EPISODE 941

[INTRODUCTION]

0:00:00.0 ANNOUNCER Welcome to the Real Estate Syndication Show. Whether you are a seasoned investor or building a new real estate business, this is the show for you. Whitney Sewell talks to top experts in the business. Our goal is to help you master real estate syndication.

And now your host, Whitney Sewell.

[INTERVIEW]

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Whitney Sewell: This is your daily real estate syndication show. I'm your host, Whitney Sewell. Today our guest is Dave Seymour. Thanks for being on the show, Dave.

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Dave Seymour: Hey, Whitney. Great to be here, man. I've already enjoyed that conversation pre-show so I know this is going to be a cracker.

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WS: Awesome. No, pleasure to have you on. David is a retired 16-year veteran on the fire service and launched his real estate career over a decade ago, rapidly becoming one of the country's top investors. His unabridged passion for business and real estate put him on the radar of ANE TV network, as well as multiple news organizations like CBS, ABC, CNBC, and Fox News. Dave's a blue-collar attitude in the white-collar world is why investors seek his advice and want to invest alongside his team at Freedom Venture Investments. His partnership with Shark Tank's Kevin Harrington has disrupted the private equity landscape, allowing ambassadors access to i nstitutional quality commercial real estate assets and have normally only been for the elite. So, Dave, welcome to the show. Honored to have you on. In case the

listeners haven't heard of you, give us a little more of that background and what you've been up to. Sounds like you've been up to some really big things, recently. And let's dive into a couple key things that I know that are going to help the listeners.

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DS: Yeah, for sure. First of all, I gotta have my team tighten up that introduction man. That's way to wordy and way too long. My career was very blue -collar oriented prior to stepping into real estate investing. I always say I kind of like to bring up a blue -collar attitude to a white - collar world because in syndicati on on large commercial transactions, it says much about the finances. It is about the actual deal itself. I focused heavily past couple of years on sharpening up skill set in my toolbox with regard to finance. And as I'm sure, you can testify, you know the world of finance, financial advisors, you know, large capital contributions of movement, whether through self-directed retirement accounts, or 1031 exchanges, and all of those fantastic vehicles we work with, you know. There's a lot of disrupted that world as much as anything else in the sense that I don't delve into the highfalutin terminology of the financial industry. I tell them, "Hey, stop trying to be smarte r than you are. Just give it to me, meat and potatoes, you know. Give it simple." So, you know, we spent a lot of time on that.

But yeah look, I'm probably better known for my time on the TV show, "Flipping Boston" there on the A&E Network. 2008 my career started when most careers stopped. I stepped into real estate... as it's said in the intro, kind of with a passion with a vengeance for some change and...I was interested and I kind of walked in, again, with that blue -collar attitude. And because I was following people who had already been successful in real estate at various levels. I kind of didn't take no for an answer. I encouraged every no that came towards me because I know it's going to get me closer to a yes. And I've used that firefighter ment ality, if you will, where when everybody else goes rushing out, we go running in. I kind of use the same thing in my real estate career and, you know, it did. It got me recognized as one of the top distressed asset investors in the Boston marketplace, put me put me aligned with the then AG's office Martha Coakley. I work directly with the state of Massachusetts through their abandoned housing initiative that has to take some of these blighted properties that the banks that kind of like

walked away from in 2008, 2009, 2010. We went in there and took over first lien position on these assets and turn them around, put them back on a tax roll.

So, I got to see the upside, right? I really got to see the the positivity of a good investor. Residential redevelopers, as we call it. And it created motion. It created attention. TV show was great. You know, it put me on places that I never believed I will be, you know. I'm sitting there on Squawk Box with Joe and Becky and Andrew and I'm thinking to myself, "How the heck did... how did I get here?" But you know, I leaned into it, stepped into it, love my career as a fire fighter but financially, it was, it was a challenge. I followed a lot of the... You know, the financial information that's given to the majority of our country, right? Guy said to me one time, "If you show me where somebody gets their financial advice from, I'll show you what their financial future will look like." And for me that was kind of a little bit of a dagger in the heart, Whitney, right? I was trading time for money, work hard blah blah. Oh good fundamentals, but definitely not a recipe for financial independence.

