

Michael Cowen:

This is Michael Cowen. And welcome to Trial Lawyer Nation.

Voiceover:

You are the leader in the courtroom and you want the jury to be looking to you for the answers.

Voiceover:

When you figure out your theory, never deviate.

Voiceover:

You want the facts to be consistent, complete, and credible.

Voiceover:

The defense has no problem running out the clock. Delay is the friend of the defense.

Voiceover:

It's tough to grow firm by trying to hold on and micromanage.

Voiceover:

You've got to front load a simple structure for jurors to be able to hold onto.

Voiceover:

What types of creative things can we do as lawyers, even though we don't have a trial setting?

Voiceover:

Whatever you've got to do to make it real, you've got to do to make it real. But the person who needs convincing is you.

Voiceover:

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.

Michael Cowen:

Today on Trial Lawyer Nation, I am joined by my partner Natalie Arledge. Natalie, how are you doing today?

Natalie Arledge:

I'm good. How are you, Michael?

Michael Cowen:

I'm doing well. Recovering from trial. But other than that, I'm doing well. So today, we are going to talk about how to be wildly successful as a lawyer without being a shitty parent. Which is really tough to do.

Before we get there though, I do want to give a shout-out to our sponsored LawPods. LawPods produces, edits, does everything we need to do for this podcast. They make it so easy. All we have to do is sit here and talk. And they do all the other magic from... Again, doing the sound edits, to making all our cool little videos and ad clips, to posting it for us. So if you want to do your own podcast and you want to make it easy, I highly recommend LawPods. That being said, Natalie, how are you doing today?

Natalie Arledge:

I'm doing great.

Michael Cowen:

So, I mean, you've been on before, but maybe a while. So, tell me a little bit about yourself and your practice.

Natalie Arledge:

Oh, well, I've been lucky enough to be here at your firm for six years. I'll be here six years in November.

Michael Cowen:

Oh, wow. Time flies.

Natalie Arledge:

It does. I feel like it's been a few lifetimes here. I've had a few iterations of myself while I've been working here. But yeah, I mean, I love what I do. I love all my clients. I love all my cases. And, when I'm not being an awesome lawyer, I go home and I have a family. And I have my husband and my two little boys. My oldest is six and my youngest is going to be two in September.

Michael Cowen:

And before we go to the family stuff, I do want to start with the lawyer stuff. And, I'm so thrilled, and the lawyer you've become, and the lawyer you're becoming. But I want to start, you said, you've had several iterations. What do you mean by that?

Natalie Arledge:

Well, I mean, when you introduced me, I started here as an associate, and now I'm a partner. It's a huge, huge long track for me, to have gotten from associate to partner. When I started here, I had been off of work for nine months. I had been on maternity leave. And, I felt like I was just getting my foot back in the door, trying to remember what it meant to be a lawyer and what I was supposed to do. And then, I graduated to becoming a docket lawyer, and was handling my own cases. And now, I've been honored to be named a partner here. And, feeling a little bit more like a leader here at the firm. So, it's been a lot of growth.

Michael Cowen:

It has. And I've been really impressed with your growth. And you don't just become a partner here. There's certain things you have to do. You have to be able to handle cases at a high level on your own, without being babied, or having someone have to hold your hand through every step. You also have to have success. You have to be able to get good value on your cases and bring in a certain amount of money for the firm every year to earn that, which you've done. And I want to talk about how you've

developed those skills. Because, I mean, you came in as an associate, you hadn't yet handled a docket at a high level, you hadn't yet learned how to handle the clients, move your docket, lead a team, get top value on your cases. What is it that you had to do to learn those skills?

Natalie Arledge:

I would say the biggest thing is that, I feel very fortunate to work with a lot of great lawyers here. And they've all been more than willing to answer all my questions and give me guidance. And so, it's been a lot of talking to the other lawyers that work here, because not everything we do is written down in a book. You can't just look it up and figure out what to do. And so, I've gotten a lot of good guidance from them. And not only just asking them questions, but also, I spent a lot of time early on in my career here just sitting in and watching them work, watching them do depositions, watching them do mediations, watching them prepare experts. I mean, every chance I got, I was just sitting in to watch how somebody else did something.

