

*Borne the Battle*

*Episode # 225*

Jack Carr, Navy Veteran, Former SEAL/Sniper, New York Times Bestselling Author

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/83415/borne-battle-episode-225-jack-carr-navy-veteran-former-seal-sniper-new-york-times-bestselling-author/>

(Text Transcript Follows)

[00:00:00] Music

### **[00:00:05] Opening Monologue:**

**Tanner Iskra (TI):** Aw, yeah, let's get it. Monday, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021. *Borne the Battle* brought to you by the Department of Veteran Affairs, the podcast that focuses on inspiring veteran stories and puts a highlight on important resources, offices, and benefits for our veterans. I am your host, Marine Corps veteran, Tanner Iskra. We are back. You have been following the podcast for a while. Yes, this is new music. What you're hearing is the song *Machine Gunner*, courtesy of the non-profit Operation Song. And it was written by Marine Veteran Mick McElhenny, Nashville song writer Jason Sever and Mykal Duncan.

\*Machine Gunner, song lyrics\*

And it is our new anthem for 2021. Now, I was not a machine gunner, but I think it's got a lot in the lyrics that many can identify with, and I don't know. It's got a great vibe. Hope you had a great holiday season. Got a lot to catch up on. Got to say you all have been great over the hiatus and supporting the podcast. And as we started the year on January 1<sup>st</sup> and January 2<sup>nd</sup>, we were in the top 20 in our category in Apple Podcast. And you did that with your listens, your ratings, your reviews, and with your subscriptions. So, thank you. And if you are new to the podcast, welcome to the show. Before we getting to responding to reviews, I got to let you all know it's the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary where all 5 military branches joined a coalition to push out Saddam Hussein's forces from Kuwait in support of Operation Desert Storm. This entire month, VA will profile these veterans and tell their stories in honor of their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Some are already out there on [blogs.va.gov](https://www.blogs.va.gov). [Link: <https://www.blogs.va.gov/>] There are a lot of stories. From our Veteran of The Day series to a story about the chocolate chip uniforms to what the coasties were doing to some summaries on some VA benefits and resources that are unique to those veterans. So, if you get some time, check them out on

blogs.va.gov and just type in Desert Storm in the search bar. The first link will be a page that has all the links to the stories and resources. Shoot. I'll just say the URL. It's easy enough. It's [blogs.va.gov/vantage/309-years-desert-storm](https://www.blogs.va.gov/Vantage/30-years-desert-storm/). [Link to the Vantage Point Desert Storm webpage: <https://www.blogs.va.gov/Vantage/30-years-desert-storm/>]. Received some ratings and two new reviews during our hiatus. Thank you for that. The first one is from Angela Simonsen. Says, "Five Stars. Host is great." Why, thank you very much. "Tanner is a great host. Fellow Marine. No surprise. I honestly thought this podcast was going to be VA bureaucracy talk, but it's actually very interesting personal stories of fellow veterans. Thank you for sharing these." Angela, as Marines, you know we hate bureaucracy, and I will do my best to keep it out of the podcast. This is for you, for me, and any other veterans looking for that something that we're missing when we took off the uniform. It's also a way for me to explore what the VA has to offer because man it's huge and to let you know what I found out. So, welcome to Borne the Battle, and I hope you stick around and continue to give us feedback. The second review is from Buzz Hazmat. "5 stars. Helpful, clear, succinct information delivered in a pace and tone to convey that information, but not put one to sleep." Thank you, I guess. "The one critique is that in some parts it could be quicker. The pause between phrases could be less. Otherwise, very good. Thanks." Buzz Hazmat, I appreciate the feedback. I've also been told that I talk too fast on here as well. And I'm glad that you like the info that is . . . provided. As always, if you like what we put together every week, please consider smashing that subscribe button and then, even if you are listening on a different platform, leaving a review and or a rating on Apple Podcast. In doing so, you'll be able to help push this podcast up in the algorithms giving more veterans the chance to catch the information provided not only in the interviews, but in the benefit breakdown episodes and in the news release.

As for news releases, a lot did get released during the hiatus. You can find them all by typing in VA press releases in your internet search engine of choice. You will either find our press releases or Virginia's at the top. Either way, we're one the first two up there. Click, learn, and read about what's going on in VA. For here on the show, we're not going to get too deep into all the – to the news releases, we're just going to hit you with the titles for some of the ones that pertain to you. So, since we've been on hiatus, US Department of Veterans Affairs announced recently the formal launch of 1-800-MYVA-411. And if you want to take the letters out, the numbers are 1- 800-698-2411. It is a single access point for all VA contact centers. When dialing 1-800-MYVA-411, callers have the option of pressing zero to be

immediately connected with a customer service agent to answer questions or to provide a warm hand off to an appropriate VA expert.

Okay. The second one is titled VA and the American Lung Association have partnered to help veterans diagnosed with lung cancer. The third one is the VA welcome kit has been updated to include the addition of 10 quick start guides and care giver resources. VA has also resumed overpay notifications while continuing to offer relief options to veterans. Over payments were deferred in 2020 to offer financial relief due to COVID19. In the news release there are options to submit request or call the debt management center directly. We've had a couple of episodes also in our Borne the Battle archives that talk about the debt management center and the relief options that they have. And finally—and I'm putting a couple news releases together—VA has administered over 146,000 COVID vaccine doses at over 120 sites. The sites are listed in the most recent news release about COVID vaccinations. That's what's been going on here at the VA for the last few weeks. The direct URL to read all these news releases is [va.gov/opa/pressrel](https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel) p-r-e-s-s-r-e-l All one word. [Link to the news releases: <https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/>].

Alright, so we have a great first guest for 2021. If you're an avid podcast listener or watched the news from time to time, you might have seen or heard from him already. He is a navy veteran, and for over his 20 years in navel special warfare he transitioned from an enlisted from an enlisted seal sniper to a junior officer leading an assault and sniper teams in Iraq and Afghanistan to a platoon commander practicing counter insurgency in the southern Philippines to commanding a special operations task unit in the most Iranian influenced section of southern Iraq throughout the tumultuous drawdown of US forces. He is now a New York times bestselling author and an avid outdoors man. A has recently had one of his books optioned by Chris Pratt to be an upcoming Amazon prime series. He is Navy SEAL Veteran Jack Carr. Enjoy.

[00:07:40] Music

## **[00:07:45] Interview**

(TI): And we are live. Welcome, Jack Carr, to Borne the Battle.

(JC): Thank you so much for having me on. It's an honor to be here.

(TI): Absolutely. So, for a while when I became host of this podcast, I didn't have many authors on the show. And then we had authors like Dayle Dye and Jeff Struecker who are veterans that are known for other things but happened to write professionally on the side. And then we got into G. Michael Hopf who is a self-made Amazon best seller in the post-apocalyptic genre. He got signed by Penguin Random House and now, you know, within one week, I'm sitting down with at least two authors, you and John Del Vecchio, author of *The 13<sup>th</sup> Valley*. And no, authors are some of my favorite interviews because to me authors – they're the origin of a lot of mediums and storytelling. A lot of times you don't have movies, movie series, TV shows, video games, YouTube clips without really good story tellers that are writers in the beginning.

(JC): Yeah. Yeah. And they're all connected. And everybody kind of comes up a different way in this. I know as I was from a very young age just drawing to reading because my mom was librarian, and we were surrounded by books. So, that was just a natural part of growing up. She really instilled a love of reading in us, and at the same time I was drawn to – drawn to film. So, growing up in the – primarily in the – in the 80s, of course I was watching things and reading things that pertained to what I wanted to do later in life, which was serve my country in the military, specifically as a SEAL. So, I tried to read books that had protagonists with backgrounds that I wanted to have in real life one day. And a lot of those back then were by guys like Tom Clancy; Nelson DeMille; David Morell; A. J. Quinnell; J. C. Pollock; Marc Olden and these guys had protagonists typically back them with backgrounds in Vietnam either in special forces or as SEALs or attached to the CIA or something like that. So, I just loved those kinds of novels and knew that after my time in uniform that I would write novels that I was enjoying like that, so. So, it's all connected and then you get to see some of the adaptations on TV and in movies from things that you've read or maybe you discovered them through the movie and then find the book, so it's all kind of interconnected.

