

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSIONAL
DRUMMER, MUSIC TECHNOLOGIST, MAGAZINE
PUBLISHER, AND AUTHOR, DAVID FRANGIONI
DREAMPATH PODCAST, EPISODE 44

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Host: Bryan Smith

Bryan Smith: David Frangioni, welcome to the podcast. Thanks for making time for me.

David Frangioni: Oh, it's my pleasure, Bryan. Thank you for having me. Great to be here, everyone.

Bryan Smith: Yeah, well I've done some research on you and your background and, and there is so much to unpack. Your bio is just amazingly eclectic and layered. So, let me start off by just asking you to tell us: What was your calling in terms of finding the drums as your instrument of choice?

David Frangioni: You know, I wish I knew. It's, you know, if we go, even before I was born, my, my parents- my dad was in World War II. They got married, right? They met and got married right after that. All they wanted was a family there of Italian descent, and family was everything to them. And it took them almost 20 years of trying to have children. They had my brother, my older brother, by three years, they don't know how or why they could have kids, but they just all of a sudden had my brother; then they had me three years later. And in that process of my being very, very young, like literally a year, a year and a half, somewhere drum showed up around the house. I don't know if it's because I was banging on things and giving them an inkling that that was an interest, or if they brought it to me. I wish they were still alive that I could ask them.

David Frangioni: And I wish I had asked them back then, but it's just in my blood. It's from that young of an age, there's a picture of me playing the drums at 18, 19 months old. And then I was diagnosed at age two with Retina Blastoma, which is cancer of the eye. And of course my family was riveted. They were, it would- things would never be the same again. On top of, you know, dealing with the cancer and the life threatening nature of it. They had to remove, the doctors, had to remove my right eye. So, I've been blind in one eye ever since. They put a prosthetic in. It made for a very, very challenging childhood and, to some extent, life. And I just worked really hard, and followed my passion to, you know, pursue everything that I really wanted to do in life and not let anything hold me back. And I got those values, as well, from my mom and dad.

Bryan Smith: Well, it sounds like David, that you were introduced to music very early in life, but it wasn't just how early in life you started playing drums, it was also in a time that was a very

formative experience for you, in terms of basically battling, you know, battling to survive. Do you think that that played a role in how ingrained music was into your psyche and your being?

David Frangioni: Yes, and I, I think that, and I also think that it played a huge role in my approach to life. Which is really, you can sum it up in three words, which is: do it now.

Bryan

Smith:

Yeah.

David Frangioni: I think that that's the combination that was embedded as a result of the trauma as a result of my youth. My really earliest years, that's still- or you know, that's still with me today.

Bryan Smith: So, the other part of your biography that I read, and I read a lot, there's a lot out there that you actually started as an entrepreneur in music at the age of 16. Can you tell us more about that?

David Frangioni: Well, it was even before that. I mean, when I started playing the drums I was playing on phone books, and tabletops, and everywhere else. I was taking drum lessons before I even had a drum kit. And I got very serious about wanting to be a good drummer, and my parents were very focused on using education as a, as an important tool to being a good drummer, to being good at anything really. So, I was taking lessons, studying in school, drumming, joining every band and every opportunity I had in school. And then also trying to form bands with neighborhood kids, and kids that I heard about referrals. So, at the time I was 12 I was actually out there playing in bands pretty regularly. 13, 14 years old booking my own bands, calling clubs that I wasn't even old enough to get into.

David Frangioni: Trying to play at school dances, like anywhere I could play, I wanted to. And then what happened around 16, 17 years old is, I started to transition from wanting to be the world's greatest drummer, which I was a long way from becoming, but that was my goal, and to be into technology. And I found technology through drumming, and I took to technology as much as I had taken the drums, where I was just really passionate about it, had a real drive towards it, pursued it with a great intensity, and try to learn a tremendous amount about it. And got to the point where within a year I was able to open a MIDI consulting business. And that was really my, that was like the start of what I would call successful and somewhat substantive, you know, small businesses. That was my first small business.

Bryan Smith: And about what year was that, when you started the MIDI consulting?

