



## Episode 1,770: Screw Politics and Protect Yourself

Guest: Joel Bein

**WOODS:** Let's talk about your story. I know a bit about Crash. The audience might not. We've talked about it once before with Isaac Morehouse. But it's very important, and as I just got done, saying, I have to talk about something nonpolitical today. I've got to just cleanse the intellectual palate, in a way. So I thought this was a very opportune moment to talk to you. So you have an interesting story in that I guess you started off as a school teacher, and then had some kind of realization that kind of reminds me of – I can't tell you how many times I've had people come up to me and say they were in the military, and then they started listening to me and learning about US foreign policy, and then deciding they just couldn't do that anymore. And oddly enough, I guess you had some kind of experience not a million miles away from that.

**BEIN:** Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I sort of have two passions in life. One is classical music. I'm a classically trained musician and conductor. I have two degrees in music. Throughout my 20s – I'm in my early 30s now – I was really following that passion through and through, and I went on to create a sort of side project as it is now, a professional classical music organization that I run and conduct.

But my second passion that was also born sort of in my teens was a passion for education. And my first degree is in music education. And I went to college to get certified in New York state to become a K-12 educator. And I got that certification, but right in my senior year of college, I discovered the *School Sucks* podcast from our mutual friend Brett Veinotte that in 2009. And I got hooked in from the beginning.

And I was in the midst of my student teaching experience, so I actually from quite early on knew that I didn't believe in the conventional K-12 model, but that was sort of the degree that I had, and I had all this momentum and I had a passion to teach music. So I kind of went into the schools and kept riding out that momentum, but I knew in the back of my mind that that wasn't going to be sustainable. And so as I kept actualizing my music passion and my conducting pursuits, then I kept following the *School Sucks* podcast, and I found Isaac's work and his first company, Praxis, and just got really excited about that.

And I decided, like, I want to create something in my own life where I can make an impact in the realm of education, I can help people empower themselves in this self-directed manner to be critically thinking and to – you know, with Crash and with Praxis, these companies are sort of criticizing by creating, criticizing the conventional conveyor belt, and there's this model of be your own credential and prove your ability to create value and not rely on a third party. And it's really empowering. And so to kind of fast forward, I can go through this story but

about a year and a half ago, I decided to become a Crash customer, and I started pitching companies and then eventually pitched Crash to join the team.

**WOODS:** All right, so explain to people what exactly Crash is. I've had quite a few people, quite a few people say that they've gone through the Praxis program, which is quite different. I had a supporters event at my house some time ago, and I had a parent come up to me and say, speaking about his wife and himself, that their daughter – actually I can't remember if it was a daughter or a son, but that's how many of these stories I've gotten – went through the Praxis program, and it was tremendously successful. And I love what Isaac does, because he's always looking for alternative ways to reach goals or alternative goals, even to be shooting for. Crash is somewhat different from Praxis, though, and I'm somewhat familiar with it, but not as much. So what exactly are you signing up for when you go to Crash?

**BEIN:** Sure. So Crash grew out of Praxis as a tool to serve a large population of people. Whereas Praxis is a 12-month program – typically it's somebody sort of aged 17 to 24 is going to commit a year of their life to this bootcamp and apprenticeship – Crash is simply a software tool. It's a platform, you sign up, and you can first create a profile pitch, and you sort of shoot a 60-second video talking about why you're valuable and kind of pitching yourself to the world at large.

And then, on top of that, and this is really where you have the bang for your buck, is you create video pitches that are tailored directly to a specific company. You find three, five, ten companies that you're really excited about, and you deep dive those companies, learn everything you can about them, and you create, again, a 60-second or two-minute pitch video. You say, *Hey, I'm really excited about your company because I love your mission, I really appreciate your culture and your values*, or whatever the case may be. Then you say, *I'm going to be a great fit, because I have this experience and this experience*, and I'm trying to create this pitch in a video format that makes that company really feel special and showcases your personality, as well as you can create a body of work you can attach to your pitch project.

