who were out there serving the other kids in the neighborhood that weren't in our home.

Not only that, but they became fluent in French, they became fluent in Creole. They had this depth of understanding that a lot of people didn't. When they came back to the States, it was tough to adjust, but the experiences I talk to them about today as adults – that they talk about – is just I mean this was one of the best times of their lives.

Matt: That's amazing. So, I have to ask what is Ariana doing today? How old is she – first of all – and what is she doing?

Bill: Okay. She is an amazing girl. When she got there – when we moved there – she just went to work. We were doing our own thing trying to run an orphanage and trying to figure out how we were going to fund this thing. We had no idea what we were doing. But she was out there collecting kids on the streets and literally just ministering to them. She would take these girls that were on the streets – you know that lived on the streets – and she'd bring them in and she'd talk to them about how to take care of yourself so you don't have to give in to these guys that are putting pressure on you and all these things.

She found babies that were just abandoned and saved the lives of these babies. We'd literally take them into the house. There was always a baby or somebody that was sick living in our home that we would take care of. Most of those were people that were brought in by Ariana. So, she – starting at age 12 – this was her life for a really long time. And as she got older, it was kind of this thing it's hard to explain. But when you open your door and there's always somebody out there – there's either a mother with a baby saying, "Take my baby" – and we would usually have to respond with, "Hey, why are you giving us your baby? You don't love the baby? You don't want the baby?"

The mother would say, "No. That's why I'm giving you the baby because I love the baby. The baby is going to die with me." So, I would work with the moms, my wife, Susette would work with the moms, and we would help them to figure out why couldn't they have the baby. Usually, it was because they didn't have any money. So, we would teach them how to get a street business

going – a really simple thing that they could sell on the street – that they could support their kids and even send them to school eventually.

So, we would coach them and help them launch a little business. In some cases, the kid was sick and they couldn't handle them. They couldn't handle the medical bills. We would take the kids in – in those cases sometimes – and we'd even hire the mom to work in our orphanage. So, there are a lot of different situations, but every day we saw something and a lot of times it was death. A lot of times it was suffering. It was really tough. So, 12 years of that is pretty intense on anybody and – even with my daughter – she needed a break.

She needed to come to the States just to kind of rethink and understand what was going on. All of us love Haiti. All of us have a heart for Haiti. My wife got cancer when she was there and so we had to fly back to the States. She had treatment. We came right back to Haiti and it's a tough place to live. What we didn't understand or what we didn't really see until we'd come back from Haiti that we all had PTSD like, man, to the nth degree. So, it kind of hit us all after we left. Just an example of what that was like for me personally is the kids I'd treat them.

I'd go to the local market and there weren't really potato chips. Well, there were, but they were really weird potato chips they had there and stuff. They were usually from the Dominican Republic or something and they were called orange outs or something weird. But it was always a little treat I'd bring home to the kids and they were all excited. It was a big deal, okay? When we came back to the States, one of the first things I did is I went to the market and I'm going there to – I was having trouble sleeping. My wife was having trouble sleeping. We're kind of going through something we couldn't quite figure out. I went in to buy some chips, okay?

The kids wanted some chips. I go into this market and on both sides of me – on either side – is every kind of chip you could possibly imagine from like gluten-free to vegetable-based chips and everything and I was just sitting there staring. I don't know how long I was there, but it felt like I was there for half an hour and I just started crying. I just started crying. I couldn't stop crying and it was just a part of this what we had on us that we had kind of buried because to live there – if you let everything get to you that

you see – it would just devastate you.

So, we were always in this place where we were that much above the fray. So, it was an intense thing to come back and adapt to. So, my kids started growing up and moving back to the States. That was the time that we knew it was time for us to come over. There were a lot of other situations, but we found some great people to step into our role there. We're still big supporters and active in supporting our ministry over there, but we're back. We're older. It's a tough place. It's not a place for people that are old like us, right, but we're still very much plugged in.

Matt: That's amazing. That's amazing. So, is Ariana back here in the States now as well?

Bill: Yes.

Matt: And what is she doing with her life?

Bill: She's still serving people. That's what she does, you know? She's serving children, people with special needs. I mean that's her heart and so she's just an amazing girl. All my kids are amazing, but she was a special, special kid that really just has a heart for helping people.

