

Episode 1566**[INTRODUCTION]**

Melanie Barjrovic (MB): Refi but another one, refi but another one. So, I love it, that's my favorite strategy as long-term buying holds. And then I bought two commercial properties. And then I bought an Airbnb as well. Yep. So, I manage all of that myself. I don't have property managers to meet. We all have the same 24 hours in a day and people like me, how can you handle that many properties by yourself? Like it's not that difficult.

[INTERVIEW]

Josh McCallen (JM): Welcome back to The Real Estate syndication show with Whitney Sewell. He is not here today to He allows me Josh McCallen, flying in from Capitol Hacking, our podcast, because I'm a good friend of Whitney's. And I love what he's done on the real estate syndication show. Today's another one of those treats. We have Melanie Barjrovic, who's in from Niagara Falls, Canada, at least through the internet you are, and I want to welcome you to The Big Show. Welcome, Melanie.

MB: Thank you so much for having me.

JM: So, Melanie and I got to meet for just a moment but for the rest of us who have not yet met this powerhouse. Why don't we ask you Melanie to share a little bit about your backstory and what brought you to where you are today?

MB: Okay, sure. I started working at the age of 12. My parents were immigrants from Serbia and Bosnia. And they believed in all the family has to work and contribute so they owned a little bar. I started when I was 12 years old in the kitchen. It was not a great place to be, I was a horrible cook. You know, I used to do my homework on the on the chest freezers and like I would just do my thing and cook orders and then that developed into blasting and then host to sing and then they bought a bigger location. That's where I really started. Waitressing, bartending and then managing. So I basically managed and ran that place for like 18 years, believe it or not.

JM: Wow.

MB: In total, and all the while though, I was saving my tips. I didn't start to get paid until I was about 16. So, it was kind of slave labor, I guess. But then yes, my parents started paying me and my mother's, it was her idea to actually put my wages aside so that I didn't touch them. I just lived off of my tips and I even saved portions of my tips. So, few years later, I was like, okay, I have all this money. You know, like Mom, I want my money now. And I decided to buy my first house. I was 22 years old. I bought my first house. Best decision ever, best move I ever made. Best deal I ever made. It's still my crown jewel. And yeah renovated. It was brutal. It was like this family owned it for like generations. So, like, it needed a complete back to the studs. Redo you know, like I remember scraping off six layers of tiling and you know, same

thing of wallpaper on all the walls like it was it was it was rough shape. So, it took me a few months to get it up to stuff and then I rented it out.

MB: And then I did the same thing continued working working working. This is all through school as well. You have to remember my undergraduate degree; I worked all through that. My MBA worked all through that, saved all the time again to the same thing bought another house. I didn't have to do as many renovations but it took quite a few holes of trash anyway. And so, I repeated that process a few times. And then I realized like, oh, I can refinance this and get money. Like working my ass off for two years and you know, or a year at a time to be able to buy a house. So, I refi but another one refi but another one. So, I love that's my favorite strategy as long-term buying holds. And then I bought two commercial properties. And then I bought an Airbnb as well. Yep. So, and I manage all of that myself. I don't have property managers to meet. We all have the same 24 hours in a day. And people always like ask me, how can you handle that many properties by yourself? Like it's not that difficult. The main one that requires most attention, of course is Airbnb. Do they ask you a bunch of questions to vet people. And with the long-term buying hold, the only real time consumer the real time sock is when you have to get new tenants when it's time to fully screen them. And you know, like, do 100 showings and you know, make sure you really liked somebody before they move in and I learned my lesson I had some bad experiences of not doing good enough vetting of people. So, I'm going to alert your audience we can come back to that.

MB: And so basically, yeah, like I came in the message I always tried to sort of say is, I came as a lowly barmaid. And I was able to amass this wealth and to create my own little empire, literally by being a waitress, so anybody can do it. Anybody.

JM: I love that message.

