

Mayor Francis Suarez – The Miami Elevator Pitch

- Jim: Well, hello everyone. It's Jim O'Shaughnessy with my colleague, Jamie Catherwood, and I am very excited today to have on as my guest, the honorable Francis Suarez, Mayor of Miami. Welcome.
- Mayor Suarez: Thank you so much. It's an honor to be with you.
- Jim: So your activity is kind of becoming a legend, right? I mean, you seem to be everywhere and you are out there pounding the pavement for Miami. Why aren't other mayors getting active on social media and whatnot, because you really stand out?
- Mayor Suarez: I would say a couple of things. I say the first thing is it wasn't planned. It wasn't like I said, "Hey, I'm going to wake up one day and send out this viral tweet and then have this viral month of tweets." It sort of happened all spontaneously. I was home on a Thursday and all of a sudden this tweet comes through my thread of, "Why don't we move Silicon Valley to Miami?" And I simply tweeted at the person, which by the way, became easier with some of the new changes that Twitter made, because we all have some sort of technical limitations. And I just said four words, "How can I help?" And that went viral. I mean, that tweet got 2.3 million impressions. And I think the reason why that's important is because it shows the appetite for receptivity from government in an industry that is both shunned and over tasked.
- Mayor Suarez: And so from my perspective, so that was one part of it. I think the second part of it was why aren't more mayors doing it. And how did this sort of happen? At that point, I realized that I had lightning in a bottle. I had really hit a nerve. And where social media generally for public officials is oftentimes a negative place, a nasty place, I can tell you, James, that the overwhelming response to the tweet and the subsequent tweets were positive, like 90%. And that to me, it spoke to me, it spoke to my psychology. And it fed me, was feeding me, right? So the positivity fed me. And in turn I gave back. I think public officials are generally reluctant and scared, and I was too prior to this moment, to completely open up and express themselves, because they're afraid to say the wrong thing.
- Mayor Suarez: I was tweeting one day till 2:30 in the morning. You know what I mean? Am I going to be criticized for being up so late? I mean, some people tweeting at me from Hong Kong, "Look, he's still going at it. He's still there. He's hanging in there." And at some point, I just basically was like, "Look guys, I'm done. I'm done for today [inaudible 00:06:07]." So I think that vulnerability, that openness, which is a positive thing in most cases, sometimes by elected officials is viewed as a negative because you don't want to say and do the wrong thing.
- Jim: Right. Right. I agree. And it's very refreshing, at least for me, to see a public official being able to interact with people in an honest fashion. And well, now,

we know of course you're trying to sell Miami, but that's good. You should be, right? You're the mayor.

Mayor Suarez: I know. My job is to not only sell Miami as a brand, because I do consider myself a brand ambassador. But I think my job also is... Look, I have a six year old and a two and a half year old. And for me, my question is, what future am I putting in place today that will allow them to have a career here in the United States and here in Miami? And I think what has happened in my generation, if you were a good student, you left Miami to go to an Ivy League or Ivy League caliber school. And then oftentimes, you didn't come back. Right? Because some of the high paying careers and jobs were not in Miami. And so reputationally, we were seen as a place to just sun and fun and maybe a place where you can retire when your career's over. But it wasn't really a place so much where you can create, particularly not on the tech side. And that's something that obviously is changing dramatically. And it's something that I want to change.

Jim: So if you were trying to sell me, so I run an asset management shop, but we're also highly engaged in technology with a new platform that we're offering. And I walked into your office. Give me the bullet points on what you're going to tell me to make me think, wow, I should really think about moving the firm to Miami.

Mayor Suarez: I'll start with the things that you will probably already know, right? You already know that Miami is... This is not a virtual background behind me. This weather is exceptional. And you also know that there's an enormous tax and cost of living differential, if you live in a high tax and high cost states like New York and California. So those are the things that you know. The things that you don't know are, for example, that we produce more African-American Hispanic engineers than anywhere in the country. So from a talent perspective, we are net talent exporters, or have been net exporters for many, many years. So there's this myth that Miami doesn't have enough talent. That's not true. We're providing talent to the rest of the world, and really to the rest of the country. And we've been doing it for multiple decades.

Mayor Suarez: And then I think the third thing that I would mention to you is this moment is becoming a movement. And I think what's happened is that the combination of governments that don't appreciate innovators and builders has created an opening for a city like Miami. And you have a confluence of two things. You have a confluence of tech VCs, and founders that are coming here, which are creating a density point and critical mass that is needed to sustain an ecosystem, a company like yours. And then, you're also getting the PEs and the venture capitalists and the private equity guys and the finance guys from New York that are coming as well. So this is a phenomenon that's bringing two major sources of capital to the city. And by the way, there's a great opportunity to merge those two things because the PE guys oftentimes invest in real estate. They may invest in certain companies, but may not be looking at tech.