Matt: Incredible. So, how did the real estate investing thing start with you because you started that in Haiti before you even came back to the United States? How did that come about and how did that get on your radar even to start investing in US real estate from Haiti while you were still there?

Bill: Well, it was really interesting. We were nearing the end of the time. We knew our season was coming up. So, I was trying to figure out, "What am I going to do when I go back?" I'm not somebody that's just going to retire and collect seashells and stuff. No, I love doing stuff. I love being active. But I had no idea what I was going to do and I didn't picture I'd go back there with this weird resume that's got everything from rock and roll bands to working with Haiti orphans on it and I was 60. So, what am I going to do?

I pictured myself in a blue vest at Walmart, you know, handing out carts. I have to figure out what I'm doing. So, I started looking at

things and I'm working with the kids there teaching them stuff. We had this internet business I told you about and I said, "Well, let's experiment. Let's try something different" because I'm also kind of thinking for me is, "Why don't we do a dropship thing like with eBay and Amazon?" So, we started doing it – just started experimenting around – and I found a good model that I liked. I started doing it and we were just making bank, you know? It was like, "This thing is really taken off" and these kids, okay –

The average person in Haiti gets paid like a dollar a day. It's a crime, but it's horrible. But I had these kids in my orphanage – 12, 15-year-old kids – that are making like 300 bucks a month, you know, and they're having a blast selling bedroom sets on eBay, you know? So, we were just having a kick with this and so I was thinking, "Well, maybe this is what I'm going to do." And then I got the kids going doing it in the orphanage, so I started to do it, but then it was like a Christmas season and everything was "Frozen." You know the movie "Frozen." So, we had all these things.

Anyway, all of my vendors were out of the items and I got all these bad reviews because I couldn't respond quickly enough. I'd give them a refund and I'd say, "Oh, I'm sorry" but they didn't care. So, I got kicked off of eBay and when you're kicked off of eBay, you're pretty much off for life, you know? So, there went that model and I'm just kind of looking at this going, "What am I going to do?" and I got this inheritance check I didn't expect and I got it and I'd been very heavily in the stock market – especially tech stocks from my background – and I didn't want to put money in the stock market. It looked really volatile at that time.

The chairman of the board of our organization is a real estate investor. I said, "Maybe I'll just invest in some real estate passively," you know? I don't know maybe I'll buy REITs or maybe I'll do something like that. And I decided to buy some turnkey properties. So, I did my research, started looking into this whole deal. I hopped on a plane from Port au Prince. I went to Atlanta and then I went to Memphis and then I flew home – all within about five days. I came back, I had three properties – two single-family homes and a duplex – and the next month, I'm getting a check in the mail, right? It's going right into my account.

I'm going, "This is very cool. Maybe it's not just an investment.

Maybe I could do this and this could be my job or whatever.” That’s where I started to look at this and then I said, “Okay, this makes sense to me. I’m going to start to expand this and I’m going to grow my portfolio.” Then I had part of my dream in this was, “I’m going to raise money to be able to help.” One of the things we wanted to do in Haiti was to build this village for our kids and that has all the stuff that we do. We rent seven building there, but we wanted to own this land to make their place forever type thing – or at least a place that the kids could grow up and other kids could come into.

So, that was my idea and that put me on this quest that moved me into this area. Okay, so I’ve got my friends that are like my age. Some of them are approaching retirement, some are in retirement already, and they’re saying, “What’s this real estate stuff you’re doing?” So, they’d email me questions and ask me how I did this and how I did that and emailing just got really kind of crazy and I said, “Well, I’m just going to blog it, okay? I’m going to take some of these questions that everybody’s asking and I’m going to blog. You guys can read it and that’ll be easier.”

That’s kind of how this Old Dawgs REI Network got started is – while I’m doing this and I’m actually going through – I’m sharing the good, bad, and the ugly, you know, and everything. They get the whole truth and nothing but. Then one of my mentors at the time told me, “Hey, you should do a podcast.” I was really reluctant. I didn’t want to do that, but he finally said, “This would be a good move and a lot of good reasons for it.” I jumped into it feet first just crazy and it was awesome. It ended up being really, really great. So, now I had the podcast, I had the blog, and I was able to reach a lot more people with this message and it’s been awesome ever since. It’s been great.

Matt: That’s amazing. So, how 8 – after you got the first three properties – how did you then go from there? What was your scaling process from there to acquire more units?