MB: Like it's a big you know, and that's I don't know if that makes me relatable to people. But up until just three years ago, I owned my own restaurant bar. I ran in one of my commercial properties. And I did that for just under 10 years. But I actually have to admit, I hate bar industry. So, I don't know if it's because I started so young in it or just being a part of all that, you know, just drugs and drugs and fights and issues. And you know, like bars have a lot of, there's a lot going on many moving parts, and the bar I had was enormous. So, like, it was just such a huge, huge undertaking I did for 10 years, like, constantly running events, constantly getting bands, making specials like every week, you know, and every quarter, I'd have to like, plan a zillion things because you got to get butts in the seats, butts in the seats. And it was like, no, so it was difficult. I did it all myself again. And my family always thinks I'm crazy. Every decision I've ever made. They're like, don't do it. Don't do it. You're crazy. Don't buy that like house or don't do that. Or don't buy the bar, please, please. You know, my grandparents were like crying begging me. They're like everyone who's done it in our family or people we know. They have like the whole family running it. No one's ever done it completely by themselves. And believe me, I you know, I can see why like I work 24/7 for almost nine years. You can't not be at the bar when you have the bar. So, does that kind of answer your question?

JM: It does. And you know, when I break it down just for a moment, because two things. One, the group we are honored to be a part of, you can see one of our pretty

resorts behind my back here on the video. We have hundreds and hundreds of teammates that do great work and they're in the restaurant business and we have bartenders. Now you called yourself a bar maid, I love this handle you have on social media called the wealthy barmaid.

MB: I didn't love there's a story and come up with. Okay, so I lived in Toronto for about a year. Again, full time bartending in Yorkville. If anybody knows Toronto, well, very high-end area of Toronto. So, I lived there for about a year. And I didn't know anyone. And I started going to make one friend then I started going to like launch parties and Toronto, there's something going on all the time, like New York City, like any big city. And I met this one girl, and we became, you know, friends, acquaintances, and she happened to work for the Toronto Star. So that's net, Canada's largest, largest newspaper today. And she was working for them as a journalist. And once she knew my story a little bit that like, at that point, I had all gotten through three homes. She's like, can I use you as my subject for my story? And I was like, sure, I don't care. Go ahead, you know if that helps you out? No problem.

MB: So, we do the interview we have that it publishes and it was the like, what came after that? 1000s I'm talking 10s of 1000s of people emailing me, messaging me, writing it under the article in the comments, contacting her who wrote the article, like 10s of 1000s of people from all over the world, not just Canada, not just the US, all over the world. I'm talking in Australia, in Germany, UK, like everywhere. And basically, begging like, oh my God, how did you do it? What did you do? How are you able to do that? How, like, how can I do the same thing, but at the time, I had a coach through Tony Robbins, which I'm a firm believer in having a coach, I still do to say, and he was just like, now like, you better write a book. You gotta you gotta tell your story. These people are begging these people, I think, and she's the one who said I think the title was wealthy barmaids. RRSPs are income properties. So that's where the wealthy barmaid sort of came from? I didn't come up with it. I wish I did. But yes, full term of bartender, I suppose. And it's cool, because I'm a girl. I know. It works. I

JM: Love it. I love it. And you ran with it. And I'm on your website, and it talks about your book. Now the book is not by that name, though. You have a great title there as well. I think it's one. Oh, you have two.

MB: And they, I'm so I don't even know how it happened. But they both became number one international best sellers. Like this was never a plan that I had, but whatever. I love writing and it's amazing that that happened. But the first one is called the wealthy barmaid, from minimum wage to millionaire. So that one describes my story from stemming from my grandparents coming to this country and everything leading up into it all. How I did my deals and how other people can do it. And here's all the financing options and here's it's a really good informational book for so many people and super motivational I like literally was speaking with my daughter a few months ago and he was like, you need to read your own book and I read it. And I was like oh my god. I felt so like motivated, inspirational and a few of my friends recently who have read it think like I feel like I could take on the world. So that book's awesome.