Mayor Suarez: So I think what's going to be different about Miami is... That's why we don't necessarily want to be called Silicon Miami or whatever, any version of Silicon Valley, is we're going to have the best and brightest minds from Silicon Valley and the best and brightest capitalist minds from New York, in one place together. That's scary for the kind of gasoline that we have for growth. And then, we have a huge zoning envelope where we have the ability, the capacity to grow within our zoning envelope, 10X, in terms of physical growth. So without any modifications or any variances to our zoning code. So it's very easy to come in and develop something and expand the capacity.

Jim: So what do you think about... So I hate humidity and heat. Okay. So that's a negative for me. Okay, in the summer. And obviously we have air conditioning, right? Singapore wouldn't exist without air conditioning, but what about some other things like... And I'm kind of a novice on this, but hurricanes, tide levels, that kind of stuff. What do you say about that?

Mayor Suarez: Yeah, so let's go first to the heat and humidity, right? So like you said, there's air conditioning and large portion of the time you're in air conditioning. So whether it's in your car or inside, but the other neat thing about the heat of Miami in the summer is unlike New York and unlike California, you can't go in the water in those places. I mean, first of all, I wouldn't go in the water, even if it was warm because of the way it looks. But in Miami, you can go in the water comfortably eight months out of the year. So the heat and humidity, first of all, you get used to it because once you're here, it's something that you get accustomed to just like I presume... Actually, no, you never get accustomed to the cold.

Mayor Suarez: So that's a big differentiator. In terms of hurricanes and climate. Look, I think the City of Miami, what we're doing is we're not climate deniers. We believe that the climate presents engineering challenges that we as a city, like other cities across the country, should deal with. We have a bond program called Miami Forever. It was voter approved. We have \$200 million that we're trying to leverage to create a more climate resilient city. But I'll tell you this, first of all, the little known facts, most people don't know that New York has suffered more hurricane damage in terms of dollar amounts than Miami. People often don't know that. And secondly, what I can tell you is post hurricane Andrew, which was in 1992, we became the most wind resilient city in the planet. This building is a historic building.

Mayor Suarez: I don't know if you can hear that.

Jim: Yep. We can hear.

Mayor Suarez: Those are hurricane impact windows. So every single building in Miami is completely prepared for a hurricane up to 200 miles an hour. The new challenge we have is water, in terms of flooding and things of that nature. And we're dealing with it. Like I said, we have a \$200 million program to deal with it. And I would say by the way, that we're probably the city that's best positioned nationally. And one of the best cities internationally to adapt to climate.

Obviously, California has earthquakes, has wildfires. Those are the things that are very, very hard to plan for and they can be catastrophic. The good thing about hurricanes is we can see them coming. We can get prepared. We had a very active hurricane season last year. We didn't have one hurricane hit the city of Miami. So the last time we had a major hurricane hit us was in 2017.

Mayor Suarez: It wasn't a very windy event. It was sort of a watery event. And the water that came in was from storm surge, which is four to six feet, dissipated in 12 hours. So that was the extent of the discomfort. Hurricane Andrew, which was that big wind event that I talked about was in the 1990s, that was 30 years ago. Look, those who don't want to see Miami succeed are going to counter brand Miami. I get it. I understand, but we're not going to let them do that.

Jim: Interesting. And so on that point, what are your thoughts about like, say people who've lived in Miami forever, right? Old Miami. I have a friend who lives there and has lived there all his life. And he and I were chatting over the weekend and he knew I was going to be interviewing you. He loves Miami, but he expressed a worry that I thought was well-founded, which is, "Oh my God, I'm going to have all you New York assholes down here." I mean, might there be a problem of the new people coming in with very different attitudes?

Mayor Suarez: Look, I think there are always going to be concerns from people on both sides of the political spectrum. I try not to be overly blue team, red team, right? In terms of how I view public policy and solving problems in city voting. But look, my Republican friends that happened to be registered Republican fear that people will come from blue states and that will import their policies and their politics. And what I say to them is look, Cubans, who fled communism in Cuba, are not looking to replicate communism here, right? We're not trying to do that. Why? Because we're traumatized.

Mayor Suarez: So the people that are coming here are traumatized by the way that they've been dealt with by governments. By contrast, my liberal friends and I have many of them are worried that this is going to be a gentrifier, right? We're already experiencing tremendous gentrification in the city because there's really a Renaissance to all cities, to urbanism, right? Because people want to live closer and walk and have all those things, quality of life. So they worry that this is going to be a gentrifier, that this is going to be exclusive instead of inclusive in terms of the movement. And what I say to them is look, again, every person that I've spoken to, every founder, every tech person, they understood-

Mayor Suarez: Every person that I've spoken to, every founder, every tech person, they understand that there's a reputational issue, whether it's true or false, there's a reputational issue, and they all want to hit it head on. They're not denying it. When we had Amazon, when we were pitching Amazon and we were in the top 20 with Amazon, the first thing that Amazon said is, "Look, we understand the reputation that tech has. We want to get involved in the ecosystem educationally. We want to get involved in trying to create equity and opportunity."