And, over time, after watching how everybody does things, that helped me develop my own style. Right? I mean, I love what Sonia does, and I love what Mallory does, and I love what you do, but I couldn't just pick one of those things, one of those styles, but learning from all of y'all, I picked what worked well for me, and I feel like I've really developed my own style, which helped me grow even more.

Michael Cowen:

I think that's so important, and it's something that I really had to learn as a person who's trying to develop other lawyers is that, development doesn't mean imitating me necessarily. I mean, I have things that I think work really well for me, but it doesn't mean that they would work well for another person and that person may have something that gets the same result or even a better result, but they go about it from a different angle. So what would you say some of the differences you've seen between the way Sonya does things, and Mallory does things, and I do things.

Natalie Arledge:

I love Sonya, because she is totally fearless. She is totally fearless. She's not afraid to say what she thinks the truth is, or what the truth is. And, she goes with it. And she truly believes it, and she's diehard for her clients, for sure. Mallory, I feel like she's much more of a diplomat, right? And she's a good teacher too. But she weighs her options, and she thinks about what she wants to do. She doesn't make snap decisions. She's really thoughtful and careful about what she does. And yeah, I love you, because you're a risk-taker too. You're fearless in a different way than Sonya though, but you are fearless, and it is fun to watch you, and learn. And, I like watching the confidence that you have. So, everybody's a little different. And, for a while, I thought I didn't have a style. I thought I was just somebody that didn't have a style. But, I learned that, I do have a style, and that I just needed to learn, and watch other more experienced attorneys to figure myself out.

Michael Cowen:

How would you describe your style?

Natalie Arledge:

For the most part, I like to think I get more flies with honey than vinegar. And I just think I'm a nice person. I mean, in general, so it fits with my personality. I don't feel like I have to turn on and be somebody different when I'm doing my job, so that helps. But, I don't know. I mean, I guess, I would say, I'm to the point, direct. I don't have time to mess around. I like to fight the fights that I think I can win, or

that should be fought. I don't like to waste time on petty arguments, or little technicalities, things that aren't going to be beneficial to me or my clients, at the end of the day.

Michael Cowen:

I think that's really wise. Because, at some point, you had... Not that you were a bad lawyer before. But at some point, I just saw a transformation in you. You just started owning it. Because you were always nice, but you had to learn to say no to the other side and not feel bad about it. And like, "No, I'm not going to let you have a continuance. No, I'm not going to give you all my clients' medical records for the last 10 years that aren't related to the crash at all." They get the relevant stuff, but not digging into all the personal history. I don't know what other examples are. But you've stayed nice, but you've gotten tougher, and you've gotten, like I said, more of a, "I own this. This is mine." What is it do you think that triggered that?

Natalie Arledge:

Besides just having the experience and the confidence, I guess, that comes along with the experience, I put myself in my client's shoes a lot. I really empathize with them. And, it always crosses my mind, my client's been dealing with this for two years. Do they want me to push their trial another six months down the road, because the defense lawyer didn't file their counter affidavit or something?

Michael Cowen:

Right.

Natalie Arledge:

I would feel that was totally unfair to me. So, I don't want to do it to them. I wouldn't want everybody looking through my medical records about all the things that are unrelated. So, I mean, that helps, right? When I think about, I wouldn't want this done to me. I think the other thing is... So, I had a baby while I was here. He's the little one. He's almost two. And after I came back from maternity leave with him, I mean, it was a switch, because I felt like I didn't have time to mess around. I don't have the time to continue the case. I don't have the time to try to work with somebody on something that they really shouldn't have.

It's much easier to live my life right now just to say yes or no. And, if it's a no, and they want to fight about it, take me to a hearing. I'll go to a hearing. But, yeah, I've only had a limited amount of time that I can devote to my cases. And so, just remembering that, and I've only got a limited time in the day.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. I do think you really did come back with all your jets firing when you came back from maternity leave. You've been kicking butt and taking names. You got into a run where you started hitting some cases for good money. And it just seemed to really snowball after that. Do you think you needed that first taste of success, where it was your case, you weren't the second on the case ever, you developed it, you turned it into good money, and just realized that, "I can really do this," to really develop the confidence?