MB: And then the second one is called the most awesome money book ever and that is for youth and youngsters to learn about financial literacy which is a huge time topic. I'm an advocate, I won't I won't dive into that right now. However, it's applicable to other people like I had a 50 might one of my 55-year-old cooks was like, you know, going through and going. Like, I have no freaking clue, because we're not taught it in school, right? You know, like the whole financial literacy thing is a big problem for these next generations. So that's why I wrote that when I thought I was really compelled. And I've in that I've been given I've been donating books, donating my courses, and with so many NGOs and nonprofits now just giving that knowledge to them to like to work with. So that's really, whatever worth it to me. And it means a lot to me that all these kids and these students around the world right now I'm using my curriculum, I guess, and you know, so those are the two books. So, the first one was aptly named the wealthy barmaid, just the subtitle was from minimum wage to millionaire.

JM: I love it. I love it. I love it. I love it. You did a great job with that. If you didn't come up with the brand and you went with good brand. So that brings you to, if I keep my stats, correct, you still have several houses. You have two commercial buildings and one beautiful Airbnb. Correct?

MB: Yeah.

JM: And the Airbnb which Lake is it on? You mentioned a lake house?

MB: Yes. It's directly on the water. It is on the house or lake house. Why can we call it the lake house? So, it's on Lake Erie. So basically, you got buffalo over here. And like, I think like Pennsylvania over here. So, it's one of our Great Lakes. And it's just incredible. You just like, people have messaged me when they walk into. My God. I cried. I cried when I saw the view. I can't even believe this. And it's just so cool. It just the deck and stuff. It just looks infinity into like,

JM: Oh, I get it. I get it.

MB: Yeah, super cool. And then there's stairs going right down private beach, like, you know, it's just, it's amazing. And what's funny is I didn't even buy it to the lake house. So, like, it's this is absurd to me. I just felt like, I'm like, you know what? I want to Lake House. I want to have some lake or beach house, whatever. So, I bought a beach house. I lived in it for a little bit, but I don't even know who someone may be. Someone mentioned like something about Airbnb. I'm like, Okay, let's test this out. Holy moly. There's another bullet. It's doing \$150,000 a year in sales on that one property loan.

JM: That's incredible.

MB: I had no clue. I like it. I just don't know what to say. But so that was that was a good buy.

JM: That was a great buy.

MB: I just wanted a beach house for myself. That's the truth.

JM: I like it. I like it. I like it. What about that for deal? There's a bunch of deal junkies listening in here? What's it like financially? So, you said 150,000 in revenue? What did you purchase that one for the Airbnb?

MB: Oh, I wish numbers are here. I purchased one for 675 which was a huge deal. Like so my house there is a three-bedroom, two full bathrooms. Upstairs main floor, huge, huge, long front yard. And then the back is just the deck in the water. And they're selling even back then. And even still to this day. They're selling like this one bedroom 600 square foot. One-bathroom teeny tiny things like 899.

JM: Wow.

MB: You can see what kind of a deal that was. I really like I brought them down quite a bit because you know, you always gotta like when you're trying to make a good deal. You always have to find out what the whole story from the sellers, you know, why are they moving? How fast do they have to get out? Are there any issues? Are there problems? And they weren't they were trying to get this one house is just funny. It was down. And they were desperate to get it. Market wasn't hot. It was on for like 799 I got it for 675. Yeah, that was another. Yeah, another good one. And I did a VTB with that one. So, I don't know if there's call it the same vendor?

JM: No, we don't call it that. What does that mean?

MB: Oh, you guys call it by free we call it.

JM: 1031 Exchange.

MB: It's a vendor take back meaning.

JM: Oh, you have seller note. So, the lender was the seller.

MB: Yeah. So, there's other terms that come up. But that's basically what they hold the mortgage for me. They held it for me for one year until then I was able to get into a conventional mortgage. So I get right so I gave a down payment and all that kind of stuff. They held the mortgage for me at 4% which was still great at that time.

JM: Yeah.

MB: And then I went into a commercial mortgage. So that's that. That will feed your deal junkies.

JM: Though it's good. You know, today, are you still active in real estate?

