

**How Joe Budden
Became the Howard
Stern of Hip-Hop**

By Iman Stevenson
Aug. 22, 2018

**The True Story of the
Flamin' Hot Cheetos
Inventor Richard
Montañez**

By Andrew Whalen
Aug. 27, 2019

**Ben Mallah—the
\$250,000,000 Real
Estate Mogul**

By Atanas Shorgov
Jul. 21, 2019



STONEROST



MAY 4, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

This magazine emerged out of a part of life where it seemed like there was nothing to believe in. When you feel like the cards are stacked against you, but somehow you look into the future knowing you'll look back to the current time you're in as small obstacles rather than mountains. Through seeing parts of myself in the people featured in these stories, I want to highlight for the reader as well as myself about how at times in path of figuring oneself out, there is once upon a time where things did not seem so clear. A magazine that shows the ugly reality of success, where the environment around feels like it isn't built to see one thrive, one can rise above.

So without further adieu, I present, Stonerose Magazine.

Sincerely,



Aaron Lobo

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Ben Mallah — the \$250,000,000 Real Estate Mogul

• May 4, 2020

Ben Mallah — the \$250, 000,000 Real Estate Mogul

Atanas Shorgov
Jul 21, 2019

When I was a kid, I always wanted to make a lot of money.

Ben Mallah is the guy who plays Monopoly for real. His description of not mine. He is a Tampa Bay real estate mogul with a net worth of \$250,000,000. That's a lot of money if you ask me. Ben is also a pretty cool and straightforward guy, who likes to keep it real. He started from nothing, growing up in Queens, New York, dropping out of high school, and getting to the position he is in now — it makes for quite a fascinating story.

His childhood wasn't easy, living in the slumps, surrounded by criminals, raised by a lunatic mother according to his words, in a shitbox bungalow. Often, individuals raised in the hardest conditions built resilience and mental toughness that others could never achieve. Living in such environment and surviving in there for many years teaches you life lessons that can't be described by the textbooks.

Bad parents can set good examples of what not to do. Unhappiness, hatred, and other strong negative emotions can be a strong motivator for achieving success. You don't want to be a failure as everybody around you. Overcoming all these challenges that come from your surroundings, makes you almost immune to failure.

I've heard this phrase from other ultra successful people, who just knew that they want to make a lot of money.

That was their ultimate goal and they managed to achieve it in one way or another. I don't say whether it's good or not, but the fact is that setting up your mindset towards money from a young age and just pursuing this dream no matter what — just makes the difference with anybody else who half-wants to be rich. Being fully-committed is the game changer.

"Started on his real estate career by purchasing a crack house in section 8."

One of the biggest challenges for Ben over the years is dealing with properties from a distance. He says: I like to touch the real estate, I like to get my hands dirty, I like to deal with the problems easily, and when things are far away it's hard to deal with it. You don't want to hire management companies because then you are not in control of your own investment and they can do things you don't want them to do.

Nobody else will care about your business as much as you care about it. Don't leave it in the hands of agencies or third party companies. The core of the business has to be with you. If you start biting more than you can chew, that's when the troubles begin. At the end of the days, it's about creating value, it's about making something better than what already exists, and there will always be a place on the market for it. New opportunities keep coming, new jobs are created, creative technologies are developed, something is constantly happening. If you go out there, you may even find what is for you.

How does somebody learn all of this? Just by doing it, experiencing it, and finding that there is a true value to something. We learn by doing stuff. If you start a new job, you learn at least 80% of the tasks by doing them. Even if it's something very complex and time-consuming, you will learn it eventually by doing it. Of course, there are some limitations to it, but in most cases — that's it. Trial and error without too many errors if possible.

It's a simple formula, but it takes a lot of hard work, big balls, and huge determination. How many of you would take the risk and buy the worst crack house to try fixing it, and then manage to sell on profit. Most won't do it. They wouldn't even approach such a neighborhood.

There might be an opportunity in your business area that nobody else want to take because it seems to difficult or it takes too much effort, or whatever.

Don't take the easy road, but rather go after the crap and make it work. It's too difficult for the rest. All these new entrepreneurs who want to be successful overnight want to alto do it from the comfort of their sofa. The problem is that it doesn't work this way. You have to solve real-life problems to get paid.

I bought the worst crack house and made it up, and fixed it up, and made money from that, and look the profits to buy other stuff.

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CONCRETE JUNGLE
ISN'T WILD
ENOUGH?



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How Joe Budden Became the Howard Stern of Hip Hop

• May 4, 2020

How Joe Budden Became the Howard Stern of Hip-Hop

As a rapper, Joe Budden had a hit 15 years ago — and then a string of bad luck and poor choices. Now he has emerged as a podcast star.