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WS: No, I can relate to that as a police officer. Previously, you know, I've been a police officer for a number of years and federal agent as well. So, I can definitely relate to that. I appreciate your service there though. Hats off to our law enforcement and firefighters and all those first responders that are laying it down - Military, you know, - every day. Well, grateful. It's just neat to see and hear a little about your progression, you know, from the first responder world.

And I know there's a lot of those that are listening as well that are looking to get into real estate and can relate to your story. You know, fast forward a number of years now. And I know one thing that you have kind of going for you now that we briefly discussed before the show is just having pocket listings. And I think in this market - and it's always this way or is what every body says anyway, right? - is that it's so hard to find deals or increase deal flow and things like that.

But you claim to have pocket listings that everybody else just claimed to have, right? But you actually have them. I thought you could dive into that a little bit. I know the listeners are...

they're all looking for deals, right? And that's our, that's our issue, you know as well. It's just finding the deals. So, let's let's discuss that a little bit.

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DS: How do you become an expert in anything, right? You do it consistently and you don't die. That's really, that's really, that's really it right? What is it? 10,000 hours to become an expert in anyone's field, right? For us, we aligned as a company, Freedom Venture Investments, and just as after COVID hit, reconnected with a very good friend of mine and a mentor to me. A gentleman by the name of Walter Novicki. In our age group, in our 50s, you know, we've been through some market cycles. We got the scars. We've, you know, we 've been through those processes. And Walter has been a residential redeveloper as well as a commercial land development and apartment house redevelopments. But he'd done it for over 25 years through the Gulf Coast region of Florida, as far up to Orlando.

Here's the good news and the bad news. The bad news is is if you're new, and you're looking for your first maybe three to five deals, you are gonna be challenged. I'm not going to paint, you know, pretty stories and put a unicorn in the mix when they don't exist. You're gonna have to put in the time and the effort, the leg work, consistency. Prove yourself. That's maybe bad news for some, but at the same time it's good news for others because some people just put their hands up and they say, "Okay, instead of me putting in the 10,000 hours to be the expert to get the pocket listings, to be known as the closer in any marketplace, can I leverage somebody else's experience?" And that's where we step in, you know. It's interesting, I like your use of terminology. You claim to have, right? You claim to have pocket listings. And you know proof is always in the pudding, right? What does the track record look like?

So, when you combine the track record of the principles of Freedom Venture myself and Walter, and also our third partner, Eric Wilson, who's the millennial that we we absolutely need to make sure that everything runs smoothly. There's probably 55, 60 years worth of experience that combined. Well, during that period of time your network grows massively, righ t? So, in the Florida market place, my partner Walter, when we combined in April of 2020, he's known as the closer. Albino capital had done a quarter of a billion dollars' worth of transactions just in

commercial real estate alone. Raised 125 million in private equity, deployed that capital, paid it back with its double-digit targeted returns, never missed quarterly distributions. So, that makes some noise in the marketplace. And yet it was still boutique enough that there was a good relationship between the investor and the GP the LP. The GP, LP relationship was always strong. So, you know, that's what works for us. I mean, I've got approximately, 28 million, either under contract or in their final negotiations of LOI to get on the contract right now. And every one of these deals combined is a solid, solid either core plus, or the new classification I've created is a core plus plus.

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WS: Plus plus? Yeah.

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DS: Yeah. Plus plus. It's not quite a value-add, but it's not quite a quarter plus. It's in between. So we create a new asset class. But the thing is is every one of those deals, you didn't see. My competitors didn't see. Nobody else have seen those deals because it's that old story of the motivated seller, Whitney, who has to get into a position where "Can you close? Can you close quickly?" You know, we always say it's got some hair on it. You know, some of these deals are a little hairy and we're able to, you know, pivot, negotiate. We're well -capitalized to move fast or slow depending on the needs of the so and so. That's the correct.

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WS: A couple things I wanted to go back to. And the first is, you mentioned earlier, which I think is very crucial to the listener bec ause we all want to get to that 10,000 hours as fast as possible, right? We all want to become that expert. But you mentioned partnering with the experienced. And we've talked about partnership so many times on the show. But it's just so crucial. It's like you got to get it out of your head that you're going to do everything, right? Or you're going to be the best at everything. You're going to get this done because you're going to get there slow, you know. Right?