MB: Absolutely. Part of my day to day is driving around looking for houses, or things houses that are boarded up on the windows, looking for someone who has a mowed the lawn. In 10 weeks, you know, like looking for distraught properties to see like, okay, I can make a deal with these people because they're clearly, most likely we don't know until your full story but most likely desperate to sell. And I mean, I still look on the MLS as well, I'm still looking. But I'm also, I'm running some other

companies. So, I have cash flow coming in from there, but I'm building these businesses so I keep putting the money back in there. So, I still have, I always and I still always tell people, you gotta keep a stash and aside, like, the biggest mistake I ever made was like, not buying up 100 houses in the US when you guys had that crash and you know, 2008 2010. So that taught me a lesson like, oh, you always got to keep some money over here in the sights, we can pounce on an opportunity, right? I'm absolutely still actively seeking another right now. I'm looking for a long-term rental.

JM: That's very cool. So, in your real estate world, you've done those reifies. And then you started new businesses, you sold your bar, did you sell your bar? Or did you just close it down?

MB: No, I sold my bar, the business, not the building I sold. So that was the prerequisite for critical. Yeah, even when I went in, it was like, I'm not leasing anything from anyone because that doesn't go along with my goals of owning X amount of real estate for my empire. So, I purchased the building, and I ran my business from it. And that's the business that I just sold in 2020. But again, just the business. So, he runs the show now and he pays me rent, triple net, lease, all that kind of stuff. So that's where that happened.

JM: That's wonderful. And as we you know, want to get to the salient things that you love teaching. You're a great teacher, you have a mentoring program. But I love this book. I don't know if I've made it clear to everybody the book. The second book is called the most awesome money book ever.

MB: Yeah.

JM: And the target audience is young at heart.

MB: It's anyone I'm telling, like I told you the story about 55-year-old, you know, employee down to, I mean, at what age can children start really learning and sponging information three, four or five years old. I even made a course to go along with it. I made it animated so that it's not super boring. So, it'd be fun for kids watching it. It's me narrating but I made it just a little more interesting, because I know a lot of courses and I've taken my fair share courses like you know, and they can be really dry, really boring, really, you know, like, hard to get through. So, my first one, the wealthy barmaid, I have a course for that as well. Again, I did different locations, different outfits different, you know, like, put things up on the board. But like, I'm thinking, how can I make real estate fun? Or how can I make real estate more interesting when, when you're talking about all the dry details. So, I worked really hard to do that. And that's like a tip top A plus kind of course, like I'm super proud of it.

MB: And I also am very proud of the most awesome money book ever most. I call the course the most awesome money course ever. But yeah, it's truly for anyone I like how you said you said heart. It doesn't even it doesn't even have to be that but my own mother, for example. I mean, she's you know, 63 or something, she doesn't even know what a line of credit versus a credit line is or home line credit plan. Like she has no, you know, like, so it's really for anybody and everybody who wants to

learn everything about there is to know about financial literacy about money, and how does money work? How does credit work? How does all that kind of stuff. I won't bore you with the details. But I like how you said for people young at heart, yes. So.

JM: Ready to learn ready to take life by their own design?

MB: Yes.

JM: It seems like you live that way. I love the story about the article that turned into 1000s of people reaching out to you and turned into a book, turned into another book. So, of all those things. And you also said something I'm waiting to teach people for a moment. So, you have your base cash flow coming in from real estate. But you believe you called the more it seems like you're not only are you trying to buy more real estate, but you're also building other businesses. You're done with the bar business.

MB: Yeah.

JM: But you're building other businesses and you're saying that whatever cash flows coming in, I'm putting back in so teach me about the mindset why build other businesses? Why not just buy more real estate? And why keep the money going back in? Teach us those two things about that a lot of people learn from that.

MB: Sure. Well, from my perspective, I can share that: a. I always want to continuously buy real estate so whether that's one two or five houses per year, or one two commercial properties or I'm down. When there's not the problem now, we're having is that it's a seller's market right now. So, it's like during that time until that can slow cool off until our interest rates can cool off a little bit because now they're spiking and they're gonna keep spiking here. What else can I do? And I'm, I'm not one I can't sit and do nothing. Even though I don't have to work. I don't have to do anything. I love doing something. I love building things from the ground up. And I love seeing what potential do I have on this planet on a short little life that I get to live? What's my potential? How far can I go? So that's how I look at it. And yeah, I, again, we buy real estate every day of the week, if I had enough money, and that's one another, like, mistake back in the day, if I had learned so many of these other creative financing strategies that I could have probably bought more had partners, or whatever the case may be, I wish I had double what I have, but so does everybody else. You know, so I'm able to do kind of passion projects. So, you know, on top of my holding company that are companies that deal with that all my rentals are in and I run over that like as we discussed, and it doesn't take a long time, especially with the long-term buying holds. They're super easy peasy.