Mayor Suarez: Frankly, it's a lot better when the private sector decides they want to get involved. I think that this is a wonderful moment for us as a city to recreate a new model that maybe other cities across the United States and across the world will emulate as integrating a new industry in a way that doesn't leave anybody behind.

Jim: How much do you think that the pandemic and lockdown has helped you? I've seen lots of trends that were nascent and they got sped up by a factor of 10. Do you think that's part of the process here?

Mayor Suarez: I do. I think it's a 10X too. I like the 10X thought on it. You have two phenomenon going on. You have one phenomenon which is that, and the governor's taking a lot of heat for keeping the state open vis-à-vis other places, but the fact that we're open and other places are closed has created a huge opportunity. Then I think the second piece is the fact that we continue to attract more and more people because there's a remote capability.

Mayor Suarez: Maybe pre-pandemic 10% of the people were having remote teleconferences or working remotely. Now it's 90%. I spend a huge part of my day on Zoom meetings, or on Microsoft Teams or whatever the platform is, having virtual meetings. It's incredibly efficient. I think that has changed the dynamic, and it has made it so that you can live where you want to live, not where you have to live. Then when you throw in all these other things, you reach what Malcolm Gladwell describes as the tipping point, where you're like, "That's it. I'm done. I don't want to pay any more taxes. I don't want to pay more for school. I don't want to pay more for rent, or for a mortgage than I have to."

Mayor Suarez: You know what I mean? I don't want to be in the cold anymore. All these things line up, and now since everybody's doing it, and I hate to sound like trendy, like everyone's doing it, now it becomes safe. Because now it's no longer a big risk of what if I go down to Miami and I'm the only one there. You know what I mean? How am I going to build my business? To your point, if you were coming down to Miami, that would be the argument that we'd be making.

Jim: Interesting. Do you get flack from other mayors?

Mayor Suarez: Actually, so far, no. I'll tell you what I've gotten, which is interesting. I've actually gotten calls from other mayors like, "Hey, we love what you're doing. We would love to get on board." I've gotten calls from mayors from Troy, Michigan, who reached out to me. I have the Mayor of Boca. I'm having lunch with the Mayor of Boca and Fort Lauderdale. They said, "Hey, we want to be a part of this." Actually, most of the stuff on mayors that I've gotten calls about have been completely positive.

Mayor Suarez: Listen, I'm friends with a tremendous amount of mayors. I'm friends with the Mayor of San Francisco. I'm friends with the Mayor of LA. They're good friends. I'm going to be the president of the US Conference of Mayors, so all the mayors nationally, beginning either June or January of next year. I have wonderful relationships with my mayor colleagues. This movement in Miami, for me, I've tried to stay away from criticizing either mayors or their cities, because I know how hard it is to be a mayor. I know it's really easy to be a Monday morning quarterback, and be critical.

Mayor Suarez: I don't think, by the way, criticism gets you anywhere. They're my friends, so I don't want to criticize them. Now, if they called me and asked me for advice, I would also give it to them.

Jim: That's fantastic. I think what attracted me to this whole thing, and we did hear it all on Twitter, which is amazing, is the fact that it's sad for someone my age, I'm 60, but it's kind of sad to have a proactive, pro-business government person anywhere. I love it, and it seems to me that that needs to be the future. I live in the New York City metropolitan area, and I love culture. I love ...

Mayor Suarez: Sorry to hear that.

Jim: ... the museums. I love music. I was the chair of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. Are you also making efforts on that front?

Mayor Suarez: Absolutely. I think one of the things that has created this moment, we talk about the "how can I help" tweet, which was obviously this watershed moment. The truth is, we've been building this ecosystem for 10 years. One of the things we've invested heavily in is art and culture, heavily. We have the Performing Arts Center. We're now looking at renovating two more facilities, the Coconut Grove Playhouse, and also our Miami Marine Stadium, which is on the national historic registry, which is an outdoor marine concert venue, where you can do symphonies, and have orchestras. Incredible venue, unlike anything in the world.

Mayor Suarez: Also, our art community has just exploded. I'm sure you're aware of Art Basel which is probably the largest art festivals in the world, here in Miami. We also have a growing and growing private and public collection. We have the Pérez Art Museum. We have so many galleries from Rubell, to de la Cruz, to the Contemporary Art Museum. We have so many different galleries that, frankly, if you're an art aficionado, you know Paris and New York, but Miami is right up there with you. You're not sacrificing anything by coming here in terms of quality of life or arts and culture that you would experience in a place like New York.