(TI): I appreciate the medium, but I haven't read fiction since *The Red Wall* series when I was in middle school.

(JC): *Red Wall*. I don't know that one.

(TI): Yeah. It's a bunch of animals that they—you know. I don't know. It's Brian Jacques. And it was a bunch of—. He converted animals into like medieval characters.

(JC): Oh, interesting.

(TI): What do you call it? The badgers were like the big brutes. And the rats were the nefarious bad guys, and the mice were the heroes of the story. It was – it was—. I—. But that was a series that I was actually dedicated to, but I have not been dedicated to a series since. I've tried to get into a couple. Now John, he wrote *The 13<sup>th</sup> Valley*. Did you get a chance to read that when you were younger?

(JC): I have not read that.

(TI): I'll send you the link. Apparently, that was a big Vietnam book back in the 80s.

(JC): Oh. Interesting.

(TI): Yeah. I thought there might have been a link there. And he had actually, you know. He was with the I think the 101<sup>st</sup> as a combat correspondent, so.

(JC): Oh. Interesting. I have a pretty solid collection of books both fiction and non, so I'm surprised that I haven't heard that one or read of that one. It sounds like—especially if it came out in the 80s. That was right—. That was right in my wheelhouse.

(TI): That's what I was thinking! So, Tom Clancy. What other 80s authors were influential to you?

(JC): Yeah. David Morell for sure. So, he created the character, Rambo, back in 1972s and he wrote a trilogy. He starts with *Brotherhood of the Rose*, and he wrote that first one in the early 80s. And then the second one is *Fraternity of the Stone*, and then *The League of the Night and Fog* is the third one. But really, he took the best elements of US spy fiction, which at the time was like your Ludlum, with the best of UK spy fiction, which was like John le Carré, and so he combined those to really move the genre forward. So, *Brotherhood of the Rose* was a very significant book for me because one, I loved it so much and knew that I was going to try to write novels like that at some point in my life, and then also because there was one sentence in there. Now, the two protagonists are army special forces guys, but there is one sentence in there that talks about SEALs. And that really cemented—. I already knew that I was going – I was going down that path but having like the creator of *Rambo* have this sentence in there about SEALs really

cemented me on my path. And now I've gotten to be good friends with David Morell.

(TI): Now I've gotten to be good friends with David Morell. Amazing guy. So kind, and he's been so wonderful to me. He blurbed my third novel and he's just been fantastic so, yeah. David Morel was a huge influence. Nelson DeMille was a huge influence, especially with *The Charm School*. It was the first novel that I read of his. All the Marc Olden books. All the A. J. Quinnell books. So, all these guys back in the 80s, they really had an impact on me. And so, for kind of—. I feel like they kind of passed the torch on as most of those guys aren't alive anymore. But it's my job to kind of move the genre forward as best I can.

(TI): But that's outstanding that you've gotten to meet some of them that you read about when you were a kid. Now, you get to read—. Now you get to meet the author. That's got to be a cool feeling.

(JC): It's so crazy.

(TI): [Laughter]

(JC): It's—. Yeah. It's a little surreal that I've looked up to these guys for so long and read all their stuff and all that, so. Everybody in the genre has been great to me. Everybody in the industry has been so welcoming. I thought it was going to be the opposite. I thought coming out of the military—. You know, I'm in the SEAL team, this competitive environment. We're all trying to make ourselves the best operators we could possibly be, pushing each other day in and day out trying to earn that trident every day. And I thought that hey, when I get out, the people that were established in publishing would kind of keeps me at arm's length and view me as competition. And the exact opposite was true. They welcomed me with open arms, and everyone has been so helpful and encouraging, and it's just a great place to be. And I think a lot of that's because, you know, most people don't that read don't just pick one book a year, so it's not like you're in competition with one each other – with each other. And people that like somebodies' book once they – as soon as they finish it, they want another book that's like that or it's in the same genre or it's has a protagonist with a similar background or whatever it may be. So, it's been absolutely incredible to step into that world where everybody is so encouraging.

(TI): Are a lot of them veterans as well?

(JC): Not too many at the – at the highest levels I would say. Yeah. I mean there's some of them are like Nelson DeMille. He served. Steven Hunter. He served. When you go back and look at some of those guys who were writing in the 50s and 60s and 70s, most of those guys had some sort of military background. And I love going back and studying some guys that I've read for years because back in the 80s and the 90s you couldn't just google something, so whatever it said on that book jacket, that's all you knew about them.

(TI): Yeah.

(JC): So now you can dive in and find out a little bit more about them just online and you soon realize, "Oh my gosh! Look at what this person did during World War II or look what they did in the Korean War." So, I love doing that and going back and read all of that and finding out some of those backgrounds.

(TI): That's outstanding. Was reading these books – was that – was that the first time that you knew that the military was going to be the next stage in your life?

(JC): No. I think I knew that from birth. My grandfather served in WWII and he killed off Okinawa in 1945. He was a course air pilot in the Marine Corps—

(TI): Oh wow.

(JC): which was like the plane for those listening have the gull wings that folded up to make room on aircraft carriers. So, I grew up with the silk maps that they used to give aviators back then because if you hit the water with a paper map it would disintegrate in the water, so they had silk maps, so I had those. I had his flag, his wings, his medals, pictures of him and his squadron. And also, there was a show on TV called a *Black Sheep Squadron* starring Robert Conrad and of course it was about Pappy Boyington and, you know, kind of a fictionalized version of some of the adventures that they had there in the pacific. And I love watching that with my day because he never met his dad because he was away when—. He was born when his father was away in WWII, so that was kind of our connection to him was watching *Black Sheep Squadron*. And it was great. I got to meet Pappy Boyington before he passed in the 80s.

(TI): No way!

(JC): And got to meet Robert Conrad who played him as well, so that was pretty cool for a young kid. I was drawn to it I think because of that connection to my grandfather, so I always knew I was going to serve. I just didn't know quite what that was until, and here is once again, the influence of popular culture is I saw an old black and white movie called *The Frogmen*. And I saw these guys swimming up over the beach and blowing up obstacles at the advance of the conventional force landings and asked my dad, "Hey. Who are these guys?" He said those were frog men because that was the name of the movie. And I said, "What are these guys? What is it all about?"

(TI): [Laughter]

(JC): And he said, "Go ask your mother." And my mom being a librarian we went down to the local library and started doing research. And that's the early 80s, so there was hardly anything written about SEALs back then. There's a couple mentions in a magazine article or newspaper article or two. Couple chapters in books. There's actually some beta—uh. [Laughter]

(TI): Beta cam?

(JC): Yeah. Beta max videos that talked about Vietnam—

(TI): You're dating yourself.

(JC): I know—

(TI): [Laughter]

(JC): and had some cool – some cool footage from Vietnam. And I just devoured all of it. And back then you could – you could almost read everything written about SEALs because there wasn't that much. Obviously, you couldn't possibly do that today with the internet—

(TI): Interesting.

(JC): you could spend the rest of your life going down those rabbit holes, but back then you could read all of it.



(TI): And still be starving for more.