MB: Other than, as we mentioned, when it's time for a tenant change, but other than that, it's like once every six months, oh, hey, there's a leak or hey, this the furnace will turn on or whatever. And boom, boom, boom, I get someone out right away. Same thing is my Airbnb, if there's a problem, like I'm out there, someone's like, well, if there's no more batteries in the remote, well, there I go. And the biggest thing I love to share with your audience on this note is that no matter whether it's an Airbnb, a

long-term buys and hold, commercialism doesn't matter. Like, you have to treat it like a business.

MB: Yeah.

MB: Everyone, well, not everyone, but so many people I know and so many out there, they're treating it like a hobby. And I see them, like a hobby. Half the people I know say, oh, yeah, call my tent, like they don't get back to me for two months, when they don't answer the phone, or they had this leak for five months. Now, whatever the case may be, and it just drives me nuts. Because if you treat it like a hobby, it's gonna pay you like a hobby, right? It treats it like a business. Now we're talking I mean, like so doing all of that still gives me plenty of time, believe it or not to do other things. So, I started a construction company, because it's somewhat involved in more obviously, with houses with renovations. And, of course, that I use my team, my construction company to do things for me and all my houses and all that kind of stuff, and maintenance and everything is set up.

JM: I'll tell you, it's amazing getting to know you and I love how you moved from passive income, you bought the real estate, you have the assets, you build up a personal net worth. And then you went into other things that bring you excitement and passion, you're an inspiration.

MB: Which is risky. People would say like stay in your lane. A lot of people say that, right? So, you got to have the, at least I understand business. That's a big part too, right? If you only understand like real estate, it's different. But if you understand business, how to run a company how to rent you know, like either.

JM: And I give you credit, because being in the bar business and any restaurant, hospitality business is super dynamic, and so complex in a way that you have been tested. Imagine deal negotiation, salesmanship, all these types, of course, hills, cash flow management, you know, you said you created events, we're big at that as well, we have a whole production company. So, whenever you create an event for your bar, you always say I can't spend more on the event. And I'm going to make it the event. You see you have all this p&I and ROI analysis going on to this has just been the air you've been breathing your whole life.

MB: Exactly. And thank God I learned all those skills from a young age and watching my grandparents do it, my parents do it and learning the ins and outs. And then I made every system 50 times better than they ever did; you know there and then you need those skills. But it's cool that I was able to create the show and that it's successful, which is you know, it could have really gone either way. Yeah, a lot of people do kind of say, you know what, stay in your lane, you know, real estate, just same real estate, just saying you're coaching or mentoring programs or is that but again, I'm testing my potential and my what abilities that I have so far. Thank God everything's worked out and making money, everything's profitable. Real Estate's great, everything's managed, everything's handled like, just, again, you just you treat everything like a business, and you should be okay. You know, you got to know your numbers, make sure you're profitable, like the best advice I can give. Don't treat anything like a frickin hobby and spend three, three hours a week on it or something. Well, that's what returns we'll get.

JM: Tell me how we can follow up if we'd like, because it's been a great show, and I'm sure a few people want to buy the book, but what's the best way to reach out to you through the internet?

MB: Sure. So, I'm available at www.thewealthybarmaid.com. And all my handles on social media are The Wealthy Barmaid. So that's on Instagram, Facebook, I don't do much Twitter, but they're all at The Wealthy Barmaid.

JM: I think people will reach right out to you. It's been great to get to know you. Thank you for being part of the real estate syndication show community. It's great to have you.

MB: Thank you so much.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[OUTRO]

Whitney Sewell (WS): Thank you for being with us again today. I hope that you have learned a lot from the show. Don't forget to like and subscribe. I hope you're telling your friends about The Real Estate Syndication Show and how they can also build wealth in real estate. You can also go to LifeBridgeCapital.com and start investing today.

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