Jim: What keeps you up at night? You're very proactive. You're doing a really good job, but what worries you?

Mayor Suarez: I think what worries me are the things that worry any mayor. You want to have a safe and secure city. This last year that we just ended, December 31st we were down 24% in crime. The year before that we had the lowest homicide rate since 1954. We want to have a safe city. Obviously when you see these civil disturbances and some of the things that happened in the Capitol, we want to make sure none of that happens here in Miami. Even the bombing in Nashville, those are things that keep you up at night is safety and security, making sure your city is safe.

Mayor Suarez: By the way, safety and security is an economic issue. People will go, whether they're from South America, or from anywhere in the world, they will go to places where they feel safe. I do think that that's more than just keeping my residents safe. That is also a selling point that I have for the rest of the country.

Mayor Suarez: The other thing that keeps me up at night, obviously, is the concept of we have a brand. Miami forever is our resiliency brand. We want to make sure that we have a Miami that's here forever, for your family, for my children, for my unborn grandchildren, and their unborn grandchildren. There's a second brand that we have, which is Miami, and it's a play on words, Miami forever, Miami for everyone. We want to have a Miami that's here for everyone. That is a bigger challenge.

Mayor Suarez: We don't believe in big government. We don't believe that governments should control, like what happened in Cuba, where communism basically took away private property rights, and took away freedom of the press. We believe that we have a role to play in the equity discussion. We think that if we have the best educational system possible, that every child in our city will have an opportunity to thrive and succeed in this new economy.

Mayor Suarez: We want to make sure they have the digital tools. We want to make sure they have broadband connectivity. Those are things that we want to do. That keeps me up at night, because I'm blessed. I was very blessed. My dad who was a immigrant, was the ninth of 14 kids, came to this country with nothing. I was the son of a mayor, so I was blessed. I grew up in that sense in a privileged way. There are so many kids in my community that don't get to grow up that way, that do experience poverty, and I want this movement to be something that gives them a higher probability of an opportunity to be successful and to provide for their families, and to create a career.

Jim: One of the jokes in my business is always be closing. In other words-

Mayor Suarez: ABC.

Jim: ABC.

Mayor Suarez: Personal. I get it.

Jim: What is your most successful ABC? Is there a line or a couple of lines that you use that you?

Mayor Suarez: I'll tell you a funny one. A funny one that the current president of the US Conference of Mayors, who's my dear friend, Greg Fischer, from Louisville says, "Follow the dollar." He says follow the dollar. He says that's the business term is you follow the dollar. I think for me, customer service, accessibility, welcomingness, those are things that ... My wife is in hospitality. My wife is an event planner, so from a hospitality perspective I think of myself as the concierge of a high-end hotel, that wants to make sure that people come here and their experience from A to Z is a phenomenal experience, so that they want to come back and never want to leave.

Jim: Fantastic. I think if nothing else, mister mayor, you are demonstrating to other public officials that just a little positivity, a little optimism, and people are going to really listen to you. I think personally that that's great.

Mayor Suarez: I think it's missing in a modern day world today. It's so sad, actually, that we're so conditioned to turn on the TV and see, like they say if it bleeds, it leads. You know what I mean? Even in our political discourse, even what I call the channelization of society, where if you're a Republican you watch these stations, if you're a Democrat you watch these stations. They're driving us apart, and they're doing it in a way that's negative.

Mayor Suarez: It's not even like they're driving us apart through two positive agendas. Will say, "Hey, if you're Republican you believe in all of these great things. If you're a Democrat you believe in all of these great things. Let's have this great debate, and see who wins that great debate of positive things we want to accomplish." No, it's all negative, negative, negative. I think one of the things I learned, James, is there is a space, a big space, almost an unoccupied runway for positivity and somebody who wants to engage on that on those parameters. Social media allows us to do it, which is incredible that more people don't.

Jim: You're thinking like a founder, I think. You're finding a space, you're finding an underserved market, and you're filling that space. I personally think that's great. Now, we know that your time was very limited. Your wonderful aide, Otto, prewarned us. We always ask our guests the final question, which is what I'm going to ask you.

Jim: We make you emperor of the world for a day. Now, there are rules. You can't kill anybody. You can't round people up that you don't like, but you can suggest two things that when you suggest them it's almost like people are like, "Yeah. Of course we'll do that." What two things would you promulgate if you had that magic ability?