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And so, talk a little bit about partnering with the experienced. You know, speak to the listener who's like, "I don't even know where to start to find that person who's got that experience I'm looking for." Can you just speak into that a little bit? And then I want to move into finding those motivated sellers like you're talking about. But first partnering with that experience.

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DS: Yeah. Look, we leveraged the notoriety or the recognition of the brand of myself from the TV show, Flipping Boston. Then also, one of our partners, Kevin Harrington, the original shark from Shark Tank. You know that attracts or rejects. It depends, I guess. But that attracts the, retail investor. Look, you know as well as I do, there are probably hundreds of thousands of doctors, surgeons, den tists, attorneys, business owners, chiropractors, who are so engrossed in trading time for money. Agreed that at a very high level compensatory level, and yet don't have the ability to work their capital at a higher rate of return. They just hand it over t o the stock market. The stock market beats them up, rides them up and down, up and down. You know it doesn't offer the alternative investments.

So, the first thing is this man you gotta seek it, right? It's religious. Those that seek shall find. And when an accredited investor gets sick and tired of the same old same old, then they'll ask questions. And look, I believe this. What an investor has to understand is you are investing with the team. Real estate is real estate. It's either a good deal or a bad de al. It's underwritten properly or it isn't. But you're really investing in the team. So, some of the things I always suggest is, what is the track record of the team? What is the availability of that team? Because it's a partnership. We're in bed together for three years, seven years depending on the structure of a deal on or whether you're coming into our fun d for example.

What does that track record look like? Have they raised money before? Have they deployed it? Have they paid it back? And then the vertic als of that team. Do they have property management? Do they have the vertical for construction? Does this story makes sense, Whitney? As syndicators and professional real estate investors, our story needs to make sense. It's gonna tick the boxes. Why Flori da? Why now? Why the asset class we pick, right? All of the reasons behind our investment strategies need to make sense. And then read the PPMs. Read the private placement memorandums. Get on a call with the team. Ask the hard questions. And, you know, you will very quickly get a sense of the ability of that team to execute. So, to sum it all up, do your due diligence. That's how you find a good partnership.

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WS: You mentioned the availability of the team. What does that mean?

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DS: I'm glad you picked up on that. Look, man, you can go on a Google right now and Google syndicators. And, you know, a list of companies will come up. And the reason that they show up first is because they spend more money on jets and Rolls Royces and Google AdWords than they do on delivering, you know, a consistent rate of return. That's my own. I don't want to be the guy who pulls somebody down to build s omebody up.

One of the things we did right out of the gate is that we wanted to keep a company at a boutique level meaning, if you have a question for me, the CEO of the company, there is a way to get to me to ask those questions. I won't bring money into it or fund on to add to our deals until I've touched clubs with the investors. I want to Zoom call. It doesn't have to be hours on end, but it's just that. "Hey, I appreciate you coming in with us. We're here to support you and help you. Let us know what y our goals are for us." It's not about me, it's about the investment. What are your goals? And how do we achieve them together? So it's accountability, its accessibility, it's transparency. We do a very simple waterfall system that everybody understands. We don't overcomplicate this thing, man. We don't have to. There's so much opportunity out there so...

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WS: I like that. I mean, we talk often about due diligence for passive investors and things like that. You know, learning who these operators are, track their knowledge. It's interesting you talk about availability. Not many people bring that up. You know, is the CEO available for you to speak to? You know, I think that's interesting. I've had calls I know when I was first work ing in this business and calls with syndication groups, right or companies, and I had a five -minute

call - I'll never forget this - a five-minute call with somebody that's, you know, not the CEO. I said, "Whoa, that was fast." You know, like I don't know. I'm not sure I feel comfortable investing with this group. But that was known like it's five minutes and it wasn't with the CEO and like we're off the phone. Like, I don't know about that. But let's move on. You mentioned, finding the motivated seller. Speak to that and how you all are doing that successfully?

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DS: Yeah, again, it's the track record in the marketplace. So, when you've been doing the same thing successfully for over a quarter of a century, you know, the pre-foreclosure attorneys know who we are. The right brokers in the right markets know who we are. So, get into that motivated seller. We're very proud to say it's inbound lead generation for us right now. You know, COVID created a massive opportunity in the mom and pop asset class 20 to 150 units which is where we focus our attention. We let the guys who drive around in the jets and the Rolls Royces chase the 300-door plus. We'll let them, you know, put the deal together at 3% yield. We'll go in at eight to 12% yield because we target that smaller asset class.