(JC): Yeah. Exactly. Exactly. And so—. So, my takeaway from that research from my mom was that I read that these guys were some of the toughest special operators in the world and that the training the toughest ever devised by modern military. So, from a very early age, they had me. I think I was seven years old when – when I did that research. Ever since then I just kept my – my eye on that goal of getting to BUD/S and getting through BUD/S and getting to my SEAL teams. We thought once we got to our SEAL teams that we would zip off on the world doing all sorts of secret missions, but truth be told, we crossed that quarter deck, and they hand you a mop and a broom and say, “Hey, new guy. Go clean the bathroom.”

(TI): Yeah.

(JC): But uh. We didn’t get to do—most of us anyway—didn’t get to do what we thought we were coming in to do until after September 11<sup>th</sup>. And after that it was kind of off to the races.

(TI): Everything changed. Twenty years in the navy. How much was spent— . How much of it was spent in SEAL teams?

(JC): Yeah. All of it. I mean boot camp obviously you show up and, you know, you’re doing your boot camp stuff and then right from there back when I came in you had to go to an AA school first, so get your MOS somewhere. So, I went to an intel school at Dam Neck, Virginia. And then, you know, a few weeks after that you’re at BUD/S, so within that first year from those first six months or so, or maybe seven, eight, whatever it was, I was at BUD/S. And then, the rest of the time I was in Navel special warfare up until I got out.

(TI): Very cool. Very cool. Now you were, you were a Mustang, right?

(JC): That’s right.

(TI): You started out as a sniper. All the way to a commanding special operation, task units out in Iraq. Now, did you spend some time out in Africa as well? Because it says in your book, it says, you know, doing some research. You spent some time in Mozambique if you spend some time down as well? Because on my last appointment, one of my public affairs Marines that I served with, when we were attached [] he

went down there to get some footage of weapons, training and whatnot. We're in Sigonella. Anti-poaching is a mission that, not that many people are familiar with. Is that something that you, you, you were a part of during your time?

(JC): Not during my time in the military. I went there after.

(TI): Okay.

(JC): So, I did go to Tamale, while I was in the military to do some training down there. And before that I'd been to Kenya and to, to Egypt and to Morocco. But after I got out, I got out in the summer of 2016. And I was just putting the final touches on my first novel *The Terminal List*. Then didn't have an agent. Didn't even know I needed one. Didn't have a publishing deal or anything like that.

(TI): You were just writing it?

(JC): Just writing it and I always knew I was going to write a second one because of the John Grisham story where he wrote *A Time To Kill* first. And he couldn't give that novel away.

(TI): Yeah.

(JC): Instead of quitting, he continued to write, and he wrote a little novel called *The Firm*. That then took off, there's a movie with Tom Cruise, of course. And then they go back and republish *A Time to Kill*, which I think is – is probably his, well, to me, I think it's his best work, or some of his best work anyway.

(TI): Got you.

(JC): So, I always knew that no matter what happened with that first one, if I couldn't get anyone to even remotely look at it, I was going to write that second one, so.

(TI): I always told producers the same thing, or writers that wanted to write for TV series or films or had an idea for. Give them the one that you're not, you know, that's not your heart in, on all of it because they're going to change it and then have them come back. Is that what you were kind of talking about?

(JC): No. It was more along the lines of “Hey, if I can’t even get someone to look at this thing, kind of like John Grisham with his first book,” then I was always going to write a second one and because that was the one that might take off. And if the second one didn’t take off, then I was going to re-evalutate my life choices.

(TI): Got you.

(JC): But I was always going to write that second one. So as soon as I got out, I was really on a plane to Mozambique to do that research for the second novel. Because there’s some things you can only get by being on – putting boots on the ground. So, I went out there for that. And then, before I’d finished the second one, I went back and this time to South Africa and trained up an anti-poaching unit down there that was switching over to M4s and Glocks. So, I’ve a little bit of experience with those weapon systems, so.

(TI): Were you a contract at that point?

(JC): No. I just went over to volunteer my time to go over and help, train up this, this anti-poaching unit over there, so.

(TI): Wow.

(JC): Went over there and did that and learned so much from those guys. A lot of them had kind of cut the tail end of the Bush Wars. Well, first they had grown up hunting and tracking for food. And then they caught the tail end of the Bush War. So, they’d turn that tracking of animals into tracking humans, tactical tracking, and then they came back from that and the government was like, “Wow. We have a lot of people coming back from these Bush Wars. What are they going to do now?” Oh. I know. We can bring them into the national police force and kind of turn them into their version of a CSI. So, they took this tracking of animals, tracking of humans and then applied it to tracking in an urban environment. And not necessarily looking at drops of blood or something like that but getting inside the mind of the perpetrator and trying to figure out what his next move was going to be. And then a lot of people get aged out of that. So, a lot of the people that I was working with were older and this anti-poaching unit, but they brought all that experience with them. And in the case where I was in South Africa, their job was to protect some of the last Rhino on earth, so.

(TI): Yeah. Yeah.

(JC): So, I learned a ton from them. I got to incorporate that into both my second novel and the third one as well.

(TI): That's outstanding. That's outstanding. While you were in, give me either a best friend, or your greatest mentor.

(JC): Hm. Well. Mentor-wise there was a commanding officer that I served under at one of my SEAL teams, and he had spent the first year after September 11<sup>th</sup> deployed to Afghanistan. So, we hadn't have really sustained combat operations since Vietnam. You know, we had flashpoints at say Desert One, Grenada, at Panama, Mogadishu, but we hadn't been in sustained combat operations for quite some time. We spent that first year over there and he brought the certain lessons back to us and really made us memorize these for battlefield expectations that he had. And they apply on the battlefield. They apply in life. And he just, just the way he cared and passed those lessons on, lessons that he learned in blood downrange, onto the rest of us, certainly made an impression. I haven't forgotten it and they actually worked their way into my fiction. I italicized them and actually put them into semi-fiction as the protagonist is thinking through different – different problem sets in the novels. So, he's the one that would jump out to me with that question.

(TI): What are the four pillars? What are the four lessons?

(JC): Yeah. He said always improve your fighting position. Always exploit all technical and tactical advantages. Push SA. And of course, a relation to this is probably military, situational awareness both up and down the chain of command. And that fourth and the most important one I think is in the absence of orders or direction on the battlefield and take charge and lead. So, those ones were—. You throw out every manual you've ever read and you take a breath and think about those and a chaotic situation, they'll point you in the right direction.

(TI): Outstanding. I heard in your Rogan interview that when many of your fellow SEAL members were watching shows or gaming, you were always reading, analyzing storytellers which I related to because that's what I did. That's what I was doing with storytelling and shows, features, just overall content creatures. It was just mindless fun or relaxation. It was kind of a studying. Is that kind of what you were doing with your books?

(JC): Yeah. So, I've always been a reader. And even before I joined the military, I was always studying warfare and insurgencies and counterinsurgencies just to – because I knew where I was going. I didn't wake up one morning and decide I was going to be a SEAL. I've been preparing for it my whole life. So, I was just building on that foundation. And I always thought it was my duty to do that, to put in my time energy and effort into that study to make myself the best operator, the best leader that I could possibly be downrange. So, even when I was downrange, I was always studying after action reports from other things going on in theater, I'm still reading nonfiction books out there and then throw it in every now and again, a little, little fiction. As well, but, I – I very rarely watched a movie maybe once or twice during those deployments and never played a video game. So, all my time, if we had down time, it was spent studying. Doing things that were going to make me better and more effective and more efficient on the battlefield, so that has always been a part of it. And really, all that study both before the military, during my time in and continues today, that coupled with all that fiction that I read growing up as well, like they combine at the right time and place with my experiences downrange in Iraq and Afghanistan. And all those three things, the experiences down range, the feelings, and emotions behind those. Plus, the reading of the fiction and the study, the non-fiction all combined at the right time and place to make its way into my novels as I transitioned from the military. So, I didn't really plan it like that. It was just a very natural course that I took, but it ended up working out in a way that it couldn't really have been planned better.