By Iman Stevenson

Aug. 22, 2018

This wasn't how Joe Budden planned on becoming famous. In fact, he didn't plan much of anything. Now he's on the charts, but not for his music.

Instead, as of Thursday, Joe Budden has the No. 1 podcast on the iTunes music podcast chart — five slots ahead of the NPR standard-bearer "All Songs Considered." The Joe Budden Podcast With Rory and Mal is produced at a friend's house in Queens.



Mr. Budden had a brief taste of mainstream success as a rapper with a Top 40 hit in 2003 before his career stalled. Now he has become a kind of volatile elder statesman of hip-hop, holding forth on his podcast, social media and YouTube before an audience of millions. His soliloquies and tirades, whether a careful examination of a rap diss or a nuanced defense of XXXTentacion, the controversial young rapper who was murdered in June, lend him a credibility he never quite had as an artist.

Mr. Budden is now banking on a new partnership with Spotify to expand on his success. Starting this fall, his podcast will stream exclusively on that platform. (He plans on still uploading videos of the show on YouTube.) The goal, according to Courtney Holt, head of studios and video at Spotify, is to “develop out not just this show, but other shows in the future.” When asked why he thought Spotify was the best home for his show, Mr. Budden said simply, “They weren’t afraid of me.”

Seated at the dining room table in his Montclair, N.J., home, Mr. Budden is just as he seems as a podcast host: expressive and candid and unembarrassed to recount a series of personal and professional misfortunes and poor decisions, from his battles with addiction, messy physical fights that spilled onto social media to rap beefs and shady recording contracts that left him broke for most of his rap career.

He was also accused of beating an ex-girlfriend, and even though charges were dropped, the allegations continue to dog him. “Even if you’re innocent of those things, therapy teaches you to always pay attention to the part that I played in things,”



And then he decided to quit rapping.

“A key point to his identity as a musician is that he’s been run through the major label ringer,” said Paul Thompson, a freelance music writer based in Los Angeles. “I think his listeners get the sense, and like the sense, that he’s sort of a rogue individual.”

Mr. Budden said. “I didn’t do any of that stuff, but how did I get here? I frequented strip clubs, I popped pills. My life was in disarray. It made me say, ‘No more.’”

The Joe Budden Podcast began in 2015 as I’ll Name This Podcast Later. His rap days behind him, Mr. Budden is like a retired athlete at a desk on ESPN. He’s brash, opinionated and blunt. And he knows what he’s talking about. His time spent as an artist on a major record label lends him an insider’s perspective, and his disdain for the music industry has only served to boost his credibility.

Joseph Anthony Budden Jr. was born in Spanish Harlem in 1980. At 13, he moved to Jersey City with his mother and older brother. He was soon sent to a boarding school in North Carolina.

“My mom’s mission my entire teenage years was just to save my life,” Mr. Budden said. He did, however, check himself into rehab, a deal he struck with his mother in order to attend a prom. “I was the only volunteer in that rehab. Everybody was mandated there by court.”

He failed to get a diploma, he said, and by the age of 20 had a son with an older woman. Shortly after his son was born, a demo he recorded made its way to Def Jam Recordings, which resulted in a record deal for Mr. Budden. “I was just rapping as a pastime and I became good at it,” he said. “So much so that by the time my Def Jam contract was in front of me, I didn’t have a rap name.”

“My mom’s mission my entire teenage years was just to save my life,”

Right away he had a hit with “Pump It Up,” and he was nominated for a Grammy, but Mr. Budden stalled as a rapper. He lasted at Def Jam until 2007. It was a chaotic time.

“Turmoil everywhere,” he recalled. “The label situation, family situation. My relationship with my first child was nonexistent. I was broke and I was a new rapper whose career was spiraling downward.”

He thought recording on a smaller label would give him more freedom, but he found himself saddled with yet another bad contract, so he turned to the internet. He started filming his day-to-day life on his YouTube channel, Joe Budden TV.

This led to an offer to join the cast of the VH1 reality series “Love & Hip Hop: New York.” It was an eye-opener. Mr. Budden saw it as the perfect vehicle to revive his rap career. Instead, it was a pitiless mirror that revealed an addict in denial. He decided that the way to get off pills was not to go into rehab but to appear on another VH1 reality show, “Couples Therapy.” “I wasn’t going for couples therapy,” Mr. Budden said. “I wasn’t going because they were paying me. Drugs were my issue.”