And, to be frank with you, it's conversations. It's conversations. It's being very clear with our acquisitions team - what we're prepared to underwrite and what we're not. And I'll give you an example. "Gentlemen, we have 81 units under contract right now, and it's been long. It's been a long process. Like we've been under contract for almost five months with this thing, because there's so much hair on it." You know the seller finds out that there's a ma ssive mold concern on this thing. So, now he's got to put another 750 into the property to remediate the mold.

You know, some investors would like run for the hills and just bail out of this thing. But this gentleman is going to tell other investors in the marketplace, you know, "Freedom Ventures gave me time. They gave me resources. They introduced me to their verticals, their contract, and teams. So, it's doing good business. It's what creates that inbound lead generation. And then once again, you know, you're leveraging whatever tools you have. Police officer, firefighters. People relate to us, right? We're the good guys. So, you know, learning how to market correctly is important. But again track record, it's longevity in a marketplace that gets you the motivated seller to call you rather than you have to chase them.

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WS: You talked about doing good business. It sounds like, I mean, the golden rule, right? I mean, it's doing good business, and always doing good business. It's interesting you talking to being a firefighter, people can relate to you. Yeah, and I think often we forget about maybe our previous skill sets or previous careers before we got into real estate and how relatable, you know, we can be to those on the groun d, you know, like you're talking about. That can help you even find the deal or connect you to the right person or right seller. Dave, what about...Let's move forward a little bit. How do you prepare for a downturn? You know, maybe you can speak to how did this last year change maybe the way you prepare for a downturn or another one?

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DS: Great question. So, you prepare for a downturn by buying right in the beginning, right? So many investors don't even earn the moniker of investor. They're really gamblers, right? One thing I learned very very early on in my career is that my number one responsibility is to an investor. Period. And the conversation. W alk away from 100 deals to do one deal. So, preparing for a downturn. It's interesting. I had this conversation with Walter who's been through probably three, if not four cycles in his own career. And it kind of upset me a little bit because he said I think Florida...He said, "In my opinion, Florida is going to sit out the next downturn." And I'm like, "That's a bold statement, Mr. Noviki. Let's discuss my brother. Let's get into that."

And he had some really good points, you know. The underlying causes and conditions of the next downturn will not necessarily be comparable to 2006, 2007, 2008, right? That was a financial predatory scenario that occurred. Whereas, this one, you know, it's going to occur kind of in a similar sense because of how the government reacted to it. You know, the COVID band aid is yet to be pulled off. You know, you don't have to pay your mortgage, you don't have to pay your rent. Well, that stupidity only lasts so long and then the world's going to reset itself because the bank will a lways get paid. So, you know, the question always is is what

position, are you in as an investor to prepare for that change? So, we've got the huge migration into Florida. 1500 people every single day moving to the state of Florida where we do our business. So it gives me the population growth. The retirement community continues to grow down. They will live in longer and longer and longer because of the miracles of medicine, and with every retiree creates for service shops. All of the data, right, supports this market. So, that's number one. I'm hedging against a downturn because I'm in the right place at the right time.

And then for us, the next thing is, how we buy. We never over leverage. We go into the 65% LTV on all of our deals which gives us security. And then at the same time, because we buy right, we buy with two-point, maybe three points spread on the cap rate on the buy side, so that then when we do a repositioning, we may well be as much as four points, you know, spread on a market cap and trade in comparison to final product. So, we can absorb potential, you know, vacancies. We can absorb potential, you know, financial occupancy. It's not being where you want them to be. So, it's a process but look, man, full disclosure, everything is based on assumptions.

Everything is based on a "Wait-a-minute-I-saw-something-similar-to-this-before." What happened then. It's these syndicators that, you know, come out of some kind of education arena, and figure that they've got a pretty cool spreadsheet, and now I'm an investor. No you're not. You're dangerous. So, you know, the track record, history, buying ability, movement of capital, and always, always, always being a steward of capital is what keeps our investors in a safe position. This is a bold statement but I can say in truth, neither myself nor Walter has last one dime I've invested in capital. Never. Never lost one dime invested capital. And I've always made distributions. Not just one time but every time on time. That's because we work damn hard to buy the right deals.

