

Intro:

This is Michael Cowen and welcome to Trial Lawyer Nation. You need to show people the worst possible harm that that negligence could have caused, because that's what the case is about- What I'm asking you to do is to focus on what you can control because that's where the power lies- The Dalai Lama has a saying that in the face of anger, justice evaporates- If you can't focus group it, you have to be very, very critical of your process- The facts aren't good. You can create a miracle- We can agree to disagree and be zealous advocates for our clients-Quit worrying about looking perfect. You're not going to. That'll come in time, but you can still be an effective litigator- Welcome to the award-winning podcast, Trial Lawyer Nation, your source to win bigger verdicts, get more cases, and manage your law firm. And now, here's your host, noteworthy author, sought-after speaker, and renowned trial lawyer, Michael Cowen- Today, we have a very special guest on the show. Actor, writer and producer, David Koechner is well known for his roles as Todd Packer on the office, and Champ Kind from Anchorman and Anchorman 2: The Legend Continues. He currently plays Bill Lewis on ABCs The Goldbergs, and recently appeared on ABCs Bless This Mess, CBS's Superior Donuts, Showtime's Twin Peaks, Comedy Central's Another Period, and IFC's Stan Against Evil. David also voices reoccurring characters on Fox's American Dad, and Netflix's F is for Family, and The Epic Tales of Captain Underpants. An alumnus of Chicago's Second City theater, David got his first break as a cast member on Saturday Night Live, and has since become an instantly recognizable face, appearing in more than 190 films and television shows. When not filming, David performs live stand-up comedy across the country. Welcome to the show, David Koechner.

Michael Cowen:

Today, on Trial Lawyer Nation, we actually have a Hollywood actor joining us. It's a different episode, but it's going to be a great one. David Koechner is joining us. David, how you doing today?

David Koechner:

I'm very well, thank you. Thanks for having me. Good to see you again, Michael.

Michael Cowen:

It's great to see you again, too. And I really am glad because I've been talking, you come from the... I'm just saying you've done live as well. But you've done a lot of TV, a lot of film. And we lawyers, we're having to adjust from having a live presentation in person, where we've actually worked with a lot of theater people on connecting with an audience.

Michael Cowen:

Now, it looks like we're going to be doing things through Zoom and over cameras. And so, I really appreciate you talking to us about how to communicate with other human beings through this medium over being on a screen, and not being able to get the instant feedback and eye contact.

David Koechner:

Yeah, because in the courtroom, there is a chemical reaction. There's a lot happening. It'll be interesting. My guess is because you'll also not be subjected to some of the chemical reactors that could potentially throw a case one way or the other. It might just come down to, "Well, these are the facts." Are they going to do trials via Zoom?

Michael Cowen:

They just did one. They just had a gigantic verdict this week in a trial done by Zoom in Florida on a car crash case. We're doing one, it's not all by Zoom. So, we will be in a big courtroom with the jurors all spread out, and everyone wearing masks. So, we'll be in the courtroom with the jurors, but the witnesses will be mostly testifying either by Zoom or pre-recorded videos.

Michael Cowen:

And so, it's a different way of communicating. And then, of course, we'll be wearing masks. So, you lose a lot of facial expression. We're having people that are a lot more spread out. So, where to stand, how to stand, how to not box off part of your audience. All these things are new to me. And since you have worked such bigger audiences than I have, I'm really looking forward to hearing your wisdom.

David Koechner:

Well, it's not often that the word wisdom is associated with me, and I will do my best.

Michael Cowen:

To be consistently funny takes a lot more smarts and skill, I think, than people think it does.

David Koechner:

I agree. I agree. Yeah.

Michael Cowen:

I have a wife and children tell me I fail miserably at it all the time.

David Koechner:

Well, that's the best and worst audience always. And of course, the biggest win is when you actually get a laugh, but couldn't help it like yes. Because I'll swing at anything. I'll swing 100 times. And then, on one on one, I got a laugh. I'm like, "Yeah, it all paid off." Even if I had to exhaust them, I'll still take it.

Michael Cowen:

Well, it's like, I can't believe I married someone would think that was funny. There's like something really wrong with you.

David Koechner:

You think that or your wife will think that?

Michael Cowen:

She thinks that about me. How could you find that humorous? That is disgusting.

David Koechner:

Delisi, and I think you'll agree to this. All men are 14. And if you find one that's mature, actually to the age of 50, you're like, "Okay, I'll take that one."

Delisi Friday:

Or they're just hiding it. It'll come out.

Michael Cowen:

It'll come out.

Delisi Friday:

Yeah. It'll come out.

David Koechner:

God bless all women for taking on the task of whatever we are. Right, Michael?

Michael Cowen:

My wife is the same sometimes, I'll just leave it at that. None of us are perfect, but-

David Koechner:

I don't think you need a qualifier. Old times.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. So, let me get a little bit of background on you. So, I've seen you on TV. I've seen you at the movies. What is your story? How did you get into comedy or acting?

David Koechner:

Well, of course, like most people do, I was a political science major.

Michael Cowen:

Oh, really?

David Koechner:

Yeah. So, I am from a very small town in Central Missouri. By now, most of the country is well acquainted with the Lake of the Ozarks, but not necessarily for positive reasons. But geographically, I grew up half an hour north of the Lake of the Ozarks. So, really, Central Missouri, and a very small town. My father was a manufacturer of livestock trailers for turkeys.

David Koechner:

I have to always say it that way. Because if I say, "Turkey coops" people go like in your backyard, like, "Ha-ha, not funny. Okay, goofball." No, livestock transportation vehicles for turkeys. You guys are in Texas, you know Nacogdoches, Texas is?

Michael Cowen:

Yeah.

David Koechner:

So, Bright Coop company is the only other turkey coop company in the country. So, they were our competitor, lone competitor. So, that's where Nacogdoches is, and how to say Nacogdoches. Anyway, so

I started working for my father when I was seven years old, which I think probably figures in mightily when it came to my career.

David Koechner:

In a small town, where most people are farmers, my father grew up on a farm, his father was a farmer, you just start working. So, my dad made me start working at seven. He probably gave me a break, because I think he started working at the age of four. So, anyway, I've never been unemployed in my life. And that's all owed to my father. It's a great work ethic.

David Koechner:

And so, you just figure it out, and you do it. And being in a small town, I've never met an actor. I did want to be an actor before I went to college. I've never met one. I didn't know how a person went about doing it. And for your audience, of course, a lot of younger people, this is before the internet. So, it's not just readily available.

David Koechner:

And when you're in a place like that, I grew up with three television stations. So, it's not like we have his exposure to information like we do now. Literally, you can know anything. If you don't know the answer to something, you're just not trying at all. Or these days, you think you know the answer to something, and it's just completely wrong, because you didn't try to dig deeper.

David Koechner:

So, I always loved politics. And about in seventh grade, two things happened. In seventh grade, I realized I loved politics, and I thought I want to do that. But at the same time, I saw my cousin in a play, the high school play. There was one play in town a year, put on by the high school to tell you the cultural scene I was growing up in. And I saw her doing. I was like, "Oh, my God, that's what I'd like to do." So, in a way, one could say that politics, and acting much like lawyering are co-joined in a lot of ways.

Michael Cowen:

Oh, absolutely.