David

Frangioni: Like

86, 87.

Bryan Smith: And, so for our listeners that don't know what MIDI is, what is that an acronym for and what is it?

David Frangioni: M-I-D-I's an acronym for: Musical Instrument Digital Interface. And it's a, it's a programming language, it's a protocol, for all instruments, electronic instruments, to communicate over the same standards. So, prior to the introduction of M-I-D-I: MIDI, you had Roland put out a device, and the only thing it could talk to either rhythmically, or trigger notes, or whatever it would be- would be another role in device. They'd all have some kind of proprietary synchronization protocol. Yamaha would do the same thing. Overheim would do the same thing, etc. So, MIDI comes along, and now all of a- if every manufacturer puts a MIDI Jack, and implements the MIDI protocol into the device, now you can have everything talking to everything. So, when I really started discovering that, coupled with triggering drums and expanding my, my palette of what could be done through playing the drums and programming drum machines, it just was, it was an, is an absolute limitless universe. And your imagination tries to catch up to all of the powerful tools that you have, and the possibilities. And that's just incredibly inspiring. I mean, it just, it's, it truly is limitless.

Bryan Smith: So let, let's go back a little bit and talk about your experience in bands at the age of 12 and 13. And what were your parents thinking about this? The, these activities that are pretty, pretty cutting edge and adventurous for a 12 -ear-old.

David Frangioni: I know, I look back and they were the most supportive, loving parents. We had very little means, blue color. My dad was a meat cutter, loved to cook. My mom was a legal secretary, you know, they didn't have any money. They just had, you know, they had what was important, which was love and family values. And it really taught me the definition of gratitude and humility; coming from nothing and seeing how hard they work, and worked their whole lives until the, till they passed away, really, they were working. And... But they had, you know, a support mechanism for me, and a love and, I guess push, if you will, like to make me better that I don't even understand to this day, because I can't imagine how they let me play clubs that young, and let me play and do what I did.

David Frangioni: Thank God I was a good kid. I've never in my life had a puff of a cigarette, a drink, a drug of any kind from marijuana to whatever you want, just nothing. So, I have no substances in my body of any kind, other than I love to eat. And I probably don't eat the healthiest all the time, but, but as far as any kind of drugs or alcohol or smoke, it never happened. So, I think that was a huge factor in when I wanted to go out and play, and I would be in some of these dicey environments. I mean, they always cared, and they were on top of where I was and what I was doing, but there's no question; they were very, very lenient and forgiving where most parents would never let me do what I did. And fortunately, I made them proud. I didn't get into trouble. I didn't, you know, hang out at the clubs or do anything, you

know, I just, I just wanted to play, you know, I think I was just really lucky that my parents let me, and trusted me enough to do that.

Bryan Smith: Yeah. And it's, it sounds like your passion for playing, and performing, and learning was pretty pure because, you know, putting myself in the shoes of, you know, a 12-year-old drummer who's actually playing clubs, I can see myself getting pulled into the, mystique of the whole lifestyle, you know, the alcohol, cigarettes, you know, the drugs.

David Frangioni: Oh, it was there, it was there. I just hated it. Fortunately, for me, whatever's in my brain, it was such an instant turn off. As soon as I smelled smoke or alcohol, and saw the environments that I was playing. You know, I'm on the stage, right? Even though these are small divey places, I'm on the stage, and I can see the crowd in front of me, or in a lot of cases, lack thereof, but the, the chairs and tables in front of me, and the bartenders. And I just was so turned off, and then later as I got a little older, that turnoff was coupled with a really intense desire and focus. You know, I was just able to learn early on about working hard and having values and a work ethic, and that's really served me my whole life. And I got that from my parents, of course, that nothing will be accomplished if you don't put the work in. If you don't- if you're not smart about it, if you don't have the, you know, education and background to really be prepared to, you know, go against whatever challenge you have and go for the goals that you want to accomplish. It really comes from a foundation.

Bryan Smith: Yeah. There's this concept of 10,000 hours and, and I've read about-

David

Frangioni: I subscribed to it.