Bill: Well, the first thing I thought is, “Okay” and I sort of came up with a random, “How much per door am I making really cash flow free and clear?” The one thing that was interesting is the three properties I purchased. They all were about the same price, but my duplex was making me twice as much as my other properties. So, it was kind of like a “duh” moment, right? It’s like, “Well if I’ve got

this duplex, what would happen if I had a fourplex or an eight-unit or a 16 or whatever?" So, that was basically the approach that I took going into it.

Matt: Wow. And so from there, how did you start and build the educational piece of it because I think it's a really interesting niche that you have developed in terms of specifically educating seniors. There's a lot of real estate investing educational stuff out there. Anybody who types that into the internet is going to be overwhelmed with the number of people that have something to say about real estate investing, but I think your niche is really, really interesting and I want to just ask you maybe to speak to that and also to give some advice in that realm.

I think that people who are approaching or are already retired are really looking to try to figure out what is the best thing to do with their nest egg, with their money that they've worked for their entire lives to create exactly what you said, right, "How do we create passive income? How do we pass down something to our kids and all that kind of stuff?" So, what is the advice that you would give to seniors or people approaching that retirement age for how to think about that?

Bill: Yeah. I think the big thing for me was that there was a lady I read about in the LA Times, actually, and she had retired. Her husband had passed away. The money that she had received after her husband died she bought an RV and she was traveling all around the US in this RV, but then her social security wasn't really helping. I know what it's like to travel around the country in an RV and I know that repairs and things like that could just wipe you out especially if you're just living on social security. I just really felt for her.

The story is she goes from carnival to carnival. She's 80 something years old working these carnivals. She's like the carnival circuit and that's where she's making her money to try to survive. I go, "That's no way to live at 80 in her 80s." The missing link is cash flow. She needed cash flow – passive cash flow – to get that going. There are the people that we talk to, there's a wide realm of people. There are the people that are the smart ones that – unlike me – that have this huge nest egg that they want to maximize and they want that to last their whole lifespan. People are living longer so you have to really make sure that you're going to make your

funds last, right?

So, there's that aspect and those people might be a passive investor. They may buy into a syndication or they're just looking for a good return on their dollars, but they don't want to have to mess with toilets, tenants, and trash type stuff. But then there are those that – like me – like to learn something new and be active in it too. So, this is the active investor. So, there are those two really distinct audiences. So, my focus is always cash flow for either group. If they're going to take their nest egg and they want to get a good return – generate enough return where you don't really even have to draw from the nest egg anymore – right? So, you're getting your 10, 12, 15% or whatever it is, right?

So, that's really been the focus is everything is about we say "Cash flow is king here." That's really our focus is get something that's going to generate for you passively so that you could do the things you really want to do in your retirement, you know? That's not to spend all your time being a landlord, but use that money so you can travel, so you could spend time with your grandkids, so you could help pay for the wedding of a daughter or granddaughter or something that they might never have dreamed of having, those types of things.

Matt:

Yeah. I think that's the really important mindset shift, right? When we founded Maverick Investor Group we – since 2007 – have been helping people buy performing, cash flowing rental properties in the most investor advantaged US real estate markets, which have changed over time, right? And we help people to continue to build that portfolio of cash flowing properties, which builds their passive income stream greater and greater and greater and we're able to help them diversify and buy in different markets and all that kind of stuff. I think the mindset shift is that we are really socialized I think through – not coincidentally either – right?

When I say socialized, I mean there are a lot of very well-endowed financial institutions that want to tell you that you need to give your money to a financial advisor or to someone kind of thing. They have a financial interest in telling you to do that. But the whole idea is, "Oh, build up this nest egg and create a giant, finite sum of money by the time you retire and then basically hope that you die before the money runs out." And you're just going to spend it down and hope that you die before the money runs out,

right?

I'm like, "That doesn't sound really enticing. Even if you're able to get that nest egg, that doesn't sound very motivating." But with cash flowing rental properties, you're putting that money into an asset that's going to cash flow to you passively and throw off a stream of income which can then cover your living expenses without you having to draw down your nest egg.