(TI): Interesting. Interesting. Very interesting. You talk about getting out in 2016 and that you knew you wanted to be a writer since you were a kid, and you've done all this studying. Was there ever the thought of a back of plan, or if it didn't work out this would be—if it didn't work out there would be a different profession, or was it, "Hey, I have a retirement. I can work austere and make this work."

(JC): No. So, I—. It's always good to have contingency plans.

(TI): Sure. [Laughter]

(JC): Of course, but of course, just coming from the military, you need that. None of them were very appealing. I did have back of plans, of course, just because it's important to have that I think. But at the same time, I didn't really entertain them seriously. It was just kind of like nice to

have as these are the different paths I can take. Where do I want to go? Where am I going to put my time, energy and effort in right now? Where am I devote my bandwidth because I only have a certain amount of it, so where am I going to put that? And for me, I'm going to put into the book. I'm going to make the best book I could possibly make it before I send it off to New York, so to a publishing house. So, yeah, that was really all that other stuff never really entered my mind because same thing with SEAL training. One of my life mantras is, you know, never pay attention to the odds because there is certainly a lot of people that loved to tell me how hard SEAL training was before I went in and do you know how many people fail out or do you know how hard that is, like people love to tell you how hard things are to do. Same thing with publishing. I got the same looks when I told people I wanted to be an author that I got when I told them I wanted to be a SEAL. They look at you like you'll grow out of it one day. They kind of pat you on the head like, "That's nice." Like telling people you'll be an astronaut when you were a kid. Same thing. Like aw, that's nice. That's cute. And I didn't pay attention to any of that stuff because I didn't worry about the odds of making it through SEAL training. I just knew it was hard. That's why I was going there. And I knew that I had to prepare myself if I wanted to make it through the best I possibly could. So, I thought, well, what am I going to do? Well, you know, I can work out. I can climb ropes. I can do distance running. I can do pull ups. I can do sit ups. I can do all these things that I see people doing in these videos. And what else can I do? I can study. I can read these books on warfare, terrorist, and insurgencies. What else can I do? I can push myself. Not just in workouts, but putting on a backpack, going into the back country, putting myself into uncomfortable situations. Getting out on the snowshoes and cross-country skis and back country and doing all those sorts of things that are difficult, in order to prepare myself for SEAL training. And same thing with writing. It's you can worry about the odds of getting published by a New York publishing house. The odds of becoming a New York Times best-selling author. You can worry about those things, but you know what? That's taking up bandwidth. And where it should be focused is where you want to go. Whether it's writing or whatever else it's going to be. And building out whatever that product is or building out whatever that business is, spend that time there instead of worrying about those odds because you can worry yourself or you can study how to do something forever and never actually take that first step in actually doing it. So, people will talk to me about books on writing, and you know, I read a couple, but most of them weren't how to books. They're more of the Steven, Pressfield's the art – *The War of Art*, *Turning Pro*, *Do the Work*, those things that really talk about just sitting down and doing it. There is a

reason that the Nike motto “Just Do It” is still around and people remember it because it is so true. That’s the one thing you can’t get away from. If you are going to do something, you can think about it all day long, but eventually you have to sit down and do it.

(TI): You have a unique way of researching your books. You actually go to the places that you’re talking about.

(JC): That’s right.

(TI): What do you – what do you learn? What are you looking for when you actually go there? Is it culture? Is it terrain? Is it—. I mean—.

(JC): Yeah.

(TI): What are – what are some of the things that you focus on?

(JC): Yeah. It’s all those things. And a lot of it you don’t even know until you go there. So, when I went to Mozambique, I had a whole list of things that I wanted to come back with information. A lot of it was language, actually. A lot of it was different phrases and how to say them in these different languages over there, and I wasn’t exactly sure how I was going to incorporate them or how many I was going to incorporate, but I had about a page. And there was a lot of different languages in Mozambique. So, I had that, and I wanted to know what the dirt was like, the rocks were like, the leaves were like, what’s it like in the winter there, got to talk to them about that. Is there a rainy season? How does that—? How do things change during those times? So, I had a lot of questions when I was over there, but I got a lot that I didn’t even know that I was going to get.

(TI): Politics.

(JC): There was politics, of course. You know, the plane that I flew in on to this remote back country, hunting camp, the boots that my professional hunter was wearing, the back grounds of my trackers, that sort of thing. So, there’s a ton you get that I wouldn’t even had known to research without going there and experiencing it and living it. So, that’s invaluable for me, especially starting out. Because, really, the power of these books is that I take the emotions and feelings behind certain experiences downrange and I apply them to a completely fictional narrative. Well, same things with that research. I take that research and I apply—it’s real—but I apply it to a completely

fictional narrative. So, the sights, the sounds, the smells, what the dirt feels like, what it looks like, all those sorts of things, little stories that you can incorporate that you hear from somebody that is down there that you can incorporate into a character in the novel. So, those sorts of things are so important, for me anyway. And then I went to Siberia, well, just South of Siberia, Kamchatka Peninsula, and I always wanted to go there.

(TI): Think I saw that on a risk board.

(JC): Yeah. That's right.

(TI): [Laughter]

(JC): So, I went over there because I knew I had to go there because it was such an important part of the third novel of *Savage Son*, and I just needed to put boots on the ground. And it was crazy flying in there because most of the year you have to fly—. Let's say you are flying from the West coast of the United States. Well, first you fly to the East coast. Then you fly to the German or the UK. Then you fly to Moscow all the way across Siberia to get almost all the way back to the West coast of the United States.

(TI): Oh my gosh. Yeah.

(JC): It's not that far away from Alaska.

(TI): Wow.

(JC): But for one month out of the year you can fly from Anchorage. And it's one flight a week. So, you are either going there for 7 days, 14 days, you know, whatever. So, it's—. So, I went there for one, just a week. And yeah. It was incredible. You know about all these mosquitoes over there. Crazy. I got some incredible—. I've worked a—. I've worked some experiences over there into that third novel, and I think it really brings it to life.

(TI): Very good. Very good. You talked about breaking into the writing industry without an agent. How did you do that? Was there a connection? Was it in a developed audience? What got you to the next step to actually be noticed by a publisher?



(JC): Yeah. Certainly not a developed audience because I didn't have – I didn't have Facebook. Didn't have Instagram. Didn't have Twitter. Never wanted any of those things while I was in.

(TI): I respect that.

(JC): [Laughter]

(TI): [Laughter]

(JC): So, it didn't work. And I'm really glad that it didn't happen. Just like, I guess it could happen the opposite way where somehow, for some reason, you have an audience on maybe social media or something, and then because you have someone that you can market something towards, then New York publishing house goes "oh, let's do something with this guy." So, that was not the case. I had no accounts, no following. No one knew anything about me. And I really like that it happened this way because I sent the book to New York, and I got very lucky because—once again—I didn't study how to do this at all. Which, had I, I might have found out that you're supposed to get an agent because that's the usual path, but luckily, I did not know that. So, I didn't get one. Instead, I sent my manuscript directly to New York because I had the door cracked open for me. Someone sat next to Brad Thor at an event and it was a buddy of mine from the SEAL teams, and he had helped Brad out with a couple of books after that. And as I starting to get ready to get out, he called me and said, "Hey. I heard you're writing a book." And I said, "Yeah." And he said, "Well. Would you like to talk to Brad Thor?" And I said, "Will he talk to me? I would love that. That would be amazing." And so, set up a time to talk, and ended up talking to him for 45 minutes or so, and he was an amazing, great, incredible guy. And he said, "You know what? Hey. I've never—". He was kind of like a job interview. He wanted to know like why I wanted to write, why I wanted to be an author, all those things. And I told him all the things I just told you right now in this conversation about wanting to do it since I grew up, loving these authors, and all the rest of it. And he said, "Alright. Stop talking. I've never done this to anyone before, but your friend told me some of the things that you did in the SEAL teams. And as a thank you for that, if you write a book, I'll let New York know it's coming. I'll my publisher know it's coming.