David Koechner:

Yeah. But it didn't cross my mind that I could ever be an acting major. So, I chose political science. And after a couple years in, about three years in, and maybe you remember, what was your major?

Michael Cowen:

Psychology, I was political science for a semester, then I switched.

David Koechner:

I love it. We're the same girl. So, about the third year, I was realizing, "Oh, because I'm from a small town I thought political office was in my future." Not realizing the odds, and the difficulty of anyone getting political office. At about that year, I started realizing like, "Oh, hey, small town boy, it ain't happening for you."

David Koechner:

Because what I've seen at that point, I thought to be in politics, you either come from a political family, you're incredibly wealthy, or you're the smartest person in any room you walk into. I was none of those things. So, I just quit going to school. And my father said, "Well, Dave, I don't know what you want to do, but I don't think you want to go to school." Because I'd failed out, I was academically ineligible.

David Koechner:

And that's the best impression you're ever going to hear, by the way. And so, I kicked around Columbia, Missouri where the University of Missouri is for a year. I was working three jobs. And I've always been a fan of Second City because I knew a lot of people in Second City had gone to Saturday Night Live. So, a buddy and I took a road trip up to Second City, saw the show, and I was like, "This is it. This is what I'm going to do."

David Koechner:

So, they had a poster for classes, I wrote down the number, went back home, came back. I don't know, that summer, because I know we went the winter. I came back that summer for a two-week course. And that really solidified in my mind, in my heart. I guess I should say, my soul, this is what I'm going to do. So, I was back in Colombia, working three jobs again, to save up my money to move to Chicago.

David Koechner:

And then, I started taking classes. So, I started classes at the Second City in a place called the iO simultaneously. And then, for the next nine years, I was literally on stage four nights a week, at least. So, if you're familiar with the book Outliers by Malcolm Gladwell?

Michael Cowen:

10,000 hours, yeah.

David Koechner:

You put your 10, so I definitely did that. And I happen to be in Chicago at a very magical time. Wherein, a lot of the people we all know today, I worked with back there in Chicago, from Steve Carell, to Steve Colbert, to Tina Fey, Amy Poehler, to Adam McKay, who wrote and directed Anchorman, to Andy Richter from Conan, it goes on, and on, and on.

David Koechner:

And it really was a real, profound time to be there, which I don't think has been matched before or since that you had this deep, a talent pool happen to all be there, a confluence of talent that probably has never been seen before or since. And I was interviewed by a writer recently. And what I think happened was, so in 1975, I was 13. So, in 1986, I just turned 24. And that's when I moved to Chicago.

David Koechner:

So, a lot of people just like myself, were coming of age then. And had either just gotten out of college and thought, "What's next?" And then, thought, "I'm going to go do this thing I always wanted to do." And we all happen to land there at the same time. And I think that really, probably, when you do the Freakonomics, that book too, right? I think you could easily trace that back.

David Koechner:

Everyone went, "Oh, my God, Second City, Saturday Night Live, we'll go there," and it happened. Now, why didn't it continue? I believe, because people then want a shortcut. They're not looking to work. They're looking like, "Oh, he gets there then, I'll just do this, and I'll go somewhere. I will say that for most of the people that I came up with, it was not about, "Oh, I want fame." It really was about I want to be good. There's a big difference. And now, I think we all see that. And maybe you see it in your profession too.

Michael Cowen:

Absolutely. You have to pay your dues. You have to go try a bunch of tough crappy little cases, and hone your craft, and get those 10,000 hours in the courtroom before you can handle the big stage. At least, you can get lucky. But to do it well, over and over again, you just have to put in the practice.

David Koechner:

Yeah. I don't know. People say luck. I don't see it. But of course, they say luck is when preparation and opportunity collide. But yeah, it's about hard work really, isn't it? It's about hard work.

Michael Cowen:

It's about working hard, and being there to take the opportunities because I meant there is some luck involved. But if you're not out there, if you're not putting in the work, if you're not prepared to run with it when you get it, then it doesn't matter.

David Koechner:

But also, like you said, take the opportunity. So, I have friends in show business that are very talented that you don't know. They haven't taken the opportunity, or they just, I hate to say, they don't show up on the day, or they don't demand of themselves to push through that one hard moment, or that next step. That a lot of times, they might not even see it.

David Koechner:

It's almost like you're in a room, all the doors are open, and they keep going to the door that's locked. And so, you're like, "No, it was right there." It's like, "Well, I'm not ready for that door yet. Okay." And that is a mental game. It happens in every profession, but certainly yours, too. You're not ready. If you're never ready up here, then you're not ready, it's not going to happen.

Michael Cowen:

Absolutely. So, Second City, that's already a giant break. What was your next break from there?

David Koechner:

I got Saturday Live. I was hired on Second City to Saturday Night Live. And I got there. Now, this next speaks to not knowing what you want. So, when I got Saturday Night Live, I already decided I was not going to stay there six years. The contract you signed is a six-year contract. And in my mind, I'd already decided I'm going to stay here three years and go, which is not a great way to connect with the universe, and infinity because they do hear you, and go, "We're doing it out.

David Koechner:

So, we're going to let you go." So, the irony of being a political science major, I was not very good politically. I really say I don't suffer fools gladly. And so, when I saw things on the show that I didn't care for, I didn't hold my tongue. Or when they would sometimes come to me and say, "Hey, why don't you do this or that with that character?" And I would say, "That's a dumb idea."

David Koechner:

And it was, but I think some of the people thought, "Well, he's being a bit resistant." The year I was on, it was the first year that there was a mad TV, and Howard Stern had a late-night show. So, it's the first time they had competition in late night. And the network had a little bit more leverage over Lorne Michaels than normal.

David Koechner:

And so, they said, there's going to be changes, and I was one of them. Lorne wanted to keep me, actually. But the network had more power at that time. Now, Michaels owns all of late night. So, you can't tell him anything. He's got the Jimmy Fallon show, and he's got the Tonight Show, and the Seth Meyers show.

Michael Cowen:

I had no idea.

David Koechner:

Yeah. He produced it, yeah. There ain't no push on that. But anyway, things worked out. Because within six months, after I left the show, I was out in LA. I had a talent holding deal. I met the woman who was going to be my wife. And then, all the things, and marriages, I think only last 20 years, right?

Michael Cowen:

I hope not. I've already gone past that.

David Koechner:

God bless you. Anyway, so that happened. And then, I've been very, very fortunate, and all these steps that happened did set me up to be at a wonderful place, where I've worked consistently since I started. I guess, since I got my first television job, I've worked consistently.

Michael Cowen:

One thing you've done well is you've been able to take an outrageous character, but make it real. You don't look like a person who's pretending to be an outrageous character. How do you get into it?

David Koechner:

Well, first of all, I appreciate you saying that. And it's because you decide to do that. Me personally, I feel like, so let's take my two most famous ones. So, it's Todd Packer and Champ Kind. Number one, they're horrible human beings. If you knew them, you'll go, "No, thank you, I can't be around that." But really, at their core, what's going on? They're desperate people.

David Koechner:

They're desperate for love. They're in pain, but they won't even look at their own pain. And so, they're acting out here, all of these places outside of themselves, to help try to define themselves, even it means they're doing negative behavior that they don't even know that's negative, to attract attention, at least they've got something. So, I see these people with deep pathos, and I love pathos.