Mayor Suarez: I think the first thing is that I would challenge everyone to find a nongovernmental way to give everyone an opportunity to be successful. I think

we have not figured that out as a society. We need to figure that out. I think the second thing that I would do is I would say that we need to have the least amount of government necessary to do its function. Give back all that capital, give back all that money to the private sector, to the people who are daring and dreaming and innovating and investing and creating jobs.

Mayor Suarez: Let us do the little things that we do, the core competencies right, and let the private sector do the rest.

Jim: Those are two good items, Mr. Mayor. Thank you so much for your time. We know it's valuable. I hope to meet you when I'm next in Miami.

Mayor Suarez: Anytime.

Jim: That would be great. Any closing final thoughts that you want our listeners to think about?

Mayor Suarez: I really want to thank you for helping us tell our Miami story. One of the things that I've learned in this process is, and maybe other cities feel similarly, we have not been great at telling our story. We've let other people define us, and let the narrative be created by other people. That's one of the things that I want to change. I want our narrative to be told by us. That narrative is that we are a place where you can create, where you can innovate, where there is talent, where there is critical mass, and where you can scale and create companies that impact the world and how we live.

Jim: You have an excellent elevator pitch, mister mayor.

Mayor Suarez: Thank you, been refining it for years.

Jim: Thank you so much for joining us. Very interesting. Love seeing proactive government working hand-in-hand, trying to make the community a better place. I always applaud, whatever your party, I'm going to applaud people that do that.

Mayor Suarez: Thank you so much. Have a good one.

Jim: Thank you for joining us.

Mayor Suarez: You too.

Jim: And for listeners, hang on, because we normally have much longer periods with our guests. The mayor was incredibly gracious to give us the time that he did, but he has a jam-packed schedule, so what follows is Jamie and I sort of discussing the implications of this, enjoy.

Jim: Mister Catherwood.

Jamie: That was great.

Jim: What do you think?

Jamie: I thought it was great.

Jim: If you are listening to this, Jamie and I decided to leave this part in. If you're not, you'll never know about it. We have the power. I must admit, you know how I feel about most politicians, right?

Jamie: Yeah.

Jim: This is like he's coming from a different place. Do you think?

Jamie: No. I definitely think so. I can't remember seeing a mayor Twitter account infiltrate my timeline as much as I have in these last few weeks. It's been for a positive reason. It's been interesting to see and watch it all unfold. I feel like we've seen it play out, this just burst onto the scene of some Twitter account, but it's never a government employee. It's been fascinating.

Jim: What do you think about the risks? Because one of the things, I didn't want to ask him because obviously he's not going to answer it. I would if I was the mayor, but what do you think about the risks of the Twitter mob coming for him on some particular thing?

Jamie: I feel like it's bound to happen, but I think that he has such a net positive following, that I feel like he can ride it out. It's not like he's taking a hard stance on a divisive issue or anything. He's just trying to get people to move to Miami, because he thinks it's a great city for people to relocate their businesses to. I don't know how much someone could ...

Jamie: I don't know how much someone could fault him or get angry with him.

Jim: I agree. But, we've seen a lot in the last, let's call it 12 to 18 months. And one of the reasons why I want, as you know, because we discussed it, one of the reasons I wanted to have him on was... And this is the part that I want to think more about because I'm not sure what I absolutely think about it. But he's almost an anomaly.

Jim: And by that, I mean the government aversed people and the private sector that provides the jobs, et cetera, it has seemed to me, at least in maybe the last 10 years, that that has become such an adversarial relationship. And that seems like a big... And you're the history guy here, right? That seems like a huge departure. Or am I just wrong?

Jamie: No, I think you're generally right. I think the only other mayor that comes to mind, and it's even almost more of an anomaly because it's such a random city,

is Pete Buttigieg in South Bend. Why did everyone know who the mayor of South Bend was? And he had like his own kind of movement, very different than this example.

Jamie: But in fact, that was another good, recent example of a mayor kind of, I don't know, changing the norm, and doing things differently. And leading to widespread kind of recognition for what he's doing.

Jamie: Because I wouldn't say my mom's side of the family is all from South Bend. But besides that, I feel like most people probably didn't even know where... Well, you obviously do because of Notre Dame, but I think that's quite random. But another good example of mayors trying to change up what the norm is, and make change.

Jim: Yeah. So look, I applaud whether you're a Democrat or Republican, or an independent, if you can get on board with a positive message and work with people, I think that the net there is going to be positive for you. But Walter Russell Mead is a writer who I've read over the years. And 10 years ago he was very prescient because he was writing about the blue social model versus the red social model.

Jim: And one of his points was, I can't remember because I haven't read them for a while. I think he was in the blue camp. I'm not sure. I'll check that and we'll remove this if I'm wrong. But he was, again, a man with power. But he was just looking at it analytically like we would at OSAM, right?