Natalie Arledge:

Yes, absolutely. I mean, that was probably the best feeling, knowing that I started this case, I worked it up from day one, and that I did all the work on the case, and I got my client's great result. I mean, there's

no better feeling really. And so, I think, when that first case happened, then it was like, "I am a legitimate lawyer." Right? "I can really do this." And so, it definitely gave me a boost in the confidence. And, the more they came, the more the confidence came.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah, I saw that. And then, all of a sudden, boom, boom, boom, you're knocking them down and left. But you had to get those first one or two done. I don't know, at least from the outside watching over, it seemed a lot harder for you to get those first couple of million dollar policy cases settled for limits. And, once you were like, "Okay, I can do this." It seemed to get easier.

Natalie Arledge:

Definitely. Well, and I love that you said it looked like I came back with, what did you say, all jets firing.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah.

Natalie Arledge:

Because I did not feel like all jets were firing. I felt like maybe I had one jet, just enough to get here in the morning. But, yeah, so I mean, I definitely was dealing with a lot of self-doubt, and I had a new baby at home, and I had a lot of things going on, and I was worried that I wasn't going to perform the year I came back like I needed to. But yeah, once I got that first big one settled, and then that boosted the confidence. And then, looking down the pipeline, I'm like, "There's more I can do."

Michael Cowen:

And I'm glad you've done it. As far as the learning, you talked a lot about learning from other people at the firm. We also do a lot of... Trying to go to CLE programs and that stuff. How much of what you learned do you think has come from going to seminars, external programs, as opposed to just talking to other lawyers peer-to-peer and learning one-on-one?

Natalie Arledge:

Oh, how much have I learned from all of our trainings? I mean, they are good. I like going to our trainings, anytime we do CLEs, or we work with trial consultants, I mean, it's always good, and I feel like I always learn something. But, it could be a lot of information at one time sometimes. So, the more that we go to the better, because then it just gets ingrained in my brain. But, I usually do pick up one or two little tidbits from each training that we have, and that'll stick with me. So, I mean, I wouldn't say half-and-half, but probably pretty close to it. I mean, getting that constant reinforcement with all the trainings, and then when we get back to the office, having other people to talk to, and discuss, and help me figure some problems out. I mean, it's probably pretty close to 50/50.

Michael Cowen:

I would never want to be a solo again, partially because of just crap I don't want to do anymore. I don't ever want to defend another depo, I don't want to answer another set of discovery. But other parts of it's, frankly, I learn a lot from y'all. I mean, y'all make me a better lawyer, because I think I'm a decent lawyer, but y'all think of things I hadn't thought of before. I'm like, "Wow, so glad you're around." But a lot of our listeners are solos, or they practice with maybe another friend they got to law school with and

they're both fairly young. What advice would you give to those lawyers who don't have a firm with mentors that they can go watch and learn from to try to get that mentoring, or that learning by example?

Natalie Arledge:

That's definitely tough. Before I came to work for you, I actually tried to go out on my own for a little bit, and I did miss having somebody, a teammate, to talk to. But I would say, probably the best thing to do is just to join your local bar association, join all the local groups, go to the mixers, go to all the meetings. I feel like, most people at the groups and the associations, I mean, they're all there because they want to help and they want to spread the knowledge. And so, they're always willing to talk, and help you with whatever you need.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah, I know, timing available. I mean, we only have so many hours of the day. But I've had younger lawyers take me to lunch. And, you feed me, I'll talk to you. I've even had people say, "Well, next time you do a truck driver depo. Let me know. I want to watch you." And I've let it happen sometimes. It feels a little weird. I'm not that special. But, I've had younger lawyers sit in with me in a depo to watch. Go watch trials. I mean, if there's a good lawyer trying a case, go watch them do it, see how she does it. And, see, and then think about what of that would work for me and what wouldn't work for me. Because again, we all have different personalities and different styles. And if we're not real, it doesn't work. The fakeness comes off.