“A large part of me being absent in my first child’s life was rap,” Mr. Budden said. He has two sons, Joseph, 17, and Lexington, an 8-month-old, with his current girlfriend, Cynthia Pacheko.

In his new clean state, Mr. Budden met Ian Schwartzman, a manager who saw promise in the former rapper. “In terms of what he was capable of doing as a personality,” Mr. Schwartzman said, “it was limitless.” He envisioned Mr. Budden as the “hip-hop Howard Stern.” “The perception of him was rough around the edges, a loose cannon,” said Mr. Schwartzman.

Mr. Budden seated himself before the microphone. “Mic check, 1, 2, 1, 2,” he said in his gravelly baritone. The podcast had begun.

As with Mr. Stern, the perception would evolve. Thirteen years after his only hit record and committed to staying clean, Mr. Budden began his second act, becoming a co-host on “Everyday Struggle,” a daily hip-hop news show on Complex Media’s YouTube channel. That platform involved viral moments that would increase Mr. Budden’s visibility and complete his transformation from rapper to media personality, including scolding the young rapper Lil Yachty and walking out of a Migos interview during the BET Awards.

“Joe knows how to get under artists’ skin,” said Elliott Wilson, a content director at the streaming service Tidal. “He knows how to say the right thing to kind of irritate his fellow artists.” After a year, Mr. Budden would leave “Everyday Struggle” and the following he had amassed on the show to devote himself full time to the podcast he had been recording for three years.

The podcast’s team convenes every Tuesday in Astoria, Queens, at the home studio of Parks Valley, the show’s audio engineer. Mr. Budden, his co-hosts Rory Farrell and Jamil Clay (Mal), a videographer and an intern, gather as he reads a list of topics off his iPhone that he’s compiled throughout the week. This week’s episode would include women out-earning their male spouses and poking fun at a recent Drake freestyle. The atmosphere in the studio is very much a man cave, and the show has been criticized for sexist comments, an issue Mr. Budden said he is trying to correct. “The work is to avoid topics we’re not qualified to speak on,” he said.

“I think they’re doing the best that they can,” said Kitanya Harrison, a freelance writer based in Jamaica, who noted the sexism in a piece about the podcast. “I’m not sure if it’s enough, but I appreciate the effort that they’re doing it public.” The guys had only just returned from the East Coast leg of the Joe Budden Podcast tour. In a few days, they would head out again, to the West Coast. Mr. Clay, one of the co-hosts, recounted the story of a man who told him the podcast prevented him from committing suicide. “I didn’t think that this was life changing,” Mr. Clay said minutes before heading to his usual spot in Mr. Valley’s house to record.



THIS IS ABOUT BEING YOUR BETTER SELF.



The True Story of the Flamin' Hot Cheetos Inventor Richard Montañez

By Andrew Whalen
Aug. 27, 2019



Eva Longoria will direct Flamin' Hot, a movie about the creator of the Flamin' Hot Cheeto, Deadline reported on Monday. Flamin' Hot tells the story of Richard Montañez, who rose from janitor to PepsiCo executive after inventing the spicy version of the snack.

The new flavor rejuvenated the brand and has since made billions of dollars. "Flamin' Hot" has become a central element in Cheetos marketing, with Flamin' Hot Crunchy, Flamin' Hot Puffs, Flamin' Hot Limon Crunchy, XXTRA Flamin' Hot Crunchy and Reduced Fat Flamin' Hot Puffs on store shelves.

At The Hustle, Zachary Crockett describes Montañez's childhood as a son of a Mexican immigrant in Southern California. As a child growing up in the 1960s in Guasti, a farming community east of Los Angeles, Montañez picked grapes with his entire family, including his grandfather. The 14 members of his family shared a one-room cinder block house in a migrant labor camp.





**“I have a PhD of
being poor, hungry
and determined,”**

“I have a PhD of being poor, hungry and determined,” Montañez said in an interview with the Washington Post.

After dropping out of school in fourth grade, Montañez took on a series of jobs, including one at a slaughterhouse and another washing cars. In 1976 — Montañez was 18 — he was hired as a janitor at a Frito-Lay plant in Rancho Cucamonga, California. His wife filled out the application since Montañez struggled to read and write. The janitor position paid \$4 an hour with benefits.

After testing the flavor with his family, Montañez first pitched the idea to former PepsiCo CEO Roger Enrico over the phone and was given two weeks to prepare a presentation to the executive suite. Montañez came to the meeting with custom-designed packaging for his idea.



Now a bestselling author and motivational speaker, Montañez advocates for diversity in business. “I realized there’s no such thing as ‘just a janitor’ when you believe you’re going to be the best,” Montañez said in the same interview.



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