Jim: He wasn't looking things emotionally. He wasn't looking at them in any way, but just very practically. Like Jack Willoughby when he wrote the story in Barron's that burst the internet bubble in 2000. And how he did it, he didn't do it with any great talking points.

Jim: All he did was look at all of the company's burn rates, and publish when they would be out of money. And bam, the illusion shattered. And we all know the rest is history. So anyway, was talking about the fact that many of the big cities of course, were in New York.

Jim: So New York, very much so, but also Los Angeles, Chicago, etc, had made deals with say unions, for example, Government Unions. I think one of the reasons why FDR, one of the most liberal presidents we've ever had was opposed to them. Was they made deals with the unions that they're not going to be able to keep, especially if capital is his fleet of foot.

Jim: I mean, it seems to me that geography binds us, almost not at all these days, right? Because even at OSAM, I think we're a good example. We're willing to hire people from wherever, as long as they can do good work. Right? You don't live in Connecticut, for example.

Jamie: Yeah.

Jim: What are your thoughts? Do you think that this is actually kind of a story that is going to unfold regardless of the characters involved? Like Mayor Suarez, or do you think that guys like him are driving it faster, or it's going to happen anyway?

Jamie: I think it will happen anyway, but I think that there will definitely be people like the Mayor in Miami who are accelerating it, and maybe forcing some of that change to occur primarily in their cities. Like if there's going to be hotspots where it occurs more than others. But I think broadly, like the paper we wrote with Chris Meredith, the Value's Dead Paper, in the '20s, looked at how, like the automobile changed everything, just even outside of the auto industry.

Jamie: Because suddenly you had retail stores, and like retail centers, because people didn't have to only order by catalog, or didn't have to go just within cities. People could drive. And that changed how cities were laid out. It led to the rise of suburbs, but it was just greater mobility.

Jamie: And I feel like with the pandemic today, it's the same kind of thing where it'll play out in a lot of ways we don't foresee, because it's something new. But suddenly when you don't have to live in the city that your work is in, like that's going to have so many changes on society that I don't think we can even really begin to imagine how that's all going to play out.

Jamie: The other interesting thing that I wanted to bring up was that I read a book called Bubble In The Sun this year about the 1920s Florida land boom. Which also followed the Spanish flu. There wasn't a direct link. But it obviously followed World War I. There was so much pent up demand in the roaring '20s. But Miami was basically built in that period.

Jamie: And the way that they built up all these kind of like communities and islands, and a lot of the places that we love to visit today, it was all built in this kind of period of pent up demand in the '20s. And I think it's just interesting to see that 100 years later, this kind of, again, mass movement to Miami and it becoming a business, and cultural hub again.

Jim: Yeah. It's interesting. Of course the famous Metcalf network effect, is going parabolic now, I think. Because pre-pandemic, I don't know that we would have considered, let's say somebody who lives in Mumbai. Right? I don't know whether we would consider hiring them. And now I know we would, if their work product was excellent.

Jim: But there's also a caution there, right? So it used to be that to get the job, you had to demonstrate your willingness more strongly than you do now. And by that, I mean, you had to, let's say you got a job from and you lived in Baton Rouge or somewhere in Louisiana, we'd probably want you to move here in the past.

Jim: And now you don't have to do that. So I think it's great for hyper talented people. I wonder what the knock on effect is for, just quite frankly, the people, Douglas Adams always made fun of; kind of middle-management, people who believe in face time, I guess would be what I say. What do you think?

Jamie: Yeah, no, I definitely think there's going to be downsides to this sudden increase in mobility and freedom because if you join a company remotely and you might go to the office, maybe once a year, it's going to be very hard to foster and build strong relationships with your colleagues.

Jamie: And I feel like that will definitely have some negative effects, but it's just the question of how much does the access to talent, and more wider reaching areas offset that downside of not having as maybe a strong connection and relationship with those remote employees.

Jim: Yeah. I think that that's a really important thing that not a lot of people are focusing on, and that is a lot of stuff, a lot of ideas, a lot of inventions, a lot of things happened by accident. And the humans, look, we are domesticated primates according to Robert Wilson; but we are also gregarious.

Jim: In other words, we're very social. We're a very social species. And so I think for example, I have a friend who is a big wig at Citibank and she was telling me how that they basically don't think they're getting on planes anymore other than to celebrate like a closing. And so, I am thinking about it.

Jim: Obviously, I don't want to be prematurely certain about anything. But I think if we lose that sort of difficult to define, but you know what it is, interaction between people that, who knows. But, we have a lot of employees, yourself included, who you're here enough. We know you well. But do you think that by not being here every day, something is lost?

Jamie: I mean, I definitely miss the office and the kind of camaraderie between employees, and OSAM is a small firm, so I think we can replicate that remotely better than most companies. But if I was at a massive corporation or something, I feel like there would be a lot more negative effects of the pandemic, and remote working kind of indefinitely. I think there is something to the office.