One of the things we did recently that I think was a lot of fun, and I just want to see what you think you got out of this, we all went up to Montana to a truck driving school. There's a truck driving school in Billings, Montana that puts on a program for lawyers, where you get to actually go drive trucks, learn how to do pre-trip inspection, learn how to secure cargo, different things. Well, I don't know, I thought it was fun. What did you think?

Natalie Arledge:

I did think it was fun. It was a really neat, different type of experience.

Michael Cowen:

So what is it about actually, now that you've actually driven a tractor trailer, how do you think that's going to affect you when you're handling a case involving a tractor trailer?

Natalie Arledge:

It is so different than what I expected. It is not like driving a car. Right? I feel like this might be true for everybody, but it's definitely true for me. I don't have a real appreciation for how things work until you get your hands in there and get dirty yourself. So, yeah, actually getting in there, and driving the trucks, and doing the pre-trip inspections, and doing the load securements, I mean, it really gave me an appreciation for how much work it is. I think, I told somebody at our training that I have a real appreciation now for what it means to be a professional driver, because it truly takes a professional. But yeah, I mean, it was a great experience. And, I feel like, now that I've sat in the truck driver's shoes, just a little bit, and I'm able to talk a little bit more in their language, maybe have a better understanding of the situations that they're faced with, why they might be a problem, and learn what the companies need to do to do better to teach them better.

Michael Cowen:

Absolutely. I mean, definitely after driving on myself, there's no way you can go to a two-week CDL course, just because you can pass your license exam, you have no business driving that thing after a two-week course, not on a public street. But the other thing is, I'm surprised on how much you can see with those mirrors. I mean, besides right behind you, how few blind spots you really have, if you're looking.

Natalie Arledge:

Yes, I was really surprised by that. I'm like, "I don't see a blind spot." So now, every time somebody says, "Well, I looked in my mirror but I didn't see anybody." "How come?"

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. "Did you adjust your mirrors or did you really look?" Because we've been there. You see it with your own eyes. So your BS detector goes off.

Natalie Arledge:

Yes. And, you know what? Another interesting thing I learned there was, you can't coast to a stop in a tractor trailer. In your regular vehicle, you could just let off the gas and it slows down. They don't do that. It brings home a little bit more if they're needing to stop in traffic, or stop to not rear end somebody sitting on the highway, I mean, you actually have to engage. You can't just coast along, let off the gas, and expect it to stop. You have to be engaged all the time.

Michael Cowen:

Absolutely. I'm so glad we were able to do that. Just, again, it's just one more piece, one more experience we can go and build into our repertoire when we're doing cases. I guess, my next construction site case, I guess, I got to go get a construction job for a day. So, yeah.

Natalie Arledge:

Just take your water. That's a hard job out there in the heat.

Michael Cowen:

The next thing I want to do actually is that... Because I don't know how they get any sleep. Especially the team drivers who are sleeping driving down the road. Maybe I'll get one of our truck driver clients, or maybe I'll get these people out of the truck driving... They have a trucking company as well as a truck driving school. Maybe I'll drive them into let me ride along with somebody, because I'd like to try sleeping in one of those things, live a few days. And, can you really get rest? What's it like?

Natalie Arledge:

That's a good idea. Yeah. Because, I mean, we got to ride in one of the trucks with the driver actually driving, and I was sitting in the back. And, I mean, those sleeper bursts, I mean, it's literally just a mattress. There's not any creature comforts at all. So, what if it's hot and you can't idle the truck to turn on the AC, so are you going to sleep that well at night? I don't know. I might do it for one day. I don't know about a couple.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. But you'd almost need a couple. You can do anything for one night and just see how you feel. To me, I almost have to live something in order to experience it. So, let me ask you another thing. So how do you balance out then being a mother with small children and being a successful trial lawyer?