Bryan Smith: Yeah, and it sounds like you started your 10,000 hours really early at the age of maybe two. And so by the time you, you are 16 and you've played the clubs, and you've grinded out a lot of the work that- just the daily grind of a club musician, you accomplish that 10,000 hours and became, you know, very, very competent in drumming and performing way earlier than most people. That's what it sounds like, anyway.

David Frangioni: Well, it's true. It was a blessing. I mean, I'm a big fan of Malcolm Gladwell and, you know, the 10,000 hour philosophy, I agree with. I probably, you know, I've talked about this before I think I have three 10,000 hour businesses, that I could say. And you're right; drumming, and performing, and being a part of that is one of them. And, of course, technology would be another one. And then developing artists, and the music business side of things, which is all kind of one wheelhouse would be a third one. And so, I think that, you know, that's- I think it's important if you really want to be good at it, and be able to grow even further than that, you know, anything that we want to be good at, it never has an end zone. Right?

David Frangioni: So, no matter how far you take it, no matter how many hits songs or, or great artists, or great business deals, or whatever it is that you keep in track of to see how your goals are going and how your successes are going, there's no point where it's like, *OK, I've done it all, I've accomplished it all. I'm the best player or the best businessman*, or whatever. It's- it never ends. So, I think that the 10,000 hours is huge to get to some real milestones, and be able to accomplish some big successes. You know, that's really still part of the journey, as opposed to like, *OK, I hit 10,000 hours, now I'm good*. There's no such thing as that, really, in all of the things that we, that we have to accomplish in life.

Bryan Smith: Yeah. Especially with the changing landscape, the way that we went from analog to digital, from the 70s to the 80s. And it sounds like you stayed very tuned into the technology side of music, so that by the mid-80s, you become this, according to Brian Adams, this mini-guru. What was so important about the digital technology that changed the musical landscape in the 1980s?

David

Frangioni:

It was the beginning of eternity. You know, we're always gonna have that as the beginning of a sea change that will keep developing forever. That now there is a common, unified standard and it's, you know, it's been used and adopted by every manufacturer, and everybody. And it really was breakthrough. And to this day, of course it's taken for granted, because it's been around for awhile now. But back then it was so cutting edge, and I was working with a lot of manufacturers, software developers, you know, Pro Tools, which back then was sound designer then sound tools. Then Pro Tools working with Opcode, and Passport, and Alchemy sample editors, and just so many, so many pieces of technology that just formed the basis from which so much of the powerful, you know, studio tools that we have now were really born from that. And I think that was a really, really amazing time that that ended up, in hindsight now, becoming the beginning of you know, digital recording and music technology that we'll have forever.

Bryan Smith: And, for our listeners who aren't very savvy technologically and don't really know the difference between digital and analog, back in the sixties and seventies, we really were dealing with actual tape, right? I mean we're talking about, like, tape recordings of a drum track and a vocal track that you're- and you're splicing things together. When the digital age hits, you can completely dispense with all of the tape and really become more productive. Is that a fair way to put it?

David Frangioni: Well, we have to, we have to add one little piece to that, which is the tape. The analog tape was first, you know, it's mono stereo, four track/eight track. It grew in tracks to ultimately 24 track was really the the maximum, and then you would synchronize 24 track machines together to get more tracks. And then what happened is tape stayed but went to

digital tape.

Bryan

Smith: Ah,
okay.

David Frangioni: So we had digital tape in the 80s, which was the 80s were again another huge time period where digital tape was taking over for analog tape. Both formats very expensive, very much you needed, like, technology person to install and maintain. Then, by the early nineties we had affordable modular digital multitracks, and now everybody can have digital recording at their house using, at the time ADATs and TASCAM MA-AD8s. Some people credit me with building the first home studio.