Jamie: At least, some kind of regular cadence, like whether it's monthly or for me, it was every other week I was up in the office. But I think just something where you're able to meet face-to-face and develop trust, and stronger relationships with your employees and colleagues, I think that's definitely important.

Jim: Yeah. I think that again, evolution has made us prefer, especially if we're viewing it as a risky thing. Right? So if you're hiring somebody new and you're the owner of the company, obviously you think of that, you're happy if you're getting great talent. But you also assess the risk of that particular person or people that you're hiring.

Jim: And there's where things like micro-expressions, and body language, and all of that often speaks volumes. Not always, of course, because almost nothing happens always. But I mean, maybe one of the ways that people figure that out is that people start saying, "Yeah we think we want you for this job, but we got to meet you first."

Jim: Do you think new customs... I guess that's what I'm asking. Do you think that there's going to be out of... And we have to be mindful of recency bias, because we all suffer from it. And we're talking about something unstuck from historical trends, so to speak. But do you think-

Jamie: Yeah, I think that-

Jim: Yeah. Go ahead.

Jamie: I think that there will be changes. I am definitely in the camp that in three years, I don't think society is going to be changed permanently, like a lot of people, maybe less than now. But at the beginning of the pandemic, people were just saying like, "Literally everything you know about the world since you've existed is done forever, and everything's going to be different."

Jamie: If you just read history at all, and you look at all the events that have happened, and how fairly similar everything has happened after that, like some things will change, but like society is not just changed forever permanently.

Jamie: And I think there will be new customs and stuff to kind of address some of the problems with new things, like increase in remote employees. Like maybe it is the custom becomes that all interviews for remote employees will still be done in person, because you need to kind of suss out the person and their character and everything, because that's harder to do over a Zoom call.

Jamie: But maybe after that, most companies are then more comfortable with the remote work permanently for some employees. Because they've met in person and feel more confident that the individual they're hiring is a reputable person, and they can trust their character.

Jim: Yeah. Well-

Jamie: Or, Zoom is going to add some AI feature that reads micro-expressions and pings you an alert saying, "Employee seems uncomfortable. Employee seems angry."

Jim: Well, that's kind of scary. That sounds like a Black Mirror episode, right?

Jamie: I feel like we're probably not that far off.

Jim: Well, I have the new Oculus2 and my daughter, who's a comedian Lael said that, "When we get to Oculus five, we will never see you in the real world again, dad."

Jim: She's always like, "I am your last tether to reality, dad, I'm not giving up on you." But Hey, you know what I mean? It does not take a genius... I don't know whether you've played around in the new Oculus. But it does not take a genius to understand what Oculus 10 is going to look like. Right? Oculus 10, you and I are going to be looking at each other, because we are going to be here virtually.

Jamie: Yeah.

Jim: And again, a lot of people get afraid of that kind of stuff. I love it. I think I've always loved like technology and innovation, and like what we're doing with Canvas, for example. The future belongs to those who can customize. And, what's interesting is from someone sitting at my age, 60, I remember all of the promises that were made in the late '90s and early 2000s.

Jim: That were made in the late '90s and early 2000s. And what's happened is, they're actually coming true now, right?

Jamie: Yeah.

Jim: Back then, we were all so blinded by what we thought was this cool new technology, but it needed a long time to actually catch up with what the marketers were saying. Of course, there's going to be downsides, there is to everything in life, but I personally think we might be going into kind of a golden age, not just for technology, but for learning, for a lot of things, because I do think that what the pandemic has done, is it has offered people space to think about everything, right? You know, education right now. Look, two of my kids graduated from Notre Dame, and my other daughter graduated from Yale, they all went to great schools. But there is that craze for certification. I don't know. You're young, you just got out of school, what do you think? Do you think that that can change, or do you think we're always going to want the seal of approval from some institution?

Jamie: I think you're asking the wrong person, because that's one of my biggest pet peeves on Twitter, is all the Cancel College Bros. College has changed. I still think, no matter what, I think maybe there's going to be some lessening of the importance, but for the average person, I still think that if you're going to a job interview and you don't have a college diploma and every other person on there does have a college diploma, which is the easiest resume to... Every job application you want to apply for has in the requirements Bachelor's degree, whatever. I think sometimes in the world of VC Twitter, and Tech Twitter, and Finance Twitter, we can see a lot of examples of companies being forward-thinking and saying that, "We don't care anymore about that," et cetera. But by

and large, 99% of the jobs that most people are applying for are going to require a college degree. So I don't know.

Jamie: I think it's also interesting that the people who are always saying college is useless always say that after they have the... They can say that after having their own college degrees, so it doesn't impact them anymore.