David Koechner:

The deep dark pain inside, I believe, so we all have a commonality of pain. So, if through that type of work, I can tap into something that the audience recognizes, there for the grace of God go I, then we can go, "Oh, that guy is in trouble. At least, I'm not like that." But at the same time, for me, I like to enhance the idea of like, "That's a bad person."

David Koechner:

It might be funny to laugh at. But remember, it's a cautionary tale, too. We're all laughing at him. But remember, he's in pain. You don't have to make bad choices and bad decisions. But that person does. So, we can laugh at that. But also, we know we're not going to act like that. Just a short answer.

Michael Cowen:

No, I love it. Because part of what we have to do is in the courtroom, sometimes our own clients aren't lovable. And they act in ways, especially a lot of my clients have brain injuries. And if you have a frontal lobe brain injury, the client getting ready for a trial in November, and my client has a frontal lobe brain injury, and it makes him hard to like sometimes.

Michael Cowen:

And I have to love the part of him that was there before he was hurt. I have to remember, it's not him that's saying this, it's the brain trauma that's saying this. And it's not him, and not taking it personally. And Gerry Spence, who was a very famous trial lawyer, one of my mentors is like almost everyone's mother loves them. So, if you can find, know how unlikable the same what their mother loved, you can love them too.

David Koechner:

That's interesting. So, now, can you introduce that information at trial that my client has suffered a major brain-

Michael Cowen:

Yeah, the whole case is about this brain injury. It's about the truck that hit his car, and then caused him to suffer the brain injury. So, that's what it's about. But this case has been dragging on. So, I've been living with him for three years. And so, you feel for him, but you also get the annoyance of dealing with people that do crazy things, that say crazy things, that it's just-

David Koechner:

Yeah. And as a dad, no, you're not a child, you can't make these bad choices. But then, it's not within their power.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. When you're playing, like I say, your character is not a nice person, when you're getting into role, do you find what there is to love about them? Or do you just go all in whether or not?

David Koechner:

Well, like I'd said before, you find the humanity, just like you said. You find the humanity, and you present that. John Goodman is another guy from Missouri. And he's one of my favorite actors. And when I watch, when I see him, I see him advocating for his character. That's what I see. Almost like a lawyer. I'm putting on this character's case, and there it is. Because they have to live, and this is how they do it. So, you're almost making a defensible case for that person, for that character. So, that's there, too. Yeah.

Commercial 1:

Each year, the law firm of Cowen Rodriguez Peacock pays millions of dollars in co-counsel fees to attorneys nationwide on trucking and company vehicle cases. If you have a case involving death, or catastrophic injuries, and would like to partner with our firm, please contact us. We have experience finding potential defendants that other firms miss. And we've added millions of dollars to cases by finding these sources of recovery. If you have a catastrophic injury or death case, where the policy limits appear to be insufficient, give us a call. If we can find another defendant, we can partner on the case. And if we can't, then we won't ask for any of the fees. You can reach Delisi Friday by calling 210-941-1301, or send an email to podcast at triallawyernation.com. She will coordinate a time for Michael Cowen to speak with you in person or by phone to discuss the case in detail. And now, back to the show.

Michael Cowen:

Another thing I want to ask. You have an awesome voice, you have a strong voice, and it's very recognizable. And I'm getting ready to try a case with a mask on. So, I lose a lot of facial expressions, and then I don't have all the movement I normally get to have because I have for safety restrictions, I can't get too close to people. I'm going to have to stay in a fairly narrow area. So, I really want to work on the voice. Are there anything you've done to develop that voice in anything you do before you perform?

David Koechner:

Well, it goes back to, like you said, the 10,000 hours theory. Now, this is a very peculiar time. And that now, you're having to play basketball while holding a brick. And it's just not fair. Because a lot of it is that communication. So, my guess is a person like yourself, you're going to be doing it in front of camera to figure out how you can be seen or heard, and how you can't be seen or heard.

David Koechner:

Obviously, slowing things down, is going to be a big part of it. Over chewing your words is my guess. You tell me, what do you do? Do you guys practice on camera so you see what's working or not?

Michael Cowen:

We don't do enough of it. Shockingly, I've told this before. But when I was a little kid, and we did community theater, and so we're putting on a play that only our parents and maybe our grandparents would ever watch once. We spent weeks rehearsing. But lawyers will go in there on these big cases that they've been working for years, and they'll wing it, or they'll just do it in front of their partner the night before.

Michael Cowen:

And so, I've done some work in camera, it's painful to do camera work, and see yourself. I find I can only do it if I have someone to coach me. I have to have someone walk me through it. I'm too self-critical.

David Koechner:

So, are you doing it from the lawyer aspect? You're doing it as it so, do you do your opening argument on camera with the mask? That's what I'm saying.

Michael Cowen:

That's what I'm going to do. I'm actually going up to Portland, Oregon to work with someone that works with people on nonverbal communication, and other things, and we're going to go put me in front of a camera, and I'm going to go to do it over and over again. And then, she's going to go over the phone with me, and coach me, and what's working, what's not working.

David Koechner:

And that separates you from other people. And that's the difference. Look at the tape. That's what our athletes do. So, yeah, it serves all of us like, what's working, what's not, especially because you're now... a lot of your toolbox has been taken away. I applaud your efforts in that regard. That's the exact thing to do. But I will ask you this, please forgive yourself going into it.

David Koechner:

And don't think about, "Oh, I've got to look at myself." They're looking at you. So, just look at what are the good stuff they're seeing. We're all too critical of ourselves, most of us. There's nothing wrong with Delisi. Your one in whatever, one in a million, Delisi. But yeah, you'll see it. Don't be too hard on yourself and take the wins. Take the wins, make the small adjustments.

Delisi Friday:

I want to add, though, Michael.

Michael Cowen:

Go ahead.

Delisi Friday:

We have been practicing in front of the camera. He has been working with a consultant who has told him to do that. So, sometimes when he speaks, I'll videotape, and watch it with her. So, when he does do that, he improves, and notices things, and I've noticed that too.

David Koechner:

That's good. My guess is articulation is number one with the mask. But also, Michael, when we watch movies, and you're looking, so think of it, it's a wide shot. Not the close up, because the close up is taken away in this regard, because you got the mask, the wide shot. You can still slow things down, and slow everything down. No flourish. The movement, the purpose, I'm sure you guys, or you people, the royal guys. I'm sure you go through pointing to how do you hold your hand, all those things.

Michael Cowen:

We work on it, but you'd be surprised how little training we have on it. We have to go find people from the acting and communications role to teach. They don't teach this on law school.

Delisi Friday:

We might have just found you a side gig, David.

Michael Cowen:

They teach you how to be a really boring communicator. It's amazing. We go to these seminars, and some of you, these are people who are supposed to speak persuasively for a living, and you're falling asleep, and come on.

David Koechner:

Wow, that's inexcusable. But I would think now that you're faced with these obstacles, okay, then maybe you break down the obstacles. And then how do you overcome them one by one, rather than all at once, because you can't? So, number one is going to be just the articulation through the mask. Like you said, you don't want to be boring. So, you don't want to take too many pauses.