Natalie Arledge:

Well, I have to be very judicious with my time. That's number one. I'm usually the one dropping off in the mornings. And, I'll pick up in the afternoon sometimes. And so, I know, "Okay, I've got, basically, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM here in the office. And I need to work." I try not to text or waste time. This might not be very healthy, but a lot of times, I'll skip my lunch break, or I'll eat lunch at my desk. But, I mean, that's what I have to do sometimes. But, that's okay, because then when I go home, I'm home with my kids. And, I try not to work when I'm home, because one, I don't think they'll let me, right? But, two, when I'm home, I mean, that's my re-energizing spot. I mean, they give me the energy to come back and be a good lawyer. And so, I want to plug in with them and be with them. And so, even if I have to sacrifice a lunch hour here, during the week, it means that I get to go home and be with them 100%.

Voiceover:

Each yeah, the law firm of Cowen Rodriguez Peacock pays millions of dollars in co-counsel fees to attorneys nationwide on trucking and commercial vehicle cases. If you have an injury case, involving death or catastrophic injuries and would like to partner with our firm, please contact us, by calling 210-941-1301 to discuss the case in detail and see where we can add value in a partnership. And now, back to the show.

Michael Cowen:

And I guess, as long as your intent's in work, and you have fewer of those conversations, less scrolling the internet, you can spend all day just checking emails, and not get anything done.

Natalie Arledge:

Yes.

Michael Cowen:

I mean, I think, when we get efficient, we can get a lot more done in a day than we think we can. I'm trying not to work. I used to work at home all the time. And, I've got a 21-mile commute, so I get to work, and then I'm in work mode. And then, I work, work, work, work. And then, I usually to get home, I think, 6:30 to 7:30 most days. And then, I just try to turn it off. I try to get home, see the family, exercise, eat, put my eldest... Doesn't need to put in bed, he's 18. But, put the younger one to bed, he still wants to say a prayer with me, and lay down, and hug, and stuff. But yeah, trying to have that differentiation. Now, sometimes you have to work late, sometimes you have to go out of town. And, Randi McGinn has a good saying. It's like, "You can have it all. You just can't have it all at the same time."

Natalie Arledge:

Yes.

Michael Cowen:

So, I have weeks where I'm not as good of a lawyer, because I'm spending more time at home. Like this next week, my eldest is... I'm moving them up to college on Saturday. And so, I know that I do not need



to be working late next week, because my wife is going to need a shoulder to cry on, and someone to hug her, and be home with her. She didn't ever go off to college. She stayed home. She has a college degree, but she lived with her parents, and lived with her parents until she was 27 when she married me. While she wants them to go off to school, and wants them to have experience, it is so hard for her. Because her mother told her like, "Oh, if you go off to school, you're going to get raped. You're going to get murdered. All these horrible things are going to happen to you."

Natalie Arledge:

Oh, gosh.

Michael Cowen:

And even now, her mother will call her like, "I'm so worried about him. What if he gets on drugs? What if he gets with the wrong people? What if this? What if that?" And then, it gets her all worked up. And, that doesn't help. And so, I know next week, I'm going to have to be home more. Whereas, last week, I was in trial. And, I would text or call my wife. I didn't talk to my kids every day. I mean, I know that sounds horrible. But, last week, I was not a great parent, I was a good lawyer. Next week, I'm going to be a good parent and I got another trial coming up in three weeks, I'm going to let the law stuff fester for a little bit. And, let y'all do the work. So, I can be there for my wife.

And, even this week, I mean, he's going out with his friends at night. I mean, he doesn't really want to do a lot of things with me, but I've noticed that my 18-year-old, he's just hanging out and talking more. I've got Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, I've got three days of hanging around talking, and that's it. I want to be home for that.

Natalie Arledge:

Yeah. And, when you're working, you've got to be working. And when you're at home, you've got to be at home, because yeah, otherwise you're going to miss all of that fun stuff from home. And then, you're not going to be as good a lawyer. You can't do both at the same time. And sometimes, you have to sacrifice one for the other.

Michael Cowen:

And you've got to take vacations, both the real vacation, a week or more off, where you just have that solid family time where you're committed. But even the little three-day weekends, and just giving them that time to make up for the time when you're not there, or you're not fully engaged. The worst is when you're not fully engaged. You're there in the room with them, but you're checking your email, or looking at something else. You're thinking about your case. And, you might notice it, they get mad.