Bill: Exactly. Plus, you've got the equity. If you buy in the right market, you've got that too, which is that added bonus there. But what's really interesting – you mentioned this – I've had like the last two guests or within the last month I've had two former CFPs, okay – Certified Financial Planners – that totally went over to real estate, okay? One guy all his licenses to sell stocks and securities just expire and one guy – similar to your situation – he was working with people retiring 2006, 2007 going gangbusters and then – when the market crashed – all of his clients were just stuck high and dry.

They lost so much money and he actually started moving them into real estate investments and he couldn't do it with his license, so he had to let his licenses expire. Now, these guys are still doing this today working with people and giving them a real retirement nest egg that isn't going to totally lose its value. It never will. Real estate's always going to be worth something, right? It may go down in value, but it always goes back up. So, that's where a lot of these guys made their shift, which I thought was really interesting.

Matt: Yeah. I think it's really significant and it's really important because when you start understanding the difference between real estate investment property as an asset class compared with securities and other things like that, I mean most people think about investing like, "Oh, I'm going to buy a stock and I'm going to hope and pray it goes up in value."

Bill: Yeah, right.

Matt: And that's all I can do and, if it does, great. Well, best case scenario it does and then you sell it and then you have to pay capital gains tax and all that other kind of stuff and you're left with some kind of net maybe. But if it goes down in value, you're up the creek, right?

Bill: Yeah.

Matt: Whereas with real estate, one of the things that we teach and we help people to do – whether they’re young, new investors or they’re retirees – because we work with all of those age demographics and each person has different needs and buying criteria – is that we help people to buy based upon real estate fundamentals, right? So, you should make your money when you buy and then not have to speculate and be worried about, nervous about, “Is the market going to go up? Is it going to go down?” That’s always this common question, right? “What do you think the market’s going to do? Is it going to go up? Is it going to go down? Is it going to do this??”

Bill: Right, exactly yeah.

Matt: I’m like, “Listen. What you need to do is create buying criteria where you’re not really too concerned with that.”

Bill: Right.

Matt: “So, when you buy your cash flowing rental property, you buy it and you’re locking in a stream of income because you’re buying it in a market with high rental demand and qualified tenants and a healthy economic area and then – if the market goes down or if the market stays the same and it doesn’t go up in value, let’s say and it goes down instead – well, guess what? You’re still getting your monthly cash flow. Every single month, you get your residual cash flow into your account and, oh, by the way, guess what else? If you have a mortgage to buy that property – even if it doesn’t go up a dollar – your tenant every single month is paying down your mortgage principal for you.”

Bill: Exactly.

Matt: “So, if you just sit there and hold that property, your tenant will eventually pay off your entire mortgage principal and you will own that property free and clear. Even if it doesn’t go up a dollar in appreciation value, you are still building equity by doing that, plus you’re collecting the cash flow every month, plus you’re able to take all the tax benefits.

If you own the deeded property yourself and you haven't bought a REIT or some securitized thing, you can depreciate the value of your property and take that as basically a phantom loss against what would otherwise be taxable income. So, you're saving money there as well." So, I tell people, "Listen. Do not speculate. You shouldn't worry that much about what the home price trend is going to do as long as you're buying right from the start."

Bill: Exactly and that's an aspect too that we – like again Old Dawgs here okay – is a little bit different and that's why we sort of have our show is because the needs are different. For example, I don't recommend that people get into debt any more than they have to because – in fact, if you can avoid it, avoid it altogether – because you don't want that to continue the next 10, 20 years. For a young guy or a young gal that's part of your leveraging and that's how you're growing your portfolio.

But we have to take a little different approach because our timespan is a little bit different. So, there are different strategies that we try to address on our show and in our blog and so forth that you can do so that you're not going to be stuck having to pay off or have somebody else pay off your mortgages. You really want to try to reduce that debt aspect a little bit more so that you can be free and clear and you can enjoy that extra bonus where everything's just cash flow at that point.

Matt: And what are some of the strategies that you recommend for seniors in particular that might be distinct from investors at different phases in their career? How do they achieve some of those things?

Bill: One of the things we talk about too is accelerating your pay downs on your mortgages and so a lot of it depends on who's carrying your mortgage and so forth, but you could take a 30 year mortgage and you could pay it off in six years if you wanted and there are strategies that you can use to do that or you can just pay cash for properties.