David Koechner:

So, maybe you do have to, you find that the grace notes of what the body gives for communication, I don't know. Your job is so specific. And you have to make sure you maintain a certain elegance, and dominance at the same time. And an emphatic way to change that one last mind on in the jury box. And who knows? Look, we're all humans. For some reason, you might just not like somebody. And that's just going to be the way it is. And maybe that's the challenge. Maybe never, but-

Michael Cowen:

And for us, it's a compelling story. And so, don't have to have a perfect protagonist if you have a compelling story. Although, trials are different, because the protagonists of our stories are actually the jurors. It's their story that we're trying to create live in the courtroom, because they're the only ones with any power.

Michael Cowen:

They're the only ones that can do something. So, we have to create a story that isn't quite over yet. And they have that hunger to come in there, and do the right thing, and to be the heroes of the story at the end of the day.

David Koechner:

I hear you. So, you're creating a narrative. How do I sell the narrative? How do I support the narrative I have created? So, well, there you go. At least, you've got a pathway. It's not as if it's never been done before. It's just never been done this way before.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. Masked and yeah, and limited... and so, you've done Second City, you've been on stage quite a bit. So, that's not an intimate conversation, me and 12 people five feet apart from each other. But still,

you're there live, it's an interactive experience. You feel the crowd, I'm sure, when you're up on stage. As far as gestures, and blocking, and the way you position yourself, how do you make the whole crowd feel part of the experience when you're there with that larger audience like you did on SNL or Second City?

David Koechner:

Well, yours is a different thing, and that you are talking directly to them. And you're trying to give them the truth as you see it. So, two things that are in common, and so when I'm acting on stage, I'm this way. Hoping that they're being pulled into it emotionally. And that the story supports their interest. So, that's things that are in your toolbox.

David Koechner:

If I'm in a bad movie, there's nothing I can do, but rely on what I have. And I have been fortunate enough that, okay, even sometimes, you can take something that maybe ain't so good. But you're just going to do your darndest to make it the best you can do. And one of the things I remember very early on was I thought to myself, I never want to be a one-note actor.

David Koechner:

And as much as people might think, "Oh, he does the same thing." To me, no, no, I'm doing fractions up there. I really am. And you know where you want it to land. Because as an actor, you have an intention. The only way I can get somewhere is I intend to do this. You can't do a line reading. It will never serve you. It will just fall flat. It's not truthful. There's no purpose by it.

David Koechner:

There's no honesty. There's no connection to yourself. So, I guess to answer the question would be, what's the connection that you have to the story, like you said, that you have these people you're advocating for, and you do care, and you are in their corner, and things are at stake. And so, if you have that belief, and that knowing inside you, that's the compelling part of it.

David Koechner:

You're not just walking through it. Because that would be malpractice, wouldn't it? Same for actors, it's malpractice to get up there, and not having done your work. Now, sometimes, we have lawyers, actors, doctors, God bless us, that aren't good. But they keep getting hired. So, we can only control what we do, and those we hire.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. I think the public has no idea whether the lawyer is good or not, despite probably some directors do know if that's good or not.

David Koechner:

Or what we might consider good doesn't really matter, is it enough, or does it have a certain appeal that works. There a lot of pretty people in Hollywood that might not have that skill set to be an actor, but they're pleasing to look at. And so, there you go, okay. But in the end, that just doesn't last.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. So, one of the things I was taught to do, and I wasn't taught why to do it. I've heard a lot about the role of three, doing things in three. Have you learned anything about the rule of three on the acting then?

David Koechner:

Well, it's for comedy, the rule of threes. Something gets introduced once as an idea, it gets used another way later in the story, and then the third time you hear it, then there's the last. So, you're setting things up. And it's almost like a triangle, I guess. Like you said, three different ways. And then, it lands home. Now, you're probably thinking about the rule of threes for emphasis.

David Koechner:

And you can't just keep doing that. Because if I said, "Will you listen to me? Will you listen to me? Will you listen to me now? Okay, great, I got your attention." But if I keep doing that the whole trial like, "Bob, please, will you just stand?" but I would think if you introduce an idea early in the piece, and then the middle, and at the end, boom, there it is again. It's just like good storytelling, isn't it?

Michael Cowen:

Absolutely. And that's what we're trying to do. And that's why I'm so glad you're on here because I've been preaching to my people that we need to learn from people are saying, "Oh, you can't emotionally connect with people in a Zoom trial." And I'm like, "I watched a 30-minute TV show." And that's not 30 minutes of TV. That's probably 24 minutes of TV and six minutes of commercials, at least.

Michael Cowen:

And I've been moved, I'm tearful, I am mad, I am pleased, and laugh. I am making an emotional connection. I watched Ally McBeal or what song was Shatner? Boston Legal.

Delisi Friday:

Boston Legal.

Michael Cowen:

And they would do these one minute, a minute and a half closing arguments, and you feel compelled to do something. And that's all over a screen. And that's all made-up stuff. It's all fiction.

David Koechner:

It always comes back to attention to detail, and the connection is the detail you have in your heart. And then, so if we look at this kid here, Delisi, right? I say Delisi. But this kid happens to have a golden heart, and it comes through her face. It's not something she's thinking. It's just who she is as a person, so it resonates out. And her intention is just to be as good a person as she can be, and it shows. There's no acting there. Sorry, Delisi.

Delisi Friday:

Very flattering compliment. Thank you.

David Koechner:

Well, it's the truth. So, if you're a good person, it's going to shine through, especially like that on a Zoom. So, at least you have this. And I guess you're going to just have to keep learning. Because we don't always look at the person we're talking to in the eye. So, maybe there has to be that learning curve, too. I was like, "Do I look at the camera? Do I look at the other people on the Zoom?"

David Koechner:

Do I make sure I'm intentional about not being too busy back here? This chair, I've noticed squeaks a little bit. I don't want to use that. What's my background?" All those things that don't normally play, you have to do the attention to detail again. And then, I guess, just be honest and true, which I have a hard time because I haven't had a truthful moment in my life. I don't know, I am.

Delisi Friday:

You're right, though. All those things when you have to pay attention to detail are really important now. Because when we're doing anything virtually, we're thinking, "What's our background? What's our lighting? How do we sound?" And then for Michael, I know if I put a podium in front of him, he's going to hate it, because he likes to move around. So, he's not going to have to do anything on camera, and we have to make sure he has the ability to move because he likes to use his body in nonverbals, and feel that connection through his body and his voice.

David Koechner:

Interesting. So, now you have this idea like, "What do you do? Do I do just the headshot? Do I do a medium shot? This is called a cowboy, or a full body shot." And then, like that, what's most effective? Because if I'm here moving around a lot, it's going to be distracting. So, if I know that, I can't stop moving a lot, then I need to place my medium in a place where it's going to be most effective for those watching and for myself. Wow, but it is a steep curve, because it's quick.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. And if I'm going to move around, I got to get a cameraman.

David Koechner:

Yeah. Oh, wow.

Michael Cowen:

And then, I got to think about nobody just wants to look at a talking head for six hours a day. So, how do I mix up this shot? Can I mix up shots? Can I mix in visuals?

Delisi Friday:

How do we keep it entertaining?

Michael Cowen:

Right.

David Koechner:

Yeah. Well, at least you're thinking about it. You're not weighing it. You're preparing for the thing you're about to do in a different way. Well, that's the difference. Those that don't simply won't succeed, or maybe they'll learn. We are all learning here from which computer works better or not? Like that earlier, I had headphones in thinking is that the best way to make sure I'm seen and heard? And then, I took them out, oh no, that's much better.