Natalie Arledge:

Yes. My oldest gets mad at me. He gets annoyed if I'm trying to work, if I'm on the computer, or on my phone, he gets annoyed.

Michael Cowen:

Just out of curiosity, it's weird, I've known you for five and a half years, but we don't really talk about these things, so when you're getting ready to go off on maternity leave, we're going to give three months, we tell you we're going to give you three months. What is the thought? Do you ever have any fear like, "If I do this, what's going to happen to my career? What's going to happen? Am I going to want

to come back? I mean, are they going to treat me the same when I come back?" What's going through your mind when that happens?

Natalie Arledge:

All of that. All of the above.

Michael Cowen:

Okay. Tell me about that.

Natalie Arledge:

This time, around working for you, when I went on maternity leave, the feelings weren't as intense. But there was a lot of guilt, because all the other lawyers here had to babysit my docket, all my cases, all my clients, everything. And everybody was so wonderful, and did a great job, and I'm so grateful to that. But I had immense guilt about that. And then, "When I come back, am I going to be able to have the time? Am I going to be able to focus?" It was hard to readjust my focus the first couple of months, because it's a whole brand new life when you bring a baby home. Everything's different. Everything's turned upside down.

So yeah, "Am I going to be able to focus? Am I going to want to do this anymore? Am I going to just totally fall in love with my baby and never want to do this again and be home forever?" So, I mean, all of that went through. And there's a lot of insecurity about, "Am I going to be good enough when I come back? Am I just going to need too much time away from the office that I'm not going to be able to do my job anymore?" So yeah, there's a lot of big emotions going on maternity leave. And worry that you're not going to be able to come back.

Michael Cowen:

Is there anything we said or did that made it harder than it had to be?

Natalie Arledge:

No, not at all.

Michael Cowen:

Okay. I'm always thinking, okay, this is an opportunity to... You've got your safe space here. If we can do it better next time for the next woman, I'm just wondering.

Natalie Arledge:

No.

Michael Cowen:

We hire a lot of women in their 20s and early-30s. And so, babies are part... And men too. Men father children too.

Natalie Arledge:

Mm-hmm.

Michael Cowen:

People having children is going to be part of our firm life and firm culture. Your paralegal's going to have a baby any day now.

Natalie Arledge:

Yes.

Michael Cowen:

So, to the extent that we could do it better, do you think there's some things we could do better than what we did?

Natalie Arledge:

No, everybody here was amazing.

Michael Cowen:

Wow.

Natalie Arledge:

Everybody here was so amazing. But it's so funny, because you still have those feelings of... They're all within yourself of, "Am I good enough? Am I going to make it? Am I going to want to do this?" And, no, everybody here was so amazing, and so supportive, and I told everybody, I was like, "Please call me or text me if you need anything. I'm happy..." Nobody said a peep.

Michael Cowen:

No?

Natalie Arledge:

Nobody wanted to-

Michael Cowen:

No.

Natalie Arledge:

... And there are many times that people could have, right? There were things that I came back, I was like, "You should have called me." "Oh, we don't want to bother you."

Michael Cowen:

I was pretty adamant about not bothering you. I was pretty, "Talk to me, don't bother Natalie. Give her her time. She'll call us when she's ready." It's a value thing to me. I'm not one of these people that think that we're always pure in everything we do, and we're going to totally change the world, and everything else. But, can I make the world 1% better? Can I just make things a little better when I'm gone than they were when I started? And, one thing I want to do is I want to have a firm where people can have children, and be parents, and still be wildly successful lawyers. And not just saying, "Oh, we're work-life balanced, because we don't work that hard on our cases." No, we want to kick on our cases. Get every

possible result. Go try them if they don't pay the top dollar. And do a really great job trying them, but also minimize the therapy our children are going to be in 20 years from now.