(TI): Wow.

(JC): I can't guarantee they'll open the package. I can't guarantee they'll read one word. Definitely can't guarantee they'll like it, but I can at least let them know that it's coming. Don't call me until it's done. I'm not going to give you anymore advice. I'm not going to read anything. I'm not going to give you feedback, none of that stuff. Just when you're done, give me a call. I'll let them know it's coming." And he thought that, you know, I wouldn't finish because authors get this all the time.

(TI): I did my good deed for the day.

(JC): Yeah. Exactly. And then he also thought that if I did finish and sent it to New York that they'll read one word and be like "Eh. What do you want me to tell this guy? Just give him some advice. Just say keep going. Don't quit." Instead, Emily Besler, his editor, publisher and Vince Flynn when he was alive, his editor or publisher, read it, loved it, and wanted to publish it.

(TI): Wow.

(JC): So, yeah. So, couple of things there that stand out to me is that had I not had my friend on the SEAL teams that got out, well, I got very lucky that he sat next to Brad Thor's this dinner, but at the same time he has to risk his reputation, his capital by introducing me, by feeling comfortable enough to recommend me to Brad Thor. And had I not, you know, done some different things in the SEAL teams or whatever, he wouldn't have felt comfortable doing that.

(TI): Yeah.

(JC): So, you have to have that foundation. You have to have that reputation, that character, of course, established. You have to do that. You have to build that foundation. And so, I got very lucky that he sat next to Brad, that he felt comfortable enough to recommend that we get on the phone and talk to one another. And I just feel very fortunate all the way around.

(TI): Absolutely.

(JC): Yeah. Point being you have to do all those things, all that work, along the way to build that foundation no matter where you want to go.

(TI): You know, make sure you are just a good guy.

(JC): Yeah.

(TI): Just be cool.

(JC): Yeah. Think nothing about it. Just about —. People talk about networking and I don't — that's just a weird thing to me. So, I never intentionally quote unquote "networked", you know?

(TI): Yeah.

(JC): I was just me. Just putting in the work in the teams trying to be as good a leader as I could possibly be. The best operator I could possibly be. And then the same thing with the books, so yeah, it's just—. It's almost that simple. I think when people try to network, or try to do it, it's a weird thing and you can notice it, and it's very strange.

(TI): Yes. Yes.

(JC): And I feel bad saying that because some people maybe just aren't personable, you know, and may have a tough time. And so, they have to put in the—. I don't know. It's a strange thing. I don't know.

(TI): There's effort. You see an effort there. You see an effort there sometimes.

(JC): Yeah. Yeah. I don't put any effort into that.

(TI): It's more about karma networking.

(JC): Yeah. I guess. It's just about doing the best you can at whatever you are going to do. And that's it.

(TI): Got you.

(JC): Yeah. So, for me, I didn't like do any intentional sort of networking whatsoever.

(TI): Got you. Very good. How long did it take to write that first book? What was the process like?

(JC): Yeah. So, the first book in general can take you as long as you want it to take because you have no deadlines, so you can get as good as you can possibly get it. So, this is a good and a bad thing in that you can always make something better. So, there is probably some outstanding novels, some of the best novels ever written are probably still sitting in someone's drawer, maybe on someone's hard drive, something like that because they think it's not quite good enough yet. I just need to spend a little more time with it. So, when I sat down, I thought, I'm going to get this as good as I can get it, and I'm not going to spend ten years making it one percent better. I'm going to get it to that point where I think it's as good as I can get it without the eyes of a New York publishing editor, and then I'm sending it. And then I thought once it got there, because it never occurred to me that this might not work out, like it never occurred to me that it might not make it through BUD/S and all that, never crossed my mind that it wouldn't go right to Simon and Schuster, that they wouldn't want to publish it right away, it wouldn't get picked up for a series by an A-list star. I just assumed all these things were going to happen.

(TI): You took the if you believe it, you'll achieve it approach.

(JC): I guess. I didn't really think of it in those terms either. I just kind of thought, yeah, this is what I'm doing like I'm in this sprint, and I don't have time to think about it not happening, so point being that first one took about a year and a half, and I got it to that point where I was like okay. It's about as good as I could get it, and I sent it off to probably that first one. Now I sent it off to about four people, but that first one I think I sent it out to about 20 people to see – just get a little feedback. And I was like okay. And I'm like—. I don't remember if it was exactly 20. It might have been 10 or 15, or something, but I was like, okay, if one of them says they don't like something, then I'm going to discard it. Two of them, I'm going to take one quick little look and probably toss it out. Three of them, same thing. Four, same thing. Five out of twenty say the same thing, I'm going to really look at that part, and may make some changes. So, I didn't want to just kind of go, oh, someone didn't like this? Okay. I'm going to change it. Someone doesn't like this. I'm going to change it. Because that didn't make sense to me.

(TI): Yeah.

(JC): But if a few people didn't like one thing, then I was going to take a look at it. And so, there was a couple minor things that I changed and then

sent it off to New York, put it in the mail and off it went. And I thought—

(TI): Are you married? Are you married?

(JC): Yes.

(TI): Is your wife one of those twenty?

(JC): Uh—she did read it. Yes. But she was not one of the ones, yeah. Yeah.

(TI): She's not one of the twenty, but your wife did read it.

(JC): Yeah. Yeah. Exactly. Exactly.

(TI): My wife will not. She writes and she does not let me read a page.

(JC): My wife's read plenty.

(TI): Not a page.

(JC): That's hilarious. It's probably best. It's probably best actually.

(TI): [Laughter]

(JC): You want to keep those things separate; you know? I might recommend that. [Laughter]

(TI): [Laughter]. Very good. Very good.

(JC): But yeah, so I sent it off to New York, and I was like, you know, if Emily Besler reads this and decides she wants to put in exploding robots from outer space, you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to put exploding robots from outer space in here. And I just kind of took that approach to it. And I was so surprised that she hardly wanted to change anything. She had three questions. One was like, "Hey. Would really say this here? Would you really do this here?" And one other thing that I can't remember anymore, but they were so minor. And I couldn't believe. And I don't think I was really nervous up until that point because I was like, "Oh. She's going to make this great." And then there was these three minor little questions that weren't even changes. They were just questions and, you know, morph of a couple

sentences to fall more in line with the character and the theme of the novel.

(TI): Interesting.

(JC): So, yeah. It didn't really change much. And it's continued to be that way through the next few as well, so.

(TI): Are you still juggling editing one book while writing another?

(JC): Yeah. It's crazy.

(TI): To me that seems tough. It's like editing two projects, two films at the same time.

(JC): Yeah. Now there's a third thing going on. Now there is the scripts for the amazon series, so you have those going also at the same time. So, there is a lot to juggle.

(TI): Congratulations on that, by the way.

(JC): Oh, thank you. Thank you. I sincerely appreciate it.

(TI): Yeah.

(JC): What's crazy about that is that I pictured Chris Pratt in the role as I was writing. Which is—

(TI): I was going to ask you. I was going to ask; you how did you get his attention?

(JC): Well, once again, I stumbled into it. And as I was writing, it was weird because you wouldn't necessarily, especially back then. So, I was writing this, and I might mess up a date by a year or two because things are lazy right now because I'm in the middle of all these edits.

(TI): Sure.

(JC): December 2014, I think maybe started like – started down the path. Certainly, during my last year in the military—

(TI): Okay.