David Koechner:

There are also these types of microphones that you can purchase to use. I'm sure you guys have an audio, visual department anyway, that's going to coach you, and give you all the best equipment. So, who knows that could make the difference? If your Zoom link goes down, and the other person's never goes down, the jury might be thinking, "Oh, they weren't as good." All those things factor in like never before.

Delisi Friday:

I have a question, David. So, Michael is going to be doing a jury trial where there's social distancing, and he has his mask on. But since people can't see his face, what tips do you have for warming up your body, and using your body as an instrument, and not just your voice? We're going to have a mask on. So, it's going to be different. I'm thinking about how does he do that in a court spaced out? Or how does he do that in a stadium where he's going to have to pick a jury and the Houston Texans play, how do you use your body in a space that big in this time?

David Koechner:

Okay. So, two questions. Number one, in the courtroom, I would start watching, just really observing people wearing masks right now, Michael, I don't care where they are. And you'll see when people are calm, and purposeful, and they know they're right, or people that are agitated, and nervous, and anxious, and how that's going to affect the jury. That's in a smaller setting.

David Koechner:

And I would practice in front of the mirror with the mask. Because if you stop, you can project emotion from your body. My shoulders are up. My shoulders are down. Now, it means I'm more into what I feel I need to say. Now, if I go like this, and I need to say this, I might not be as believable. Now, it might work if I had this face I could use, and these were supporting it.

David Koechner:

But now, I got the mask, and I'm doing this. It looks maybe threatening, or certainly, not pleasing. So, it might be those smaller little movements in the course of the trial at the place that makes the difference. Now, what's this about selecting jurors at a stadium?

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. We'll have 160 people at the stadium, an NFL stadium. So, they're going to put them in the bleachers that stands, so that everybody can be 10 feet apart from each other. And so, we'll be having to... and I'm trying to form a group with the 12 or 14 that are going to be there. So, I'm trying to make all 165 people feel like we're all here together, when we have to sit so far apart.

David Koechner:

I guess you would slowly pace from one part to the other, keep checking the highest, to the middle, to the lowest, to right here. And then, you'll notice when I'm talking to someone here, as opposed to talking, and make sure you're addressing the whole entire audience, and you will change your movements here or there.

David Koechner:

But when you're moving up there, it has to be more intentional, and land exactly where you wanted to go. Now, here it could be, I might be addressing several people down here. But if I'm addressing people up here, I think that to be, you mentioned pick here. It's like since you're in a stadium, let's use that metaphor. You got to know where ball is landing, where you're throwing the ball.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. You need to know who you're talking to. But you don't want everyone else to feel left out either when you're having a conversation with person up close.

David Koechner:

I would suggest this then. You'll have access to the space a day before?

Michael Cowen:

Probably not. I might be able to look at it online to see the-

David Koechner:

Can you get there before anybody else?

Michael Cowen:

Yeah, no, I will definitely be there before anybody else.

David Koechner:

This is what I'd say, I want you to go up in the stadium. In the bleachers, I want you to sit in four or five places, where they're going to be, and has somebody down below address you. And then, you'll know what lands, and what doesn't.

Michael Cowen:

Perfect.

Delisi Friday:

That's a great idea.

David Koechner:

What do you know? Everyone is wildly-

Delisi Friday:

No, that's a great idea.

David Koechner:

Now, see, when I go do it, I do stand-up as well. What I'll do sometimes, or oftentimes, if it's a new club I've never been in, we'll do soundcheck an hour before. Before the audiences let in, you do your soundcheck, sound guy goes okay. Then, I'll have either my opening act or somebody else be on mic, and then I'll try, and walk around the room to see what plays. How does it play here, to there, to there? Because the sight lines are different. It's the same thing you're dealing with. Because obviously, I'm very physical. So, if I do have some jokes that might depend on the physicality, and I know if I just do the job this way, the audience over here is not going to get it.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah, exactly.

David Koechner:

So, you'll go, I need to make my point here, and I need to make my point here. So, yeah, I guess get acquainted with the room would have been a shorter way of saying it.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah, absolutely. And the courtroom, at least, are going to let us go in and see how it's there. And that's usually something I do. I sit where jurors are going to sit. I make sure that we can see things. But it's-

David Koechner:

We truly are the same girl, aren't we, Michael?

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. It really is, it's very similar. And in fact, a lot of the consultants we use are people that went into acting, and just didn't get hired a lot as an actor. And then, they go teach us what the skills they learned.

David Koechner:

Yeah. Sometimes you don't know where your skill set is best going to serve. You might have wanted to be an actor, but it maybe it turned out you're a great teacher.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah.

David Koechner:

Yeah.

Delisi Friday:

At the end of the day, you're both storytellers.

David Koechner:

Yeah. Yep, exactly, exactly. You're a part of it. Yeah. What's your part in the narrative? I guess, would be our theme today, and how do we physically, mentally, emotionally succeed in creating a narrative, first

of all, that's workable. And then, how do you communicate it with hurdles? But I always think this, there's always an answer, the joy is in finding it.

David Koechner:

Because we can go, "Oh, I need an answer to this. And I can spend some time with some consternation of why me, and I shouldn't have to, and this isn't my fault. And somebody else didn't do their job, blah-blah-blah." Well, so what? You still need an answer. So, you're better off having the joy in finding the answer. Because then when you have it, you don't mess, you're like, "Oh, there's the answer." Because you're looking for it, rather than stumbling upon it.

Michael Cowen:

One thing, I know that when you act, you rehearse a lot, when you do stand-up, you do the same jokes over and over again. But then to be good, to be effective, to transfer energy and emotion to your audience, you have to be in the moment as if you're living it for the first time. How do you do that? How do you get in that zone, in that moment with something you've rehearsed so many times before?

David Koechner:

I think the point is rehearse, because if you rehearsed, now you're fully present and available. Because you're not searching, you're here, you're present. Because if I know my lines, I have the potential for more discovery. If I don't quite know my lines, then my discovery is hoping I remember my lines. So, it's not going to be quite as good.

David Koechner:

But if I'm locked down rehearsal lines, then I'm open to true discovery now that I might not have known before, and it comes to you. Because what you're supposed to do as an actor is listen. Now, oftentimes, actors are like, "Aha, aha, aha," your lips stop moving. It must be my turn to talk. So, we're not really living in the moment.

David Koechner:

So, if we can get to that place where we're actually present, then the camera can capture that, chemical reaction. And maybe you didn't even know that discovery is going to happen while you're talking to somebody. Because if we really listen, we can be in discovery. If we don't really listen, then it's a one-way street, right?

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. Can you give an example of any of the shows or movies you've been in that maybe wasn't fully scripted, but because you were in the moment, and you knew it's so cold, and you were experiencing this if you were that person, it came out and something magic happened?

David Koechner:

Well, yes, yes. I'll say an Anchorman, for instance. Your lines, but we also know because we're all a group of improvisers, Adam McKay, I came up with him in Chicago. So, he started as an improviser, an actor. And then, I knew Will from Saturday Night Live. He started as an improviser, actor. Paul Rudd, I didn't know as well, but he'd done quite a bit of improvising.

David Koechner:

And Steve Carell I'd known for a very long time, and he came up as an improviser. So, it's interesting because as an actor, you're supposed to find the conflict in the scene, and win the scene, if you will. For comedy, it's a little bit different. But comedy is conflict that surprises you in a different way, a different answer is always going to happen.