I know a lot of people that are doing this strategy with single-family homes and they're sort of using the Burr method, but that approach can be a great way to be able to do that. You still have the loan you have to create that you have to pay off, but some people again – if you can get into a property for cash – I think that

money that you have sitting in that nest egg is not likely to get as good a return as you can get from buying a property for cash.

Matt: Let me ask you this now just in terms of the podcast because you have done a lot of episodes right now. I was listening through some of your episodes and kind of going back to some of your older ones. It's really, really awesome to see the consistency. Can you talk a little bit about what the podcast is, what the format is, and basically what people can expect when they come to listen to it?

Bill: Well, sure. One thing we – right up front – is we're not selling anything. I'm not selling coaching. I'm not selling anything. People can listen to the show without fear they're going to be pitched something, okay? I say that right up front only because – when I first started – I was following every rabbit trail that was out there. I mean I've got bookshelves full of these at-home programs on flipping and wholesaling. I mean I fell into every trap there was and I want people to know that they can come there and they're just going to learn and we're going to have fun too because we joke around a lot on our show. But the idea is to get educated.

So, I have a guest on Monday and usually, it's either a fellow Old Dawg that can share their story of what they're doing or it's some expert in a certain area. It could be a Robert Kiyosaki type person. It could be an attorney that talks about some of the tax advantages. It could be a lot of different people. And then on Fridays, I share my story because I'm involved in a lot of different aspects of real estate. We do Airbnb. We do a lot of different things. So, I share the little experiments that I try. I'm still a newbie. I consider myself a newbie.

So, I share the things that I've learned. Hopefully, people won't repeat my mistakes, but they'll also learn a lot and I'll zero in on certain topics as I'll just have a Friday program on just cap rate, "What's cap rate and why should you care?" you know those kinds of things. Then we write articles as well so people can go back and they can research and find additional information. So, that's pretty much the format that I work with. But the idea is there should be enough stuff on our website already – I mean close to 300 podcast episodes and probably 150 articles.

There's enough stuff there that you could get free information that

can help you get started and to do it wisely and to do it well without having to pay \$20,000.00 to some coach to do, you know?

Matt: Yeah. I know that most of your investing you choose to invest out-of-state.

Bill: Yeah because I live in Southern California.

Matt: Exactly. Well, exactly. I mean and this is significant because I think one of the things when we founded Maverick Investor Group that we wanted to be really clear in terms of offering as a value proposition is we wanted our clients to be able to invest in the best and most investor-advantaged real estate markets regardless of where they live.

Bill: That's so smart.

Matt: Right?

Bill: Yeah.

Matt: And so I want to ask your opinion on that and your experience on that in terms of – first of all – why do you invest out of state, right? How do you select an advantaged real estate market? And then secondly – since it is out of state – how do you do your due diligence on those properties?

Bill: Yeah. I say to anybody who lives in a place that has the right numbers, you're better off doing it in your backyard. If you're in Ohio – which has a lot of great places and a lot of great properties, for example, in Ohio that you could do – but if you're not usually the coastal areas you know it's tough. Do you know the One Percent Rule? Uh-huh, it doesn't work here, you know? A lot of these components that we have to assess whether a property would be a good investment it just isn't happening here in Southern Cal, I'll tell you.

So, I just really launched into understanding emerging markets. And one great thing about real estate is there isn't really a national market, okay? People say there's a national, but there really isn't. It's a bunch of regional markets all over the country and you have some that are just beginning to move up the Bell curve. You have some that are already starting to decline like here in Southern Cal.

Prices are going down. You have all these different markets. So, finding those emerging markets and there's a lot of things you look for in a matrix, but basically, it's population growth. It's a strong local economy, low unemployment.

You look at rent ratios and things of this nature that show you that this is a good rental market for you. And I like emerging markets because you're also looking for equity growth too. For example, I bought another duplex. It was one of the first things I bought. I bought it in Indianapolis. Now, Indianapolis isn't what you would normally look at as emerging market because it's what's called slow and steady. It's a good market. You always have a cash flow. It's going to go up, but it's going to go at an incremental amount. It's a small amount. But you know where to buy. You can buy something.

For example, there's a lot of growth going on – especially with millennials in downtown areas. I mean they want to be in a place where they don't have to have a car, whether they can live close to work. So, these areas are booming right now in certain areas. Indianapolis is no exception and I bought a duplex there for \$55,000.00 in an area called the Bates-Hendricks area, which is close to that downtown area. I bought it. Immediately tenants just boom, I had no problem getting tenants on both sides of this duplex.