So if you were going for a customer success role, for example, you could look on their website, and you notice on this company's website, they don't have really a sufficient FAQ page. So what do you do? Without permission, you create an FAQ page, a more robust FAQ page and whatnot, and you just put that in a Google Doc, and you attach it to your Crash pitch, and you say, *Hey, I made this for you*. And all of a sudden, you're doing the job before you have a job. You're signaling – it's all about signaling what type of person you are, your creativity, your initiative, your soft skills, and you're showing that you are going to go above and beyond. And that really helps you stand out.

And we see job seekers on average get interviews within five days, on average get a job offer within 18 days. We had one job hunter who was just doing the kind of old approach of blasting out hundreds of resumes over the course of months. His name's George Garcia. And then he found Crash. And he's sort of an outlier case, but he literally signed up for Crash, pitched a company, had an interview and offer within 24 hours. I mean, it sort of sounds too good to be true, but it happens.

**WOODS:** I guess, then, that now I'm starting to put it all together here – the old man's a little slow sometimes, but now I'm getting it. That's the method you used to pitch your way onto this show right now, isn't it?

**BEIN:** [laughing]

**WOODS:** That video you made?

**BEIN:** Absolutely.

**WOODS:** Yeah. And by the way, that reminds me of another person I've had on a few times. He's an extremely successful entrepreneur, Ryan Daniel Moran. And he had a new book recently, and he wanted to come back on my show to talk about it, but instead of just sending me an email that would have been lost amidst 500 emails, he shipped something to my door. And I opened up this package and there's almost like a digital book in there. And I opened it up, and a video automatically starts playing. And it's him saying, "Hey, Tom, it's Ryan Daniel Moran. We haven't spoken in quite a while, but I really enjoyed being on your podcast," and whatever. I thought, what in heaven's name is going on here? And he was making his pitch to come back on the show to talk about his new book. And I thought, well, maybe I'm just a superficial person, but that guy just earned his way onto the show. That was how I felt about it.

So I can imagine this kind of thing working, because it is different from what everybody else is going to be doing. Everybody else is going to fill out a little form and sit and wait by the telephone. And you're, number one, making a video pitch, and number two, in some cases solving a problem that they don't even know they have, and then doing it for them automatically. Yeah, I would say in a difficult, challenging job market, that would make you stand out.

**BEIN:** Yeah, absolutely. And right now in 2020, this is really sort of the medicine many people need, to feel – not only does the world kind of feel like it's closing in on us; we need a sense of personal agency. We need a sense of personal empowerment and excitement and energy in something like a job hunt, where – I mean, who wakes up in the morning, they're like, I can't wait to tweak my resume? It just doesn't happen. But what I noticed on my job hunt, I pitched 20 companies, had about 12 interviews. And yeah, it's a little nerve wracking at first to get in front of the video, you've got to maybe do a few takes in order to speak for 60 seconds straight. But man, the first time I shipped that first pitch video to a company, it was this – you publish the pitch, and you put it in an email, you find a decision maker at that company –

**WOODS:** Yeah, that was the question I was going to ask you: where do you send it?

**BEIN:** Yeah, so part of the process is like, go on LinkedIn, find – if it's a sales role, maybe find a VP of sales, or if it's a small company, find the CEO, or maybe find a recruiter. Just find their decision maker, and then go on a website like hunter.io, and you can find that person's email address. But just find the email address, shoot them a little email with the Crash pitch URL for that company, and you're kind of crashing the party, right? That's one reason we're called Crash, is the idea is to go in the side door. Don't just click Apply and then cross your fingers. Go in the side door, crash the party, but have everyone be happy that you showed up.

**WOODS:** Right, right, right. So this is an example of what we have the tools to do now. And I understand – I mean, forget about all the craziness of 2020. Let's forget any of that. Let's say it was 2019. You get a lot of people saying that you have a more precarious jobs situation now

than you did, let's say, in the 1950s, and there are a lot of reasons to be unhappy about the present environment. But on the other hand, I always want to counter that by reminding people that there are many reasons to be quite pleased to be on the job market now, because if you're willing to look for them and use them, you have all these tools at your disposal and you have ways of differentiating yourself. But as you say, you have to be willing to get outside your comfort zone, do something that's new to you. But if you want to differentiate yourself from the crowd, you have a lot of ways to do it, and Crash looks like pretty good way.