David Koechner:

So, because we all knew we were all adept at improvising, what we would do on that show, we'd do the scene three or four times filming it. And then, McKay would say, "Let's let the squirrel out of the bag," which means now, we're going to improvise. So, you're supposed to be listening anyway as an actor, really listening and hanging on the words of the other person.

David Koechner:

Now, we're going to improvise. I don't know what's going to be said. So, I damn sure better be listening now. Because now, either A, I'm going to have an opportunity, something ethereal happening in that movie that seemed like, well, there seems to be more than just this scene being done. And I do believe this because we would never advise every scene, even though we shot it. We'd also be doing some improvisation. So, it puts your head and your whole spirit in a different gear.

Michael Cowen:

Wow. Can you give an example of any scene like that where something magic happened?

David Koechner:

It's interesting, because when people go, "Hey, what was improvised, what wasn't? And that there was, I'd have to go line by line through the script, because sometimes, it would be half a line was scripted, and then half a line was improvised. For instance, one of mine was I will take your mother, Dorothy Mantooth out for a nice seafood dinner, and never call her again."

David Koechner:

I think the original line was I will tie your mother Dorothy Mantooth up on to a chair, and drive golf balls at her. Now, that's very cruel. Though, it might sound funny, it's pretty dark. So, we were playing with that line. And I was talking to Carell about it too. And he had some thoughts. Now, see, I would have never come up with seafood dinner because I'm from Missouri.

David Koechner:

Carell is from Acton, outside of Boston, seafood. To add the specificity of the insult of I'll take your mother out for a nice seafood dinner, and never call her again, adds another level of ridiculousness. But it's so specific that makes the difference in the line. So, I know he and I had talked about a little bit.

David Koechner:

And I think when at the time that we had an opportunity to do it, it just came out adding several elements together. So, there was some preparation and you just go, "Okay, what's going to come down the hopper now?" That's the one that works.

Michael Cowen:

Another thing I've been struggling with is we spend all this time learning to speak and learning how to speak, but learning when to let silence hang is-

David Koechner:

I don't know about that.

Delisi Friday:

I think you don't give yourself enough credit, Michael, because I think you do a really good job of that. I really do. When I talked to you, you do a good job of just taking a moment, and letting that moment be there before either someone else says something, or you should respond. And when you do that, I know you're listening.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. Because I used to just talk a mile a minute, and nobody could keep up with me. Because what I had to say was so important, and learning when to use that dramatic pause.

David Koechner:

The interesting part is maybe that you earnestly wanted to get this information across. It wasn't about saying, I want to leave no room for anyone else to talk. It's like, I really want to make sure they get this point. But I guess the idea is, I do have to make sure not only that I'm listening, that they're listening. And if I don't check in, then I don't know if they're listening.

David Koechner:

We've all got kids. And really, what does any human being want? We want to be seen and heard, don't we? And you look at your kids, and you look them right in the eye, it makes a difference. If you really listen, because how often as parents, do we go just a minute? We say stuff to our family that we'd never say to our friends.

Michael Cowen:

Oh, absolutely.

David Koechner:

Yeah. It's that thing of what's important now, and how can I make sure that you're important? Of course, it is worth listening. If I'm being listened to, then I feel like, "Okay, I have some worth."

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. And the other thing I've learned that helped me slow down, one, it's about the audience, it's not about what I have to say, it's about what they hear.

David Koechner:

Nice.

Michael Cowen:

And then, it's about trusting them. It's about you're here to do the right thing. And so, if I trust you, and I give you the tools, you're going to do the right thing. Now, there's times that what you think is right isn't what I want to get to do, but that's, you know, I tried. Oh no, but I can't control other people.

Michael Cowen:

And when I stopped trying, and so instead of saying, how am I going to win this trial? It's like, how am I going to tell the story? How am I going to communicate? I can't win. I don't have that power. I can't go there, and tie up the juror's daughter in the basement, and wait for it. No, no. Yeah. And so, just-

David Koechner:

What I think also in what you're saying is showing respect.

Michael Cowen:

Absolutely.

David Koechner:

Yeah. Because if you give that respect, if you let the jury know that you're respecting their wishes, and their intelligence, and them to make the right choice, that will come across.

Michael Cowen:

And they're similar when you're doing stand-ups, stand-ups are so interactive. Anything with how you approach that audience, get yourself mentally to-

David Koechner:

Well, if you're doing your hour-long act, let's say, most comics are doing their scripted act. You leave room for some play, some improvisation, for some magic to happen. And every comic is different. So, if you're a one liner comic, you're less apt to improvise, setup, setup, punchline, setup. I'm more of a storyteller.

David Koechner:

And so, sometimes, there might be a discovery there that you didn't know you might find a new joke. You might have your five jokes in this particular chunk. But then, you're like, "Oh, my God, I just thought of another one." And it comes out. So, you're engaged with yourself and the audience because, like you said, the audience is going to let you know how you're doing right away. You're going five minutes, and you haven't heard a laugh. You're not doing something right.

Delisi Friday:

I think you're lucky, David, because you get to hear their laughs. But when you're in the courtroom, and the jurors don't get to make as many noises, it's a little more difficult.

Michael Cowen:

No, but when you're doing it right, you feel it.

Delisi Friday:

Yeah.

Michael Cowen:

When you are resonating with another human being, you feel it. And when you're not, you feel it.

David Koechner:

Yes. And then, sometimes I'm sure this has happened in a jury box, where someone literally falls asleep. And then, you're thinking, "Well, it's not my fault necessarily." I don't know what that person's day has been. I don't know what happened the night before. I don't know if they're a drinker. I don't know if their kids kept them up all night long. I don't know if they've got a tremendous amount of stress. I don't know if they're actually a narcoleptic.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. And again, it's learning to trust, and not be mad at them, and not be mad at yourself. Because even if you are being an ass, and being boring, beating yourself up doesn't help anything at that point in time.

David Koechner:

Yeah. That's just adding more weight on the wrong side. Yeah.

Michael Cowen:

Have you ever had in stand-up, just a night where it just didn't click?

David Koechner:

Yeah, that happens to everybody. And you don't know why sometimes. You're off your game for a myriad of different reasons. I can think of one, I can't even remember what city I was in, and it just happened to be a late show. And the audience was really light. That week, typically, we do five shows on a week, and you'll do one on Thursday, to Friday, to Saturday.

David Koechner:

And for whatever reason, I think it was the second show, Friday, which typically, you can always look, the second show Friday are the hard ones. It's the late show, people have worked all week, they're tired. And typically, they started drinking early to go to the Friday night late show. So, their attention is oftentimes suspect. So, now if I go in there going, "Oh, Friday night late show."

David Koechner:

Well, now, I'm already in a deficit. So, I think my job is like, "Okay, let's be more on point." But this particular place, was I in Tampa? I can't remember. The audience, they got a 300-seat house. I think I'd sold out, or nearly sold out every show. But for that particular one, there's only 100 people. You're like, "What? What happened?" And then, you're going through your head like, "Oh, I'm not good."

David Koechner:

They must not like me in this town. Who didn't get the word out? Was the press wrong?" Is any of that serving me? No. So, I went out there. And I was off in my head, just trying to process, what went wrong?