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WS: Nice. You said so many great things there, Dave. I love how you just went in -depth in that question, you know, about focusing on how we prepare for downturns. You said it right, you know, buying right from the beginning and went through numerous things there. I feel like

many times, operators can't give a good answer for that question. And it's unfortunate. And I feel like that was really good and I love, you know, many things that you said there that's helping you prepare. But on that same note, you know, what are your predictions over the next, you know, six months to a year in the real estate market? You know, what are plans?

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DS: Yeah, look when, when this silliness of, you know, being spoonfed by the government relaxes, and I say that with respect, but I am who I am. I'm a 54 -year old man. I've been on the planet a little while I've seen some shit. You know what I'm saying. But when the band aid is pulled off, we have to see a spike in foreclosures because the amount of delinquencies is increased dramatically. So, we're going to see a migration again. You know, this unbelievably unsubstantiated single -family residential market right now has to flatten out, if not crash. So when that happens, people will need apartments. The same thing the mom and pop investors nationwide, not just Florida. And your markets as well, man. You know who they are. You probably market to them looking for opportunities. They have not been able to a bsorb the reserves needed to sustain their assets, so they're bringing more assets to the marketplace.

So, I see a huge increase in the need for the product we deliver, you know, multifamily assets, good communities, B -class assets, B-neighborhoods. So that these families can come in for the next 3, 5, 7 years. Reset themselves. You give them clean, decent, affordable, pleasurable housing with great services. You let Them reset their lives because fortunately, unfortunately, - depending on how you look at it - you know the same people who got brutalized in 2008 own properties again in 2020, 2021, right? So, whatever comes next. People will transition out of apartments back into single families. But, again, look, the change is coming. It has to. Nothing stays the same. Everything changes. That's the one guarantee we can have in life - is that things will change, right? But again, having the preparation to have some foundation in the predictions for the future is what separates us from, you know, a lot of these companies that will fall very very quickly.

So, we're ready, we're aggressive with building infrastructure for the next fund, half a billion. We're bringing in institutional capital. We're negotiating a 100 -million-dollar deal right now for workforce housing, section eight housing, because we know that need is there. But decent - section 8 - decent, affordable housing. So, we're incredibly bullish in this market for sure.

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WS: Nice. That's awesome. That's awesome, just to hear your thoughts on the next six months or 12 months, you know. And just saying, "Hey, it probably is going to happen, right? It's going to correct itself at some point." And so, you know, last final few questions, Dave. Kind of quick. Do you have any daily habits that you are disciplined about that have helped you achieve success?

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DS: Yeah, I do. Look, I'm not a man of religion, but I'm a man of faith. I transitioned out of that environment of the fire department. And as cops and firefighters, we see things that people shouldn't see, right? We get to see how how human beings can can not treat each other well. So, I pray for good deals and good people every day. And one of the things that I do is I ask that my fear be replaced with faith and that my actions are in line with my intentions. And it's just a little routine that I've gone t hrough for over 30 years now. 30 years I've been on a journey that has done nothing but treat me well. And I always I always look to a position of... and it's so freaking corny, but I pray for the win win, man. I pray for the price of the good business. Yo u know I consistently try and find a way to be grateful. I find that gratitude is an engine that manifests good things. So, you know, there's a couple of...that's my mindset stuff. Physically, I don't work out as much as I should. But I'm blessed to have a little sauna at home. So I sit in a sauna and sweat my butt off every morning. Get the poisons out, you know. Maybe listen to some good stuff. I'm going through Schwartzman's book right now. It's the foundation of how he built Blackstone. And it's kind of interesting to...

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WS: What's the name of that?

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DS: I can't remember the name of it. It's Schwartzman's. It's his most recent one.

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WS: Okay, we'll find it.

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DS: I listen to books. I can't read. I don't have the attention span.

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WS: I do also. What's your best source for meeting new investors right now?

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DS: Oh, it's so much work. This is gonna sound ridiculous, but... and it's not scalable but it brings me the most quality of investors. It's what we're doing right now. Podcast and getting the message out there, being relatable to the marketplace. I'm just in the final stages of bringing on a team to go directly to broker dealers, begin getting the message to the poor folks who have been dragging their sorry retirement through the drudgery of the 401k plan, right? We're trying to get some help there. But I haven't dialed it in as well as much as I wanted to, Whitney, to be direct with you. It's still a work in progress.