(JC): I was working on it. And he's in *Parks and Rec* at the time. I think, or just finishing that maybe. And so, he wasn't known as an action star. Wasn't known for serious drama type stuff, but I always thought of him—

(TI): So, this was before *Jurassic Park*?

(JC): This is before *Jurassic Park*, before *Guardians of the Galaxy*.

(TI): Wow.

(JC): He had a small role in *Zero Dark Thirty*. And I think that was kind of his first like serious role. Very small. Very small role. But I was like, you know what? You know, Tom Hanks in the 80s. We had *Bosom Buddies*. We had the burbs.

(TI): [Laughter]

(JC): You know. You had *Turner and Hooch*. You had all these comedies. And then all of a sudden, he takes a risk with *Philadelphia* in the early 90s, and then from then on, he could write his own ticket. And I was thinking, who I this generations', you know, guy like that because I need this character to be likeable because he's going to do somethings that the audience is going to need to forgive him for. Their audience is going to have to want him to succeed because he is a likeable person. And I was like Chris Pratt is a likeable guy. He is awesome. He is funny. And I knew he had done the *Zero Dark Thirty* thing, so in my mind I was just like, oh. That would be a great guy to do this. And, you know, I didn't think much more about it than that because also if you read some of these books, they say don't picture someone playing your character as you're writing. But as a child of the 80s that was next to impossible.

(TI): Sure.

(JC): So, I pictured Chris Pratt. And then write before the book came out, you know, years later. So, this is now three years later, or at least two and a half years later, whatever, I get a call out of the blue from a buddy of mine from the SEAL teams, and I hadn't talked to him for years. And he's like hey, how's it going? And we started talking and he said, "Hey. I heard you wrote a book." And I said, "Yeah. It's coming out in a few months. And I can send you an early copy called the

galley.” I can send one of those out to you. And he said, “Hey. Well, I always wanted to call you and say thank you for what you did for me in the SEAL teams.” And I started thinking well, what did I do? And he said, “You’re the only person who sat me down in your office as I was getting ready to get out. And talked to me about transition. You introduced me to people in the private sector. You are the only person who took time out to do that for me.” And I was like, “Oh. Hey. No problem.”

(TI): Is he in the private sector now?

(JC): Yep. Absolutely. So, his name is Jared Shaw. I’m allowed to say his name now.

(TI): There you go.

(JC): He likes to keep a low profile—

(TI): Very good.

(JC): but I’m talking him out of the shadows. And he’s like, “I would like to give this book to a friend of mine. Do you mind?” I’m like, “No. I’ll send you two. One for you. One for your friend.” And I was like, “Who is it, by the way?” And he was like, “Chris Pratt.” I was like, “Oh. Interesting.”

(TI): That’s crazy.

(JC): Yeah. So, he gave it to Chris. And Chris read it on a flight to London for, I think some of the *Jurassic Park* things. And the next thing you know, a week or so later, you’re getting a call that says he want to option it for a film or a series. So, off we went to the races.

(TI): Wow. Like personally he optioned it?

(JC): Yup. Exactly. Personally.

(TI): That’s cool.

(JC): Yeah. Crazy and I pictured Anton Fuqua directing it – who did *Tears of the Sun*, did *Equalizer*, *The Magnificent Seven*.

(TI): Yeah.,



(JC): Got an Academy award for *Training Day*—. And he wanted it too at the same time. So, I ended up – they are collaborating together on it. Anton Fuqua was directing, and Chris Pratt is starring. And it was a great team of writers working on the scripts. I’m an advisor on those, so I get to see them and take my red pen out and jump on calls and do the rest of it, so I’m learning a ton about screenwriting and the scripts are fantastic.

(TI): Yeah. I was going to ask you about that. When a writer sends over a book for series or movies, the level of participation seems to be negotiated, right? Like some just sign it over and say, “Have fun.” Some are involved as advisors, but they’re not the end all be all maker or decision maker like George RR Martin was with *Game of Thrones*.

(JC): Right.

(TI): And my wife was complaining about the writing in *Fifty Shades of Grey*, okay? Take that for what it is. But I guess in that contract the writer insisted that the script was to be exactly the same wording as the book.

(JC): Oh, interesting. Yeah. So, I would not have done that.

(TI): Is there a concession for cold, hard cash? Is there a balance there? What did—? Okay. What did you prefer?

(JC): Yeah. So, I was not negotiating from a position of strength.

(TI): Sure.

(JC): With one novel that’s not even out yet. No platform. Zero followers on anything. So, complete unknown.

(TI): It’s you first go.

(JC): Yeah. Exactly. So, I didn’t have much to say about any of that sort of thing. But in my mind for just having studied this for so long and just having seen so many different books turn into movies and notice what I liked and what I didn’t like about that. Things that worked. Things that didn’t. Like I’ve been a student of that my whole life—

(TI): Sure.

(JC): as well.

(TI): Yeah.

(JC): So, I was not married to keeping the book exactly the same for film. It's a different medium. And therefore, it needs to be told in a different way. So, I completely understand that. And I wouldn't want it to be to the letter of the book because you're telling the story totally different. So, but point being, yeah, if you have a body of work over years like let's say you're a Daniel Silva with a *Gabriel Allon* series which is – that series is twenty books long I think now. He had three books previous to that with different characters. But if you have a body of work like that, now you are negotiating from a position of strength because you're selling an entire universe to Hollywood.

(TI): Are all your books in one universe?

(JC): Yes.

(TI): Are you building a universe with shared canon history?

(JC): Exactly. But at the time there was nothing.

(TI): There was the one book.

(JC): Yeah. There was the one book and it hadn't even been published yet.

(TI): That's incredible. You had an option for a show before the book even published. That's amazing.

(JC): Yeah. Yeah. So, you could hold on, but for me, I'm like, you know what? The exact person I wanted to star in this wants to option it. The exact director that I wanted to direct it wants it.

(TI): That's serendipity. That's karma.

(JC): Yeah. Go with it.

(TI): Yeah. Just go with it. Absolutely.

- (JC): I'm not going to be greedy here. So, yeah. So, it could work out a different—. So, I think every deal is different. I would think.
- (TI): Okay.
- (JC): But I'm not positive, but I think that every deal is different. And if you have this body of work that you have dedicated readership already, then you can – you're negotiating from a position of strength at that point.
- (TI): You're a little more closely aligned. You are more a little close to home on that one.
- (JC): Well. You get to say, "Hey. I am not going to sell you this universe unless I'm the writer. I am the this. I am the that. You do this." You can add some things. For me, there was none of that. [Laughter] I was just like thank you very much. I'm so happy to be here.
- (TI): [Laughter] Very good. Very good. Talk to me about writing as a profession. Because I'm sure someone clicked on this episode because it said author. The writing profession much like music has changed drastically within the past decade due to digital media. For the veterans that are getting out now and want to start writing as a profession, what would your advice be to them?
- (JC): Yeah. First not to worry about anything at the periphery. Meaning you have to have that product. And so, it's not just writing. It's anything. And that has to be good. It has to be as good as you can make it. So, before worrying about if you're going to get published, if you should self-publish, if you should build up an audience, how are you going to market. You know what? All those four things that I just mentioned. And I'm sure there is 10, 15, 20 other things you could be worried about. That time was not spent making the product as good as it could possibly be. So, before you worry about any of that, get the best book you possibly can. So, that is—. That would be my advice.
- (TI): Focus on the content.
- (JC): Focus on that book. Yeah. Exactly. You have to focus on that book. You have to get that thing as good as you can possibly get it. Now, you can take a breath. And during that time that you were writing, things were probably changing as you've been writing that. So, there will be things that are available to you that weren't available five years ago.