But the added advantage was is in that period of time that I purchased this, within two years, the property had quadrupled in value and it was like 200,000 – from 50,000 to 200,00 in a couple of years. And that was, again, buying right and buying in the right place. So, I was able to do a cash-out refi, take those funds to buy another property and those kinds of things can help you. Again, as an Old Dawg, I kind of say, “Don't leverage” but, again, I have a pretty aggressive plan. So, for me, it made sense to be able to do that.

But if you don't, it's great. Hey, you've got all this free and clear. I was paying initially \$300.00 and that included P&I and I was going, “This is great. I'm bringing in –” I think at that time, it was probably around 1400 a month and this little place I paid \$50,000.00 for. That's what you want to try to find ideally because – as you grow your properties grow in value, they grow in equity – you also have that legacy. I've got seven kids. So, I think a lot

about legacy because I want to be able to have something I can hand down to them you know when I'm gone and real estate is one of the best things you can pass down.

Matt: How do you conduct your due diligence on an out-of-state property? Somebody looks and says yeah Indianapolis which is – by the way – a market that we've done a lot of business in. You and I have the same assessment of a lot of the advantages in that market. But let's say somebody's in California, for example, and they want to buy in Indianapolis or they're in wherever they are. They could be outside the country and they want to buy in the US in one of these markets. If they don't live near the property, how do you conduct your due diligence on the property?

Bill: That is very crucial, very critical. I mean there's the analysis of properties that you do and, again, that's where I mentioned the One Percent Rule. You look at a property, for example, \$100,000.00 property. You hope that it'll bring in \$1,000.00 a month, right? So, you have certain criteria like that that you just kind of look at, at first, but the most important thing are the boots on the ground. Those are the people that you're going to get working with you. So, they can come from many different areas. I use Bigger Pockets, for example.

When I go into a region, I try to find other investors in that area. I try to find realtors in those areas. I try to find people that maybe I can have contact with. The most important person on your team – like when you move into a new state – you have to have an attorney from that state because they know the state laws for that. You need to have a property manager because you're not there. Somebody has to watch over that property. And then there are other ancillary people – maybe a handyman – or people that are going to help repair your property.

There's title insurance. There are other things too that you want to link into, but the most important is the property manager. That, to me, I find – especially in turnkey, for example, that has to be really important for you guys – is somebody there that you know has their client's best interest in mind so yeah, they're helping the tenant out, but they're helping you out too. so, finding that person is – I have a whole screening that I do that takes quite a while and it starts with just, again, trying to get word-of-mouth referrals – those are your best – from other investors you know and trust.

It could be your attorney in the area. It could be other people who you really know and trust. You start with word-of-mouth and then you start screening. I do things like find out what properties these people own. I'll contact tenants in the properties. I mean I get really down and dirty but because I've had some bad experiences with property managers and that really is your key to success in those markets. So, yeah, there is a lot of due diligence that has to be done and I think the more thorough you are, the less likely you are. It doesn't mean you're guaranteed that you're not going to have problems, but you're going to have a lot fewer problems.

Matt: Absolutely. Bill, at this point, are you ready to move into the lightning round?

Bill: Oh, man. I guess so. I guess so.

Matt: Let's do it.

Bill: All right.

Announcer 1: The lightning round.

Matt: What is one book that you would recommend that has perhaps most influenced you or you'd recommend that other people read?

Bill: Ken McElroy is a great guy. He works with Kiyosaki. He's one of the "Rich Dad, Poor Dad" guys. He has two books that are both great. There's the ABC's of Real Estate Investing" and then there's the advanced guide. I personally really like the advanced guide because I think that there's some stuff in there that most people aren't going there. That would be I think the one book that would be really – if you're really serious about investing – you want to get ahold of.

Matt: Of all of the podcast interviews that you have conducted at this point and all the real estate investors that you've spoken to, what is one or maybe two pieces of advice that you have learned from your interviewees?

Bill: I'll tell you. Some just had a big impact on me and I really did change a lot of my thinking because initially I was looking at there's this mindset – especially when the market's hot and I'm

buying multi-family and some multi-family is sort of this three, five, seven-year hold mentality. But I interviewed this guy. He literally wrote the book on syndication. It's a guy named Sam Freshman and he's a real Old Dawg, but what a neat guy. I went down to his office downtown LA and this guy is still active. He's somewhere in his 80s.