Natalie Arledge:

Well, and I think that helps us be better lawyers too though, because we touched on it already, but I can go home and I can turn it off for a little bit, or I can go on a vacation and I can turn it off a little bit, knowing that I have the support here to do that. Some places, I'm sure, expect you to be on all the time, have your cell phone on all the time. And, I think, being able to allow people to turn it all off just for a little bit, and spend time with their families just helps us come back and be even better.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah, if you never turn it off, then you just never get to recharge, and you don't operate on as high of a level, because we do work hard, and we do have nights... And I've seen you work nights. I've seen you work weekends when you have to. And then, you make up for it by taking a little extra time afterwards. And, I think, Mallory's been a real great... Even before she had kids of just work, work, work, work. Take a four-day weekend. Work, work, work, work. Take off early. Just finding that way to always stop and recharge. And now, that she's a mom, she's got to balance it out more. But she's still working at such an incredibly high level. And I think what we've really learned from her too is how to delegate more. Like, "Okay, I can't work 80-hour weeks anymore. So now I have to teach someone else how to do things for me and get them to do them at a high level."

Natalie Arledge:

Yeah, Mallory does awesome. I was totally shocked when she told me that she does not keep her work email on her phone, so she can't ever check it when she's away from the office. And I thought, "Oh my God, she's so successful. How is she not constantly checking her emails?" But it is doable.

Michael Cowen:

I took the icon off my phone, so I have to search for it, but I still haven't pulled it all the way off.

Natalie Arledge:

That's a good idea. Because then it's not there in your face, right? You pick up your phone. And you think, "Oh, I'll just look at it."

Michael Cowen:

For the first two weeks, I would just flip my... I have an iPhone, so I would just do the face thing where it opens up the screen, and without even thinking, I was hitting my thumb where the mail icon used to be to just constantly check it. And of course, nothing would happen, because there was not an icon there anymore. So, it was just how just automatic of a behavior it was to constantly be checking my email.

Natalie Arledge:

Mm-hmm.

Michael Cowen:

And now, like I said, I can still check it, and I still check it more than I should, but I have to at least go to the search bar, search for mail, and do it that way. Because sometimes, I do want to send myself an email

from my phone, because I just thought of something. But, I try to spend less and less time on email. I try to let my assistant do my first... I'm really spoiled, do my first run of my emails and just flag the ones that I actually have to read. And, she just deletes 90% of them without me ever reading them.

Natalie Arledge:

Oh, that's nice.

Michael Cowen:

Oh, it's so nice. But, you got to get up there where you're generating enough income where you can hire an assistant to do that shit for you. But when you can, I'll tell you, that's something you should ask for as you develop and bring in more and more business. It is a game changer.

Natalie Arledge:

A goal. It's a goal.

Michael Cowen:

It is. No, it is a goal, because going through emails, deleting all the junk stuff, the forwarding things to make sure it gets in the file.

Natalie Arledge:

It could take up some time.

Michael Cowen:

Another lawyer wants a copy of a depo, and saying, "Okay. Well, let me go see if I can find the depo." And doing the search, and then attaching it, and mailing it back. I don't need to do that myself. So, she's perfectly competent to do that stuff for me. So it's so nice. So, I highly recommend that. So I want to make sure, we've talked a lot about ourselves and our firm. I want to make sure we're providing value to the people listening. So, for those of our listeners that have families at home, what advice would you give them in trying to structure their life where they can operate at a high level, really kick butt on their cases, but at the same time, being able to not just be home with your family, but be present when you're home with your family?

Natalie Arledge:

So, we did talk about it a little bit, but I would say, so I am a person that does not like schedules. I don't like being told do this at 8:00, do this at 9:00, do this at 10:00. But I would say, get yourself into a routine, right? You got to start work around a certain time, you didn't work around a certain time, and then you go home, and you'd be with the family a certain time. But, having that routine takes out a lot... It takes time to plan things, right? And so, the routine takes some of the thinking out of it. You just know that you have to do these things at certain times throughout the day. So, having a routine and sticking to it helps.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. I think the other thing that you and I are both doing is just really, when you're at work, you're at work.

Natalie Arledge:

Yes.

Michael Cowen:

And then, when you're at home, you're at home. And every now and then, you have to either get up early before the kids, or after the kids go to sleep, get a little bit more work done, finish a brief or some of that. But to the extent possible, without a true emergency deadline is, find a way to get your work done while you're at work, and that way you can be actually present when you're at home.