Certainly not available twenty years ago. Definitely not available thirty years ago. In that before, say in like the 70s, 80s, mid 90s you had to depend on your publisher to do most everything.

(TI): Yeah.

(JC): You have to depend on that publicist. And guess what, you are not the only author that Simon and Schuster has, and they have to pay those bills. Just like with movies. There are a few movies out there like "The Avengers" makes all the money for all the movies that don't make money. So, that's kind of how publishing works as well. There's a few books at the top that make the money for everybody else. And allow those other books really be published, so it's very rare for a book to make back – to make money on a book. And luckily mine all did. Mine did right away. So, mine was kind of an anomaly. And most people just think of what really are outliers, like *Game of Thrones*, like *Fifty Shades of Grey*, like *Twilight*. Those are the outliers, but those are the types that people are like, "Oh. That's the norm." That's not the norm.

(TI): No, that's not.

(JC): Those books helped pay for everyone else's.

(TI): They're like half of the 1 percent you see.

(JC): Exactly. Exactly. But all that money that those brings in those pay for all those other books that didn't make back their money. So same thing with movies.

(TI): The one's their taking a chance on.

(JC): Exactly. So, point being, so after you have that book as good as you can possibly get it, that's the time to take a breath and figure out those next steps. I think if you tried. You know, this is just me, right?

(TI): Yeah.

(JC): It could be different for anyone else. But if you are spending time trying to build up an audience, trying to do all these other things, worried about all these other things. I don't think that's time well spent because that book has got to be the best it can be. So, that would be my advice to do that. And then, take advantage of some of the things that weren't available to authors out there 30 years ago. So,

all that marketing. Guess what you can do? You can build up. You can build your own platform. If it's CNN or Fox or whatever is not having you on one of their shows. Guess what you can do? You can build your own. You can do a podcast. You can have a social media presence. And what's important about those things, I think, is to provide something of value. So, before I post it anything, before I do anything like that, I think, "Hey. Am I going to waste somebody's time by posting this?" Like I want to add value to someone's day with everything that I do. Because if you've done that, when it comes time for that book to come out, guess what? You've added a year of value to someone else's life based on whatever it is, your study, your perspective, your experience, whatever that someone maybe, and so when the time comes out for your book to come out, well, there you go. There is your return.

(TI): That makes logical sense. Because if you can say, "Hey. In 30 seconds, this guy can make me laugh, or make me think deep or whatever. Imagine what he did with a year's worth of effort into something."

(JC): It's really about building trust with an audience. It's really about building that relationship with an audience. And you can do that today. You couldn't have done that in 1995 and 1985 and 1975. But you know what? You can do it today. But you can also screw it up today. You can do the exact opposite.

(TI): Oh, yeah.

(JC): You can break that trust. You can post stupid things that aren't adding value to someone's day. And if you are not adding value to someone's day, guess what? Why would they follow you? Why would they buy your next book? Why would they continue to engage with you if you are being a negative input in their life? So, for me, that's important. And other people might have different views on it, but that's just my – that's my take.

(TI): Yeah, no. I definitely—. It makes logical sense to me. I think it's hilarious that you have a series called Negative Reviews.

(JC): [Laughter]

(TI): Because on Borne the Battle we still respond on air to any reviews on Apple podcast. Good or bad. And you say you don't spend too much time on them, but it's human nature which is completely true. Is there

a good review or a bad review that sticks out to you as of like today?  
Or you can just show us an example of each. Either one.

(JC): Hilarious. I was just about to post one today, actually. I was just kind of rethinking it because I have a lot to do, so I was – might hold off until next week.

(TI): Oh, wow.

(JC): But yeah. I did. I did a recording the other day of just two. Because I was just scrolling the other day, and I saw two new ones. And I'm like, these are fantastic.

(TI): [Laughter]

(JC): And I pulled them out. And, gosh, one was it – just someone saying that he loved the book. It was awesome, but he didn't like the gear, so one star.

(TI): [Laughter] Wow! That's not the gear I would use. One star.

(JC): Yeah. He even said he has most of the gear.

(TI): That's hilarious.

(JC): And then another person was talking about how he did not like that there are a lot of veterans getting in to quote unquote, "the writing game" based on their celebrity status. I was like, wow. As we just talked about in this conversation—

(TI): You didn't have anything.

(JC): No. So, I had zero. So, it was all based on the book, on the writing.

(TI): Got you. Yeah.

(JC): So, he did not like that.

(TI): [Laughter]

(JC): He had some funny, totally, you know. Anyway, you got to kind of laugh at it. And then there's some where, you know, you get the one

star because it arrives – it arrived a day late from Amazon, and they give you one star.

(TI): [Laughter]

(JC): And you're like, "Aw. Bro. Come on."

(TI): Amazon, help me out here.

(JC): It's not helping. Yeah. Like the cover was ripped, or it arrived without a cover from Barnes & Nobles. And you're like, oh, one star for that.

(TI): Things that you can't control.

(JC): And every author gets those. Every author gets things like that. So, there's good and bad to all of this. The bad part is that crazy people, there are no barriers. And let's say, in 1985, if someone wrote a crazy letter to a magazine or newspaper letter to the editor, guess what? It's to the editor, so the editor reads and is like, "Wow. This person is crazy. We're not putting this.

(TI): [Laughter]

(JC): We're not doing this." There's a barrier there. But at the same time, you couldn't engage with that audience.

(TI): I think it's a great way to engage with your audience, what you're doing, or responding to reviews.

(JC): Yeah. And that was kind of a fun thing to do because I like to turn negatives into positives as best I can, and, so anyway.

(TI): Sure.

(JC): It's kind of a fun way to do it. And yeah. But I appreciate every review. It's great.

(TI): Absolutely, there's a connection there.

(JC): Yeah. Exactly.

(TI): Very good. Jack, what's one thing that you learned in service that you carry with you today?

(JC): Oh, geez. One thing that I learned in service.

(TI): I know you probably learned many things, but I think if you were to pick one out.

(JC): Yeah. I don't know where this – where this – where I came to this realization. I don't know if it was just came—. I don't think I just woke up with it one day. I think I always knew it. It was always a part of me. I just didn't really put words to it until much later, probably during my last two deployments, but it was all about building trust. Not just—. So, building trust with the guys below you in the chain of command and above you in the chain of command. And taking every opportunity, every engagement, every interaction, is an opportunity to build that trust. So, whether you're passing somebody in a hallway, or you're giving a brief, or the guys are going out to run an obstacle course, or you're going to the range or whatever. Like all of these are opportunities to engage and build trust. And much like we just talked about, you can also lose that trust if you mess it up. If you get out there and you're doing a lot of PT or you're doing some sort of a team thing or whatever, and you're not pulling your weight. Guess what? You're losing some credibility right there. So, what do you have to do? You got to be in shape. You got to be there and out front. And if you're not the fastest, well, you got to be up there near the top if you're not first. Same thing on the range. Especially as you're a leader, you know, if you're not the best shot out there, well you better be out there near the top. The guys need to be looking at you as something that they aspire to be one day. And for me, it was important for the guys to also know that I wanted them to be better than I was. I wanted them to be able to do it even better than I did it for them. And that means sharing some of the things that you can do better, sharing successes, sharing failures, pushing that credit down to the guys for anything, and then taking responsibility for the failures. So, all those things, but it comes back to trust. And same thing up the chain of command. Every interaction with those above you. They have to look at you and go, okay, I don't have to worry about this guy because of an interaction that they had, because of a brief, because of whatever it is. And they're going to focus their attention maybe on someone that needs it. They're going to give you that freedom, freedom of maneuver because they trust you. So, it's really about building trust. And same thing today. It's about building trust with that audience. Trust with



that readership. So, that's—yeah. And I don't think that I learned it service, or it was just a part of upbringing, but being able to articulate it as – giving it the credit, giving it the credence, giving that attention and just identifying, oh, the trust is the most important part of leadership. And it's the most important part of building a brand no matter what it is, is that trust with the people that are behind your product that are engaging with you.