Am I not enough right now? These things are going through your head. I must not be any good at this because no one showed up to see me.

David Koechner:

So, then there was a bit of a desperation inside me that I wanted to win even more. Now, you're just like, "God, I can see he wants to, but it ain't coming out." And then, when stuff wasn't working, you get a little panic. And now, you're really outside yourself. And then, you try to make adjustments. And then, now you've forgotten what bit you're even doing, where you are in the show.

David Koechner:

And then, you try and go, "Well, fuck it. Let's just get to know each other." And for that reason, that night, I said let's whatever, we're a small crowd, let's get to know each other. But it's a bunch of this, and then they just really weren't interested. I said, "Well, just get through the show, then." Some nights, you're just not going to have the win you're used to.

Michael Cowen:

Yep. Well, because the trials, both sides work really hard, and someone loses. Someone wins and someone loses. And a lot of what may be the skill we have to learn in our profession is coming back from the loss. And so, in getting right back in there, and not playing scared, and not trying too hard. Okay.

Michael Cowen:

Let's say you bombed the Friday night late show, you've got to go back out there the next night. You don't even get a few months to recover like we do. You go back after the next night. And you've got to be in the moment, how do you do it? How do you get back in there?

David Koechner:

Well, you're going to do some mental prep, first of all, and make sure that whatever happened last night doesn't happen again. And then, fortunately enough, you had a full house the next time. So, now you're back on your game, and you don't focus on what went wrong the night before. We're looking at all the times it's gone right. And I just made that assumption. Well, this is going to go well, number one, period.

Michael Cowen:

Prep yourself, prep your audience.

David Koechner:

Yeah, yeah. So, I always tell people, there's that old adage of think of your audiences naked. Well, that doesn't really help because you can't trick your mind. But you can believe this. You've been an audience member. When your audience member for a speaker, you always hope they do well. You're not an audience member hoping you'd come to see something bad. So, they're already on your side. It's a bit different fractionally as a lawyer, but certainly, the jury hopes you're competent.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. And they want to do what's right. If you believe that what your side is right, most people go in there, not with a preset agenda of saying, we want to do something unjust because we have some bias or prejudice. Most people aren't like that. And so, just like, do you have some jerks that go to a comedy

show, because they want to help other comedian? Most people go there because they want to be entertained.

David Koechner:

Yeah, yeah. Then, you got to realize the person that's heckling is nervous too. And they just can't stand it, or they're drunk. But maybe they always wanted to be a comic, or they "Hey, Fred, you're the funniest one in our group." Sure, sure. But no, I'll say this to people that won't shut up. No one came to see you. They came to see me. So, that's strike one. You paid your money. I want you to stay here.

David Koechner:

But now you're bothering everybody in this club. And right now, a lot of people don't like you. So, will you please just shut up. But that's if it keeps them, I have berated people. Because when they just won't stop, and they're just disrespectful, and then they say some things like, okay. And usually, when they leave, and they're flipping you off as they leave, the audience is applauding that these motherfuckers finally just got out. So, Delisi has told me I had to curse at least once in this.

Delisi Friday:

Yes.

Michael Cowen:

Perfect. Jimmy Carr is a British comedian.

David Koechner:

Yes.

Michael Cowen:

I don't know why I get off on this. But I watch this. He's got the best comebacks to hecklers, and YouTube clips of just him with hecklers. And unfortunately, I can't say them on this show. I could say motherfucker and stuff. But the little things he did would cause me to lose my audience. But they're really fun. So, if you're not easily offended, Google that, or YouTube that. It's really, really funny.

David Koechner:

That's a get too, because the danger there could be that's the act. Is that part of this thing now, is just-

Michael Cowen:

Well, part of his thing is he gets people to heckle him, and then he goes, and-

David Koechner:

Yeah. Now, see, the beauty there too, is there's only so many ways people are going to heckle. So, you probably got 10 different shutdowns for every person who's got one. So, you're loaded. It's not like you're thinking for the first time. You might have a bunch of arrows like, "Dude, I've got 20 things to say for what you just brought up."

Michael Cowen:

No, no, it's not a fair fight. And he's definitely-

Commercial 3:

Thank you to everyone who attended Cowen's Big Rig Boot Camp in August. We had an excellent virtual turnout this year, and are already thinking of how we can continue to raise that bar for next year. If you'd like to attend virtually in 2021, be sure to mark May 20, 2021 on your calendar now, and save the date. To stay updated with details as they become available, visit bigrigbootcamp.com, and sign up for our mailing list. And now, back to the show.

Michael Cowen:

So, back in August, you worked with Delisi, and you surprised our attorneys that came to our virtual Big Rig Boot Camp, and I have to confess, I've got nothing... Delisi did all of that. I just showed up and magic happened. But how did that work? How did all that happen?

David Koechner:

Well, Delisi contacted me through another app, where the celebrities can deliver a message on an app. And I had been asked because we're all in these protocols now. I've been asked to speak to 600 travel agencies with this woman who was a mother of my kid's school. And she worked for this airline. And I thought, "Oh, wow. Oh, that's right."

David Koechner:

There's something that people can't participate in anymore, which are live events for just relief of their week." Part of their week is oh, we know we have to change things up. And then, when Delisi contacted me, I thought, "Oh, what's this for now?" Typically, see if it's going to be a huge audience. Because normally, for this particular endeavor, it's just a one-on-one thing or just for family.

David Koechner:

So, if it's bigger, typically, you go, "Well, I can't." Sometimes people will just ask you to do a straight up pitch for their company. It's like, "Well, wait a minute. You can't hire me at this price. I'm saying happy birthday. I'm not saying come down to Larry's chicken shack." And Thursday, we're promoting this like, "Hey, man." So, this was a different opportunity when I contacted her.

David Koechner:

And I had done another thing for Chris Sorensen, who's now my business partner, where he had an idea. It was going to be a Zoom, where 100 people are participating. And he wanted me to do my character. And he had an idea arrays of how he wanted to do it. And I told him, "Look, I was thinking, there's something that's not being done in this particular virtual reality we're all living in."

David Koechner:

And so, I did the thing for him, and it worked really well. And like that, it brought relief to the normal day of like, "God, I can't sit through another Zoom." And he told me, he said, "I can get you 100 of these." I said, "I don't want to collect business cards. I want to do a business." And so, he and I started talking about it. And then, I think about a week later, I got contacted by Delisi, and Chris and I talked.

David Koechner:

And he said, "Hey, picture your idea of coming in, and actually being in the meeting, not just a pre-recorded message." And so, that was an early one that we did. And then, based on that, and the grace that you guys have all shown us, and what worked, and what didn't. Because we're just figure that thing out too. It was-

Michael Cowen:

It was fun.

David Koechner:

Yeah. Great, great, great. It was great for me, too. And then, you figure out, just like you said, this is a different way of delivering the same type of thing. Now, how do you make it work via this box?

Delisi Friday:

And I will say you're doing a great job, because before David reached out to me to plan that, I had reached out to other comedians to try, and do something, and no one wanted to do the homework, or think of it as from a business standpoint. It was just like a job, but they weren't thinking about why were we doing this? What's the purpose? What do we want from this?

Delisi Friday:

So, when I reached out to David, and David was speaking to me, first of all, I wasn't even sure if it was you. I was like, "Is this a prank? Is it really David?" But you were thinking about it the way I was thinking about it. As a business professional, who's trying to figure out how to navigate through these waters, and I really appreciate that. It stood out.