David Frangioni: It was all based around those kinds of technologies. Late 80s/early 90s, and then as the 90s went on, digital took a huge turn, and I'm very excited that I was able to be a part of all of this at the cutting edge. At the development side of it took a huge turn to where pro tools went from a sidecar kind of technology, where you'd have the tape rolling, and then you'd have a pro tools rig off to the side and you could use it to edit and fly things around, and kind of augment what you were doing. And then by like '97/'98, all of a sudden Pro Tools became the replacement for all of these tape console combinations and technologies. And that's how, you know, how we're using it today. But that's where it started, and it's evolved from there of course. Quite a bit.

Bryan

Smith:

Yeah. I interviewed Richard Patrick, from the band Filter, and he was a former guitar player for Nine Inch Nails back in the 80s and early 90s. And he was talking about how the recording industry completely changed when people were able to, basically show up with, you know, pro tools and a couple of mikes, and lay down tracks in their house or even in a studio. And the cost of recording went dramatically down, and sort of the barrier to get into that space when dramatically down. He- an anecdote that he brought up was that the, the studio albums that Nine Inch Nails, and later Filter, would record would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars, if not more, to put together. And then he witnessed Eminem in another studio, you know, knocking out an album within a matter of a couple of days for cheap. And my question to you is, what have we gained and what have we lost with removing barrier to recording an album, and having it sound pretty good? I mean, even even someone who doesn't really know what they're doing, it seems like can put out something that at least is passable. Of course, they're not going to get to, you know, upper echelon sound quality like you accomplish. But what are the pros and the cons of having that barrier lowered, or removed by technology?

David Frangioni: Well, the pros are that you have these incredible tools that are available to everybody. So, you're not limited by budgets, only creativity, you know, the tools have become

available and they've, the price of great quality tools just keeps getting more, and more, and more cost effective. You know, I always say though, it's the archer and not the arrow. So, the tools are important, but it's always going to be based on whose hands those tools are in. And I've always been a big proponent of recording and music technology being as cost effective as it can be, so that everybody can use it. I think that's, you know, that's a huge breakthrough. And when I look back on when I started, I would have to go to very high end, very well-equipped, what I'll call even world-class studios in Boston where I'm from, and seek out some opportunity to sit there and learn, right?

David Frangioni: 'Cause you've got a half a million dollar console or more, you've got a Synclavier, which is one to \$200,000 or a Fairlight, which was the same price. And you've got a tape machine that's 50 to \$150,000, and I mean like you blinked your eyes and it's, you're in a million dollar room. Lexicon, outboard gear, and all these different things. And so, how do you learn it if it's cost \$1 million just to, to own it and spend time with it? It really, you really had to cut your teeth. You had to spend a lot of time for free just wanting to be a fly on the wall, and it was almost- you were lucky, you felt lucky to be chosen to work for free. You felt lucky because you had access. I would go to the music stores all the time and I would just, you know, befriend people at the music stores because I was another essentially control room, if you will, full of equipment that was not necessarily accessible or affordable.

David Frangioni: 'Cause we're still in the 80s now and stuff is very expensive for the most part. But I needed to learn the gear, and in order to learn the gear you've got to spend time with it. And then after you learn it, you have to apply it musically in a workflow that's conducive to a session. And the better you get at that, the better your clients are going to be. And by the time I got the gig with Aerosmith in '89, started working with them extensively, even through to this day, you know, I was ready for it. I was prepared, and I was able to bring workflows and ideas and innovations to their creative process, that they hadn't had prior to my being on board. And, you know, that combination, you know, we did *Pump*, and *Get a Grip*, and *Big Ones*, and *Nine Lives*, and *Just Push Play*, and *A Little South of Sanity* and, you know, just a myriad of what ended up being really successful, well-received rock music.

Bryan Smith: Nice. So what, what is your official credit on those albums?
Is it audio engineer?

David Frangioni: Technologist, pre-production engineer, in house engineer... Pro Tools, MIDI, it's just a- You know, I was their one-man show, you know, in the studio until they got to, all the writing was done, all the offline work was done. And then they would go and they would record with a producer for a few months to just finish putting the tracks down. Until *Just Push Play*, and *Just Push Play* was done entirely in-house. Marty Frederickson and Mark Hudson produced it. We did it at Joe and Stephen's. We got an SSL brought in - god bless Mike Shipley, he's no longer with us- but at the time he mixed it, and Joe had an SSL brought into a house on his property temporarily. At that time, this we're going back to '99, 2000ish. At that time, the hybrid of Pro Tools and a large format console was still being utilized much more so than it is today.