(TI): Outstanding. Is there a veteran non-profit or individual you've worked with or have had experience with that you'd like to mention?

(JC): Yeah. But there's so many. I mean – there's so many foundations out there, organizations out there that work with veterans. It's almost overwhelming. So, the ones that I support are the ones I have touch points with. Either I was involved with them personally or a dear friend of mine was involved with them personally or they helped a friend of mine or something like that. So, it can't just be that they have a good website, and that's all the thought that I gave to it type thing, so there has to be a personal touch point. Rescue 22 is an amazing one started by a friend of mine from the canine program in the SEAL teams. They provide fully trained service and support dogs to the veterans dealing with the emotional and physical trauma of the battlefield. So, people dealing with PTSD or dealing with TBI, people missing arms and legs, you know, all of that. They do some amazing work with these dogs, and it's absolutely incredible. So, Rescue 22 is definitely one that's at the top of my list, but they're some other great ones out there as well. And actually, my website, if people click on the gear portion of my website, there's some merchandise there and a 100 percent of those proceeds go to the veteran focused organizations that are listed.

(TI): A 100 percent? Did you just say a 100 percent?

(JC): Yeah. All of it. I wanted that be kind of my way to give back. And I always felt a little strange about just throwing a T-shirt up there. You know what I mean?

(TI): Yeah.

(JC): So, as I started up this path and started to get a little bit of a following or whatever. I thought, you know, I want to do something a little different here. And so, a hundred percent of all the proceeds go to the veteran focused organizations. There's like—. And I try to support

veteran with the merch – veteran businesses as much as I can. You know, sometimes I can't. You know, like, but as much as I can. Like Direct Action USA, they make these awesome bookmarks that have these .556 rounds on them, so I have that on there. I have a buddy Eli Crane from Bottle Breacher that has these bottle openers made up of 50 Cal rounds—

(TI): Yes.

(JC): and hand grenades and all that, so I have that stuff on there. And then, you know, there's hats and T-shirts and all the rest of it, so. But yeah. All of the proceeds go to veteran focused organizations and they're listed on the site there. Each one of those is one that I have a personal touch point with.

(TI): Very good. Very good. You know, we've covered a lot of ground, is there anything else, Jack, that I – that I missed, or – or didn't ask that you think is important to share?

(JC): I mean since this is – you know, the audience is who I think it is. For veterans, I would say that, you know, don't let anyone discourage you as you're getting out. You hear a lot about how hard a transition is, how difficult it is to make that transition from the military to the private sector. And, you know, don't spend too much time worrying about that because once again, that's bandwidth focused on worrying. Life is about transition. It doesn't have to be leaving the military for the private sector. People in the private sector switch jobs. That's a transition. People get divorced. That's a transition. Horrible things happen in life. It doesn't just happen to people in the military. And you know what? You adapt and you move forward. So, the transition—. I wouldn't get too wrapped around the axel about worrying about that transition. It's really about identifying that next mission in life. And really the second novel, it's a political thriller, but it's about transitions. It's about redemption. And I got incorporate my experience with transitioning from the military to my protagonist who was going through a life transition as well. So, it's really about identifying that next mission in life because you are not going to recreate what you had in the military. Like that's just a given. I've seen that over and over again. People try to figure out how they're going to get a team environment like they had in the military on the outside, but then they're disappointed when that doesn't happen. Well, guess what? It's not going to happen. It's a different deal. Of course, my

experience is on a very thin slice of the military, which is special operations, so take all – take everything I say with a grain of salt.

(TI): Sure. But this is your experience.

(JC): This is my – yeah. Exactly. And I saw so many people that had a hard time with that. So, when I got out, I made the decision to make a clean break because I saw so many people that couldn't really leave that last life behind. So, I wanted to make a clean transition. So, kind of a physical and psychological break with the military, a new chapter. Turn that page. We moved out of Coronado, California where we finished up our time in the military. And my family – we moved to the mountains in Park City, Utah to raise our kids in a ski town. And I think that was important because we're not going to the same – dropping off our kids at the same school where our friends who are still in the teams are dropping their kids off. You're not going to the same bars. You're not going to same restaurants. You're not seeing the grocery store. It's just not a constant presence in your life all the time, so it a building block. Like it was something that you did. For me, I was a SEAL. I am not a SEAL anymore, but it provides a certain foundation from which to build.

(TI): Yeah.

(JC): So, that's what I'm doing. I'm moving forward in life. So, I would say that focus forward. Don't look back too much other than to build from that foundation. Take the good parts of it like. So, like Bruce Lee said, "Take what's useful. Discard what's useless." And move forward. But identifying that next mission in life, the next passion in life. I think that's a vital importance as you move forward, transitioning from the military service.

[00:66:25] Music

## **[00:67:50] PSA**

(Woman): If they need a home, they can get a home loan. If they need education, they can get education. If they were hurt in service, we pay compensation. If you weren't hurt in service, but you fell on hard times, we give you pension. There's just an array of benefits out there for veterans. And we really want to just make sure that all the veterans know what's out there.

(Narrator): Choose VA today. For more information, visit va.gov [Link: [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)] or call 1-855-948-2311.

[00:66:58] Music

## [00:67:03] Closing Monologue

(TI): Want to thank Jack and his team for reaching out and taking the time to tell his story here on Borne the Battle. You can find more about Jack Carr at officialjackcarr.com [Link: <https://www.officialjackcarr.com/>]. Carr with a C. Our Borne the Battle Veteran of the Week are all veterans who served in Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm. As said in the beginning, this month is the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary where the U.S. joined a coalition to push out, or form the coalition to push out Saddam Hussein forces in Kuwait. Thank you to the 2.2 million who served in the era and to the almost 700,000 who deployed. We honor the over 620,000 of those from that era that are no longer with us.

(TI): That's it for this week's episode. If you yourself would like to nominate a Borne the Battle Veteran of the Week, you can. Just send an email to [podcast@va.gov](mailto:podcast@va.gov), include a short write up, and let us know why you would like to see him or her as the Borne the Battle Veteran of The Week. And if you liked this podcast episode, hit the subscribe button. We are on iTunes, Spotify, Google Podcast, Apple Podcast, iHeart Radio. Pretty much any podcatching app known to phone, computer, tablet or man. For more stories on veterans and veteran benefits, check out our website, blogs.va.gov [Link: <https://www.blogs.va.gov/>] and follow the VA on social media. Facebook [Link to VA's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/VeteransAffairs>], Instagram [Link to VA's Instagram page: <https://www.instagram.com/deptvetaffairs/?hl=en>], Twitter [Link to VA's twitter page: [https://twitter.com/DeptVetAffairs?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwca](https://twitter.com/DeptVetAffairs?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwca)], YouTube [Link to VA's YouTube page: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBvOzPLmbzjtpX-Htstp2vw>], RallyPoint [Link to the VA's RallyPoint: <https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/56052/questionrallypoint-great-place-start/>], LinkedIn [Link the the VA's LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/company/department-of-veterans-affairs>], Pinterest [Link the the VA's Pinterest: <https://www.pinterest.com/deptvetaffairs/>]. Deptvetaffairs, US Department of Veterans Affairs. No matter the social media, you can

always find us with that blue checkmark. And as always, I'm reminded by people smarter than me to remind you that the Department of Veterans Affairs does not endorse or officially sanction any entities that may be discussed in this podcast, nor any media products or services they may provide. Thank you again for listening, and we'll see right here next week. Take care.

[00:68:54] Music

(Text Transcript Ends)