David Koechner:

Oh, good. Yeah. Because what I've noticed is that in so many businesses, they need Zoom relief.

Michael Cowen:

Absolutely.

David Koechner:

And they need the morale booster. And they need relief from what's always been going on. So, how can we dedicate? And typically, you tell me, but my understanding is half an hour is about what you can deal with before you need out. Or you're doing that very long day, and you just needed a break, something different to happen.

David Koechner:

And so, figuring out, how can we dedicate something within the framework of what we know, which is actually a blessing? Because now, you're not all over the place, where we've got all these elements that everyone's going to be familiar with, it's going to be part of this call. So, now, we just familiarize ourselves with within the framework of what's happening.

David Koechner:

And then, you can use all of your acting, and comedy abilities to bring it right here. It's a narrower channel. So, it's not that hard. Like you said, just do the homework, and you can have a win.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. So, you said you're doing this stuff, do you have a new venture business venture?

David Koechner:

Yes. So, I wanted to do it right away. And thankfully, Chris Sorensen, very bright guy, he's done a bunch of startups, and he's a real entrepreneur. And so, we've been very methodical about how we put it together. So, now, we've got a whole team, we've got a head writer, we've got another writer, we've got the organizational side locked down.

David Koechner:

And then, now we're figuring all of this stuff out as we go. And we've engaged with several of these event companies, and we've got educated through them. And so, now, we're really ready to launch this out. And we developed templates, what we call templates for each style of meeting that there is. And we'll still be learning as we go. We've got templates specific for the law community. And then, for whatever other community, we can take these same models, if you will, metrics, and then apply them to all kinds of different companies.

David Koechner:

Because at the end of the day, we're all just working together in one way or the other. So, we collect these things, find the commonality of it, see what can be made fun of, or what's familiar here that can be used to the advantage. Then, we all share, because first of all, we're all humans. That's a good place to learn. So, yeah, it's been a great education for me, too.

David Koechner:

And we're really ready to launch it. We've done some other beta testing, I guess, you call it. But it's been a new venture for me. So, I've been smart enough to surround myself with people that know a lot more about some things that I don't know, rather than just charging ahead, and making it up as you go. Let's do it purposefully.

David Koechner:

Number one, to let the people on the other end know that are buying like Delisi, I think that's the thing we talked about afterward, because that was a big part of it, too. That you lent your talents to us saying what worked, what didn't, what's needed, what's not? But like that, going back to listening, understanding, and then the number one thing I think you'd said was, you as a planner need to know that you can trust it's going to be done.

David Koechner:

And you're going to get something out of it. I think I came up with something recently, it was actually pretty good. After you hire us, we want you to be able to sleep the night before the event, because you know it's going to go well. But we hope you don't sleep the night after the event because it did go so well.

Delisi Friday:

And it did. When you and I planned the seminar Zoom that you did with us, there was planning involved, and you did your homework, and we asked each other questions. But Michael didn't know it was going to happen. He just had to trust me. And he trusted me because I trusted you, and your team, because you guys did a great job asking questions, and we all were on the same track. We knew what our jobs were. So, it worked out great.

David Koechner:

Go ahead.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. If someone wants to look, what's the new venture called?

David Koechner:

Oh, it's called Hey, Good Meeting.

Michael Cowen:

Hey, Good Meeting. Okay, perfect.

Delisi Friday:

And you've got someone you're doing that with, too, right?

David Koechner:

Oh, yeah. Well, obviously, I hope to have enough of these appointments that I couldn't possibly do them myself. So, we're going to slowly build a roster of talent. And I've been very fortunate, obviously, that I've been doing this for a very long time. And I've got a lot of talented friends that happen to be actors, and comics, and improvisers, and everything else.

David Koechner:

Kate Flannery from the office is a very good friend of mine. And she and I have worked together, my God, I've known Kate for 30 years. And she's just a wonderful human being. And we work together very well. So, early on, and Delisi, you told us this, that it's better to have two people out here who can help facilitate it, not just one from the entertainment side.

David Koechner:

So, everybody can pick up on something, make sure the ball always stays in the air. So, I immediately thought of Kate Flannery. Because she does a lot of these things herself. And so, I thought, "Hey, let's do this together." And so, yeah, Kate is going to be doing it. And I've got another roster of people. And like that, I can't move too quickly.

David Koechner:

Because it's one of those things where you don't want to contact a bunch of your friends and say, "I've got work for you." And they're like, "Where's that thing you said we're going to do?" So, part of it is I have to be patient enough to not take on more work than I can handle. But once I see more work

coming, then I can easily tell my peers, "Hey, I do have an opportunity for you. And this is the way it goes."

David Koechner:

Just like you know the workings of a trial, this is going to happen, this is going to happen, this is going to happen. Once we know more and more of what is going to happen from our perspective, our job doing these presentations, then I can inform my colleagues. All you have to do is come in and do this. Obviously, we have the framework of the things that we're going to present, here's how you fit in, and then just use your talents.

Michael Cowen:

And if any of my listeners are involved in putting together the big conventions and stuff like that, when I look into possibly hiring hey, Good Meeting and working with you all, how do they find you?

David Koechner:

Well, I think like everybody else, we've got a website. Hey, Good Meeting. It was available. You're trying to think of names this way or that way. And you don't want to say, a Haha Zoom, because then it sounds like a bad comedy club or Laugh Zoom, or Z Laughs, then it sounds like a bad morning show on radio. So, then, it really came down to looking in the area of what's available as a domain. Hey, Good Meeting, we're like, "That's good because we want people to walk away thinking hey, good meeting."

Delisi Friday:

I like it.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah, it's awesome.

Delisi Friday:

So, you have a website, heygoodmeeting.com. People can go there if they want to reach out, and try, and book you for something like this.

Michael Cowen:

H-E-Y or H-A-Y?

David Koechner:

H-E-Y.

Michael Cowen:

heygoodmeeting.com.

David Koechner:

Yeah. Hey, hey, hey, good meeting would be for Missourians only.

Commercial 3:

Hey, Good Meeting is ready to help you and your law firm, whether it's a monthly firm meeting, or you just want to laugh with your employees, or top referral partners. Maybe you're wondering what to do instead of an in-person holiday party. You now have the opportunity to plan something unique, and custom to you, and your guests. With a roster of nationally-recognized actors and comedians, led by David Koechner, and an Emmy-winning Saturday Night Live veteran team, right by your side. Visit www.heygoodmeeting.com to find out more.

Michael Cowen:

Well, David, thank you so much. I wish every success on your new venture, and I can't wait to see your next movie or TV show. You showing up to our boot camp, I didn't realize when I saw Anchorman, that was a guy's night. And so, my wife had never seen it. And so, when I'm telling her that you're going to be on, and she's not getting some of the stuff, we watched both movies that night. And so, you brought so much joy all these years later, that she hadn't seen it before.

David Koechner:

Yeah. That's the interesting thing too, because my characters are quite brash, and could say some things that aren't good. Your wife might be like, "Well, you hired that guy."

Michael Cowen:

She's married to me.

David Koechner:

Oh, well, fantastic. Hey, man, a pleasure. Great to see you both again.

Michael Cowen:

Well, thank you.

David Koechner:

And thanks for having me.

Outro:

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