Natalie Arledge:

I think so. I think that's good advice.

Michael Cowen:

How about mindset on turning that corner, where you're really pushing your cases, getting your depositions done, tearing up the witnesses on the other side, getting the other side to cry uncle, and pay you the top dollar on their case. Because I really think with you, it's as much of a mind shift change as it was a mindset shift... Let me start again. For you, I think, it was as much of a mindset shift as it was any new skill you developed, what advice do you have to people that are trying to develop that killer mindset for themselves?

Natalie Arledge:

Be fearless. There's nothing that is going to happen to you that is going to end the world. They're not going to take away your birthday, because you're not going to take down your motion to compel, right? There's nothing bad that is going to happen to you. One of the things that I learned here from y'all is almost everything, not everything, but almost everything is fixable. So, don't be afraid to make a mistake, because even if you make one, it's not the end of the world, and you could probably fix it. So, there's nothing to be worried about. Just ask for what you want, do what you want, and do what's best for your clients.

Michael Cowen:

Absolutely. Well, thank you, Natalie. And, I hope everyone else enjoyed talking to you as much as I enjoy talking to you all the time. I'm glad you're part of our team. And thanks for coming on the podcast.

Natalie Arledge:

Thank you.

Michael Cowen:

Just a couple of announcements before we sign off. First, I've got my book coming out finally by Trial Guides. It should start shipping no later than September 18th. The book is titled Big Rig Justice: A Comprehensive Guide to Maximizing Value in Truck Accident Cases. I know that's a big long name, but the publishers wanted all that for SEO purposes. But, it's five years of my life. It's everything I knew as I was writing it about doing trucking cases. So, if you do trucking work, and you want to give me 5 or 10 bucks of whatever the purchase price is, you can go to [trialguides.com](http://trialguides.com) and the book is available for pre-order now, and it should start shipping within the next month.

The other thing is, I'm speaking at the Academy of Truck Accident Attorneys Symposium in September in Georgia. If you want to do trucking cases, it is the best program for truck accident attorneys. You've got all the top truck lawyers there. You have a lot of really good experts that are speaking there as well. That's an Atlanta this year, and late September. Just go to [academyoftruckaccidentattorneys.org](http://academyoftruckaccidentattorneys.org), and I highly encourage everyone to sign up for that too, because that's another great program.

So, hope to see you there. If you're a listener, please come by and say hi. I always love hearing from y'all. It always makes me feel like I'm here talking to a microphone, I'd see my guests, but it's weird, I don't see you all on the other side. It's nice to know that people actually listen and get value. So, if you see it, come up, say hi. It always makes me feel good. It never bothers me. So hopefully, I'd come and meet y'all at the ATA Symposium or some other seminar coming up. Thank you very much and I look forward to having you join us next time on Trial Lawyer Nation.

Thank you for joining us on Trial Lawyer Nation. I hope you enjoyed our show. If you'd like to receive updates, insider information, and more from Trial Lawyer Nation, sign up for our mailing list at [triallywernation.com](http://triallywernation.com). You could also visit our episodes page on the website for show notes and direct links to any resources in this or any past episode. To help more attorneys find our podcast, please like, share, and subscribe to our podcast on any of our social media outlets. If you'd like access to exclusive plaintiff lawyer only content, and live monthly discussions with me, send a request to join the Trial Lawyer Nation Insider Circle Facebook group. Thanks again for tuning in. I look forward to having you with us next time on Trial Lawyer Nation.

Voiceover:

Each year, the law firm of Cowen Rodriguez Peacock pays millions of dollars in co-counsel fees to attorneys nationwide on trucking and commercial vehicle cases. If you have an injury case involving death or catastrophic injuries and would like to partner with our firm, please contact us by calling 210-941-1301 to discuss the case in detail and see where we can add value in a partnership. This podcast has been hosted by Michael Cowen and is not intended to, nor does it, create the attorney-client privilege between our host, guest, and any listener for any reason. Content from the podcast is not to be interpreted as legal advice. All thoughts and opinions expressed herein are only those from which they came.