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WS: What about the number one thing that's contributed to your success?

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DS: It's a mindset thing, man. I have an expectation of a 20% return on everything that I do. So, if I fall short and I only get a 12% return, still wasn't pretty bad, right? So, here's a better way of answering that. Every scenario that I walk into, every new relationship that I w alk into, everybody starts at 100. And then they lose points through their actions. Whereas most people, they say, "Okay you start at zero, and you earn, right? You earn your points." I find that negative approach to be detrimental to my success. My succes s has always been that I give everybody 100. And then we start from there. Let's see what happens next because that's exciting, right? That's exciting to see. Can we all perform at the level that, you know, we put out there? So, I think that's important.

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WS: And how do you like to give back?

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DS: Tunnels fatalis. It's an organization that was created after 911. After 911, I went down to the Bronx with a Salem mass firefighter friend of mine. And we rode with the guys in the Bronx after 911. Some of our guys work a pile, and the organization was created based around the story of a firefighter who was off duty when the planes hit. And then he tried to get back to the city, and he couldn't get through the tunnels. And what he did was he basically took his turnout gear in his kit bag and ran through the tunnel to this and didn't come home. And that organization has been strongly supportive of both veterans police officers, firefighters, EMT first responders. And my partner, Walter, I talk a lot about...I don't share this often but he's actually major Walter Novicki. Very decorated veteran of a number of...It gets me choked up everytime. Right? You see some stuff, man. You know, I mean, you know what he likes? To let this society in which we live operate. There's a lot that goes on that people don't se e. So, you know, I have an affinity, obviously, to those people. So, that's where we try to give back.

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WS: Yeah,. Thank you for sharing that, Dave. So grateful for your service and all our first responders. I was a first responder as well for number of years and it's a job that you just can't almost explain unless you've been there, right?

00:27:11.000 --> 00:27:13.000 DS: It's not a job. It's a vocation.

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DS: You know, you don't wake up one day and go, "Yeah, I think I'll be a cop," because those people try and be a cop, and they don't last, right? Or they try and be a frontline firefighter, medic, and they can't hang. They can't hang. You gotta know how to break stones, right? You gotta be able to break each other down and build each other back up again. And it kind of translates into business as well, right? Look at... I would say this to anybody who wants to be in this game at a high level. Look to your left and look to your right because you are going war. It's not easy, right? It's not easy. It's hundreds and millions of dollars. It's ego, attitude, you know, snakes in the grass. And you know, are you going to war with the right people? Do you feel unbelievably confident with your team? That is absolutely critical so, you know, I look left, I look right, and I know we're unstoppable, right, because of the commonalities that the mindset that we all bring to the table. I can go on for days about that.

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WS: Love that. I appreciate you sharing that and I appreciate you just sharing so much of your time today. I mean, we went through pocket listings, and partnering for experience, finding motivated sellers, how you opera te, you know, preparing for a downturn, and what you see coming over the next six to 12 months, I mean, amongst many other things. Just a pleasure to get to know you a little bit, Dave, and have you on the show. Tell the listeners how they can get in touch with you and learn more about you.

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DS: Yeah, sure. I'm old school. You can actually pick up a phone. I told you where we're approachable. 781-922-4418. Just let my assistant know that, you know, you heard us on on this show here with Whitney. But if you're not inclined to pick up the phone, you can always get us at FreedomVenture.com. Or just Google my name, Dave Seymour. S-E-Y-M-O-U-R. And you'll find me. There's some noise out there on the internet. All good, I'm pleased t o say but if you're interested and you want to align yourself with, with a good team that's doing great works then give us a shout. Seller conversation, accredited investors, we can get that lazy money out of where it is and get it working for sure.

[OUTRO]

0:29:08.0 ANNOUNCER: Thank you for listening to the Real Estate Syndication Show, brought to you by Life Bridge Capital. Life Bridge Capital works with investors nationwide to invest in real estate while also donating 50% of its profits to assist parents who are committing to adoption. Life Bridge Capital, making a difference one investor and one child at a time. Connect online at <u>www.LifeBridgeCapital.com</u> for free material and videos to further your success.

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