Now, the thing is with Praxis program, that's more of a like an internship where you're at a startup company and you work for them for a while and then you generally get a job offer. And that's an interesting path, because for some people, it's an alternative to college. While their friends are racking up debt for several years, they're getting ahead of the game, starting off with no debt and with job experience. Now, with that program, you get a lot of feedback, because the company is going to tell you how the Praxis person worked out, and the Praxis person can tell you how they worked out, how their life is going. But it's not so obvious that with Crash, you'd get a lot of testimonials. How do you know this is working?

**BEIN:** Yeah, I mean, if you head to [Crash.co/testimonials](https://www.crash.co/testimonials), you'll see a whole list of quotes, our sort of wall of love of quotes of both Crash job hunters, as well as companies that have received these pitches. I mean, it really it blows you out of the water sometimes. I mean, just to kind of elaborate more on my story, I had one company that I pitched back in March. This is literally right when the world started ending. And this is a recruiter who'd been in the business for 20 years, and she wrote back to me right away. She said, *Wow, this is the best and coolest application I've ever seen in 20 years.* This is someone, there's like 1,400 people applying for the sales job. I'm coming at this with no sales experience, but I somehow am able to kind of cut through the noise.

But yeah, you're absolutely right, Tom, about even if it's 2019, whatever, in this 21st century, we have the worldwide web at our disposal to leverage. I mean, you talk about something like Skillshare where you can for really low cost, learn a new skill, learn a new tech tool. And that's another feature of the Crash pitch, is when you add a sort of tech tool to your toolkit, something like Salesforce or Intercom or WordPress, something that you can do from a software perspective, you can add that into your pitch and you have like a nice little logo there. That's really sort of a colorful way to show a company what you can do.

But you can build that tech stack out. Even if you have no skills, if you're starting from scratch, that's what I did. I was coming from the academic world. I had no business acumen, essentially. But I said, okay, how can I take a self-directed mentality and start learning out loud? We have a great blog post on our website called "100 Ways to Work Out Loud," and it's just all these ideas of ways to build a body of work, build a portfolio of projects, to again, signal to the marketplace, signal to companies what type of person you are and what skills you have.

So I talked about like creating that project for a company, a FAQ page for a customer success role. That's like a very specific project for a company. But you can also just create projects that are in your general interest. You're interested in cooking? Create five YouTube videos, 30-minute videos. As you cook dinner, make a little vlog. And all of a sudden, you have a little body of work. When someone looks you up, they see that you are creative and interesting and articulate and have communication skills and you have creative gumption and all these things. Or go on Skillshare, learn a new tech tool.

And like what I did was, I learned out loud on my blog. So I was going through this course online for Salesforce, this tech tool. And every day, for like all summer 2019, I just did the 20 minutes a day trying to get through this nine-hour course. And every day, I wrote a little something on my blog about what I was learning. And most of the time, I was writing about how I didn't understand what I was learning. But it was like sort of signaling that I have a growth mindset and I have this momentum and I'm being consistent because I'm blogging every day. And it's not that costly to set up a blog I did it through Tom's Bluehost link, of course. So there's really a lot of opportunity; you've just got to kind of start, you know?

**WOODS:** That's right. And incidentally, there are multiple reasons somebody might want to blog. Now, these days, blogging is not as, let's say, fashionable as it was five, ten years ago. But there's still a place for it, and there are still plenty of people who have built up audiences for themselves by means of a blog and it's an outlet for them to – instead of just sending everything that's on their minds to their friends and family through email all the time, look, you'd be doing them a favor to knock that off and just get a blog and write your stuff there.

But another reason employment-wise that it can be helpful is not simply when you're seeking employment, but also during your employment. If you have a blog that is dedicated to your industry, and let's say you're reviewing books coming out on your industry or you are reporting on developments in your industry on a regular basis, you can rest assured you're the only person in your firm doing that and it's going to get around. And plus, you can do interviews with people at your firm, like the higher-ups, and that makes them feel important. And so when it comes time to hand out the pink slips, are they going to hand the pink slip to the guy who's keeping an eye on that industry and blogging about it and writing about it and staying informed and staying on top of things? I tend to think you're going to survive the cut. So I think it can be in your professional interest also to have a blog, for that reason.