Jim: Right.

Jamie: Like, "I did it. So..."

Jim: Well, I'm-

Jamie: "No one else should get it. It's a waste of time. But I don't have to face the repercussions of not having one."

Jim: Yeah. Well, I mean, I'm one of those guys. I got my degree because my mother would have been so bitterly disappointed if I didn't. And I was doing work at a younger age and was just really eager to get into the business of life. And as you know, I think that 95% of your wisdom and knowledge comes if you are curious and continue to learn. I think that there's this idea that, "Yeah, I got my college degree. Well, that's done. Now I'm going to watch Netflix and chill." I don't think that's going to work in the world, going forward. Right?

Jamie: No.

Jim: So I think I agree with your idea that the anti-college bros, as you put it, yeah if you're the founder of a company, sure, you don't need a degree. Bill Gates doesn't have one, but he went to Harvard, you know?

Jamie: Yeah.

Jim: There's all sorts of people like that. But I mean more, do you think that a reputable college or university could develop a program that was essentially all virtual, and the quality of education didn't decline?

Jamie: I don't think so. Because I feel like by and large, the professors would not want to do everything virtually. I feel like they like that in-person. I don't have data backing that up, but I feel like I haven't heard many professors saying that they love doing all their classes through Zoom to the screen of 20 squares.

Jim: Yeah. Well, if we leave this in, listeners, this is fun because I'm the youngest old person, and Jamie is the oldest young person. That's why we get along, and so sympatico. So, yeah, I think you're probably right that some kind of independent third-party certification, however that is done. Well, look at our industry, the CFA. When I was young, they virtually begged me to take a CFA from them, because no one knew what the certified financial analyst was. And chops to

them. Their marketing people made it, well, it is a requirement in Canada. We manage money up there, as you know. You have to have a CFA to be a portfolio manager. They had to grandfather me in. Honestly, I can't remember, I wish I would've gotten a copy of it. But some kind of-

Jamie: You sure that's not Canadian financial analyst?

Jim: Yeah no, I'm sure it's certified financial analysts, but they did some kind of proclamation that let me continue to manage money for our great partner RBC, which we've had that partnership for more than 20 plus years. And you know, now it's kind of like a Rite of passage. So yeah, I tend to be skeptical about those kinds of things. And by that, I mean, great, go get your PhD, whatever, but it's kind of like, don't tell me, show me, right?

Jamie: Yeah.

Jim: If you're hoping to, to ride along on your credentials, you're going to be sorely upset. I think over the next-

Jamie: Yeah. I agree with that.

Jim: Yeah. Because it's just like it, we are moving into a very different time where work quality, work product sort of speak for themselves. I mean, you are a great example here. Right? You got your job essentially through your grit, determination, but Twitter. But you also like, and this is the part that people miss often, you also got up at whatever, four o'clock in the morning because Patrick agreed to have lunch with you because he thought you were here, you were actually in Washington. So I think if you combine those two, right? So in other words, a very kind of determined nature with the ability to now show the world, your work, with Investor Amnesia is a great example. I think that things are going to go really pretty well for you, and if you've not that I think things are going to go much more difficultly.

Jamie: Yeah. Thank you. First of all. But, yeah I definitely agree with you. I mean, you're talking to a guy who was applying to finance jobs with a three-year bachelor's degree from an English University in History, so my talk about the Cancel College Bros, I'm definitely the prime example of that's a waste of money, don't spend money on that. But I still think that my history degree was invaluable, and I use all of the tools I learned there to do everything I do now. It's all information gathering, synthesizing, and creating a narrative, whether it's factor decile spreads, or narratives and stats from the 19th century. But yeah, I think that it's pairing whatever skills you have, whether it's the actual knowledge you gained at university or the skills you learned at university, with the kind of networking and determination that will allow you to get places, rather than just saying, "I got a good degree from a good university. Hire me."

Jim: Yeah. Well, my degree is in economics, because I had a few more credits there than I did in history, so I mean. And when young people ask me what they should, I do not tell them to take finances and undergrad. I think study history, Patrick has a degree in philosophy, Notre Dame, and tell you what, maybe a couple of decades ago, people would be like the whole, the graduate one word plastics and they would say, "Philosophy, Oh, that's going to do really well for you." But honestly, in this world, it's going to. It's going to do very well, because if you know how to think and put together an argument and, or a hypothesis or a thesis that can be tested, you're in better shape. If you know history and you're young, like you, you are not going to fall into a lot of the traps that people who are ignorant of history fall into. If you understand behavioral psychology or evolutionary psychology, you're going to be much better situated than somebody who has their undergraduate degree, let me stress that, in economics or finance, like me.

Jamie: That was fun.

Jim: Yeah. Bye.