He didn't tell me exactly where he is, but he's somewhere in his 80s. He comes into the office every day, suit and tie, whole nine yards. That lunch I had with him was one of the most enjoyable experiences – just a character. He's just a character. A really neat guy and it was really funny. I said to him, I asked him – actually I had him as a guest on my show too – and I asked him I said, “What was the biggest mistake you ever made in real estate?” He looked and me and he just said, “Selling.” I said, “Okay, you're a guy that's like a wheeler-dealer. You're selling properties.”

He used to go into downtown LA, okay – you can imagine this – and he'd buy a 40 story building in downtown LA for a million dollars and then a couple of months later, he'd sell it for two million and he was going, “Look, I made a killing” and he would brag about it and stuff. Now, he kicks himself because the same building is worth 100 million, okay? “Why didn't I just hold onto it?” It's really funny, but I learn more from Old Dawgs I think because these guys have been there, done that.

A lot of the guys I know who have been doing this for a long time are not selling. They're not waiting until the top of the market – the top of the Bell curve – and selling. They're saying, “Hold, hold, hold.” That was one of the most profound things that I have heard. It's a simple thing, but yet it really had a big impact.

Matt: I think that's great advice because with real estate you have so many profit centers, right?

Bill: Yes.

Matt: So, when it goes up in value – if you were to sell and try to capture that capital gain – that's only one profit center. But if you do that, you've lost the asset and you've relinquished the other four profit centers, right?

Bill: Yes.

Matt: You're no longer getting money from that. So, I think that's really astute advice. Okay, next question. What would be your No. 1 tip for seniors or people approaching retirement age who have not yet invested in real estate and are looking to get into their first property? What's that obstacle or hurdle that a lot of people are trying to overcome? What's your tip for them to get into that first property?

Bill: We're a unique group, okay, because if you've got kids, kids are moving out. You've got this big house you're probably living in, right? Some of them are, "I paid for it. I want to stay in this house, right?" But the reality is you have this huge place. You have to take care of the gardening. You've got a pool. You have to clean the pool. You have the wear and tear. All these things are going on with this property, okay?

I would recommend seriously thinking about house hacking and actually, there's another Old Dawg I had on my show – a great guy. He wrote a book called the Unofficial Guide to Real Estate Investing. His name's Martin. His wife got cancer and so it really scared him when he was younger and he had young kids and he's kind of going, "Oh, man. What if something happened to me?" Luckily, she's fine. She did great. She's doing wonderfully today and everything, but it made him rethink. So, he actually bought an apartment building.

He sold their house – which was worth a ton because it was in Southern California here – and he had enough to put a big, huge down payment on an apartment building. It wasn't, I don't think, a huge apartment building. Maybe it was like eight or 10 units or something like this, but he bought it and it had an owner's unit. So, what they did is not house hack, but apartment hack, okay? So, they basically bought this apartment with the idea that this is where they were going to move.

Okay, so they sold their house, they moved into one of the units. The people living there don't know they're the owners so they don't bother them, okay, because they have an outside property manager that does it. They live in this place rent free. Now it's completely paid for. He gets this incredible income from this place. If anything were to happen to him, his wife could live there and not only does she live rent-free, but she gets this great income just

from this one property and she has no worries.

She has a property manager who – if plumbing breaks down or whatever – the property manager takes care of it. So, some people do house hacking. They'll buy a duplex. They'll live in one unit or even a house and they rent out the other rooms, right? But this, I thought, was really unique because this is a guy who had thought ahead and now he's got his retirement and they don't stay home anyway. They travel all the time. They're out and about. They're doing things. It's not like they're just sitting home. They like to be active. So, it's a great house. They have a three-bedroom apartment and everything's wonderful, but they have no worries. They have no expenses.

Matt: That's amazing. Other than your own content, what is one blog or podcast that you listen to that you'd recommend to people?

Bill: There are a lot of great ones out there. I heard this Maverick one just recently. That one kills, man. That one kills. I love it because I'm an entrepreneur and I love the stuff you have on it. But I think the general one that I went to that was just kind of a lifesaver because, again, I was buying all these programs and I wasn't really learning was Bigger Pockets. With Bigger Pockets, I've networked. I've met people in the areas that I'm in. That's how I've made a lot of key contacts.