**BEIN:** Yeah, blogging literally changed my life. Isaac, our founder, inspired me with – at the Praxis program, at least a few years back, they would do this as part of the bootcamp. All participants do a 30-day blogging challenge. So as I was following Praxis, I decided I would try that. And I did that four years ago, and it turned into 60 days, and then I actually decided about a year ago to try to make it just a daily habit. And I did like over 300 days in a row. It's just something, really, it creates a sense of creative routine, right? So creativity is not a whim. It's a habit. And then you become someone who is consistent, and that has a lot of signaling power.

And it also can just translate to other endeavors. So that's how I really managed to make my career transition, because my approach on my job hunt was just make sure I do one thing each day to move my job hunt forward. And I learned that skill of sort of daily execution by doing daily blogging challenge. So then I took that exact same mindset. And this is often the sticking point for people, where a lot of people have dreams, they want to feel fulfilled at work, they have a general idea that they want to get a better job or maybe start a business, whatever the case may be. But then life gets in the way, and if you can kind of create systems, this can really produce results over time. What I just did was I bought a notebook, and at the beginning of my job hunt, every day at the end of the day, I would write down the one thing or more that I did that day, whether that was just go looking for job postings for ten minutes, or shoot a pitch video, or create a list of leads as a project for a company. Just trying to every day kind of keep going, and then eventually you'll see a lot of results from it.

**WOODS:** All right, now before I let you go, tell us something about this job hunt course that you guys have just launched.

**BEIN:** Yeah, definitely. So this job hunt course is basically just a distillation of everything that Isaac's been espousing with Praxis, with Crash for the past decade or so, and this whole mindset, this whole sort of mentality of taking ownership and proving your ability to create value and becoming your own credential. And so we just launched this course, and it's just to kind of walk you through from starting from scratch all the way to getting hired.

If you've never created any projects, that's great. You don't know what type of role you want to get into? Maybe you want to change careers and into a startup company, but you're not sure if you want to go to marketing or sales? We're going to walk you through that from the very beginning. We're going to talk about, okay, what role type do you want to pursue? As long as you're not doing stuff you hate, you're going in the right direction, just maybe take our discover quiz, which is on [Crash.co/discover](http://Crash.co/discover), and you'll get a little bit of a bit of feedback on your personality type. And then you maybe decide, okay, I want to try marketing, and then you just kind of start building some momentum. And then we'll walk you through, okay, what are some ideas and action steps to start building that body of work and learning out loud, like I was talking about earlier?

We're also going to give you some – part three of the course, which has five parts, part three is all about discovering opportunities. Oftentimes, we kind of just go apply to whatever job's available. We really talk about where are specific websites and cool jobs boards, and how can you go on Tech Twitter, so to speak, to find opportunities, and then make sure that you're only pursuing those companies that you're really excited about. And then we talk about in part four this whole process of pitching, of learning how to deep dive that company, and creating projects for them, sending that pitch to a decision maker, making the job hunt a sales campaign.

And then the last part is kind of how to keep this mentality going for the rest of your career. That's what's really beautiful about Crash, is it's not just to get that first job, but it's a mentality where you're in the driver's seat of your life. How can you apply that to the job once you get it? And then when you're trying to ascend to the next opportunity, how can you keep that momentum going? So that's the job hunt Crash Course, and pun intended.

**WOODS:** Well, sounds great. And as I say, this is probably the kind of thing that it's helpful people to hear right about now when everybody's obsessed with politics, to remind ourselves that there isn't a whole lot of control you have over that, especially at the national level, but you have a lot of control over your own life if we can take a moment to step back from obsessing over these sorts of things and focusing on ourselves and on the tools that are available to us in this day and age. And that's how we can get ahead, is by keeping our eye on the ball, and keeping our eye on things that we genuinely can improve about ourselves.

So I hope people will check Crash out. Anything that comes from the brain of Isaac Morehouse, whom I've talked to a couple times on the show and I was on his old podcast, is going to be worth your time. So the shortcut link is [TomWoods.com/Crash](http://TomWoods.com/Crash), so go check that out if what we've said interests you, [TomWoods.com/Crash](http://TomWoods.com/Crash). I'll link to it on the show notes page [TomWoods.com/1770](http://TomWoods.com/1770). And Joel, continued good luck to you. Thanks so much.

**BEIN:** Thanks so much, Tom. Really appreciate it.