Let's say if you're going to buy a property in Dayton, Ohio. You could go on there and find all these people from Dayton, Ohio that know that market so well. So, you could say, "What about this east side place that I'm looking at?" They'll be real blunt with you, man. "You don't want to go to that place. That place is a war zone." But you wouldn't have known it otherwise, you know? So, you make good contacts. There's tons of content. I write a blog there – a weekly blog, a lot of guys – there's tons of content there and it's all free. So, I'd say BiggerPockets.com.

Matt: Okay, last question. What is one tip that you have for raising amazing children for parents?

Bill: Wow. I mean just a big part of it is trial and error you know. It really is. But I think too often we kind of write off kids. I mean my daughter was nine years old and she ended up swaying our whole family into selling everything and moving to Haiti and that was

one of the best things that ever happened to me. I would have to say, “Give your kids the benefit of the doubt.” Their little minds are amazing and a lot of times we don’t think they have the depth and, “Well, I just want to play with them.”

Try to really get into a conversation and it’s kind of sad, it’s kind of tough. I love technology and I’ve seen a lot of it. I think I had one of the first laptops. It was called a K-Pro. It was this big box that sat on your lap but would probably burn you after a while. I’ve seen all of these developments and probably the saddest thing is these little screens that we just get locked into and our kids get locked into. One of the neat things about being on the road, being with your kids and doing what I did, not everybody can do that.

You can’t all go on the road necessarily with your kids, but I think a lot of the guys you talk to, that is happening. You need that quality time with your kids and you need a lot of time with your kids. I’ve never seen any kid I’ve talked to – including my own – where you feel “Were you satisfied with the amount of time you had with your parent?” Most of them will say, “No. I would have liked to have had more time.” Even me, my dad’s been gone for years now, but I would have loved to have had more time with him. I think that’s it. “Let’s take the screens and put them in a box and let’s just have that time together.”

We’re really big about family dinners. That’s a big thing with us and we sit around and we’ll argue politics or we’ll talk whatever it is and we have a blast because there’s that real, honest – We don’t allow any screens there. It’s just interaction. “Tell me about your day? What’s one thing you learned today that’s going to have an impact on the rest of your life?” you know things like that. We just engage, man. That’s what they want and, unfortunately, we’re kind of competing with Instagram and Facebook and all these other things out there and that’s all.

Matt: That’s an awesome answer, man. Well, Bill, it was so amazing to have you here today. I want to make sure you are able to tell people all the different ways that they can find you, definitely how they can listen to the podcast, check out the blog and – if you’re on social media – how they can follow you or how they can get in touch with you.

Bill: Sure. Well, probably the easiest way is our website. It’s

www.OldDawgsREINetwork.com and Dawgs is spelled, D-A-W-G-S. Okay, yeah, we're hip, right – real hipsters here at 63. But that's the main thing. You could contact me through there. There's a contact page you can reach me. It's really easy. Or you could just write to me Bill@OldDawgsREINetwork.com and I'd be happy to connect with you and I'd be happy to answer questions. I do that all the time. In fact, once a month, I have this thing called Ask Bill where actually I'll answer real estate questions from people. I love answering questions and helping in any way I can.

Matt: That's awesome. And then the podcast, how do they find that? On the website as well?

Bill: Yeah. It is on the website, but of course, we're on iTunes, Stitcher, Google Play, all the regular places.

Matt: So, they can just – whatever podcast platform you listen to wherever you're listening to this episode in fact – you can just type in – it's called the Old Dawgs, D-A-W-G-S, REI Network.

Bill: Yeah, and usually if you just type in “Dawgs” D-A-W-G-S besides us, it's some hip-hop guys out there. Okay, you're going to find us pretty easily.

Matt: That's awesome. Well, Bill, thank you so much for being here today. This was a blast, man.

Bill: Oh, man, it's a kick and thanks for having me on, Matt. It's been a blast just meeting you and keep listening to Old Dawgs because you're going to hear Matt being interviewed, okay? He already agreed. He's going to come on the show. So, we're going to have some fun with Matt.

Matt: It's going to be awesome. I look forward to it. Thanks, Bill. Goodbye, everybody.

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