So, I was just, you know, the go to guy for whatever they needed.

Bryan Smith: Yeah. So what, what was that process like? The workflow and the actual work itself. When you have a band that is successful as Aerosmith is with all of these personalities, there's a lot at stake for everybody, it's expensive to bring everybody together.... I would imagine there's a lot of pressure. So, when you show up to a gig like that, what is expected of you in terms of what you're contributing to the process? How much time every day? I mean, are you basically just saying, *Alright, here's my life for two weeks or two months, or it- you know, I'm at your disposal*. Or is it- I just don't understand how that dynamic would work with a band like Aerosmith?

David Frangioni: Well, it's been 31 years, so I guess it's, *Here's my life for 31 years and counting*. But seriously you know, their process in the record making time, as I would define it, which in my tenure was *Pump to Just Push Play*. Because they really did only two records since then; they did Hong Kong and Bobo, which I wasn't involved in day to day, and music from another dimension, which they did in LA six years ago or so. So, they really haven't made a lot of records like we were doing from '89 to 2001. And that was the heyday, for my time with them everyday. Since then, I've just been doing special projects and, you know, just staying in the family. But that was the heavy lifting. And the process during that time was about a year of writing, where we'd be in Joe's studio or Steven's studio.

David Frangioni: Different songwriters would come in when they wanted to collaborate. The rest of the time it would be Joe, Steven, and then the band, of course, would come in as well and collaborate. But Joe and Steven were really the main writers, and I would run the console and the computer, and all that stuff. And then they would go pick a producer, spend a couple of months recording the record, mixing it, and then they'd come back to me and we'd be in again, Joe or Stevens, and we would start doing, you know, the liners for radio, whatever promotional things. They would be doing, you know, edits and radio mixes, and remixes and CD single mixes, and mixes for movies. And we- and I remember *Mrs. Doubtfire* needed a *Dude Looks Like a Lady* added. Like, there was just- with that band, they had so much going on and they still do, but, but then they did as well.

David

Frangioni:

You know, there was never a day off, really. While I was working with them I was also building my company, Audio One, so that I could build studios. Which I still to this day is, one of my core businesses is building recording studios, digital facilities, all things, you know, studio-related or acoustic-related, as well as home theaters and home automation systems, which is what Audio One does. And that started in the 90s. So, I was kind of doing both in parallel, so I could have my day to day where it was all just strictly me. But then I could take my vision and my, you know, my passion for wanting to do more rooms than just the ones I could do myself, and start a company based on that. And now we can be doing studios all over the world. I can be working

with Aerosmith and the studio, and I have guys putting together based on my, you know, view, ideas, and initiative, you know, additional studios, and rigs, and that kind of thing. So that, that was the beginning of everything that we see today in my world.

Bryan Smith: So is- was there a moment in time that you can remember where your passion for recording, and audio, and technology went from a hobby to a career and, you know, was it when you got a call from Aerosmith, was it a previous artists that you worked with that kind of flipped on the switch that, *Oh, this is actually something that is going to be, I'm going to make a career out of this?*

David Frangioni: You know, I never really thought of any of what I'm doing as a hobby, even at the beginning. So, I found electronics through drumming. And, although you could call it a hobby at that time, because I was just doing gigs around Boston and the bottom of what you would call a professional drummers career as far as gigs, trying to make it, but hadn't made it. And, you know, just really finding electronics for that reason, but always taking it very, very seriously. And then, when I started my consulting business, and I was you could call that like turning pro for technology. I built up credits. I was networking, living in Boston, I was networking all around new England as well as New York. And there were a lot of things going on in New York. I was making a lot of phone calls, 'cause remember this is pre-internet, so there's no emails or any kind of internet at all. So, you make phone calls, you send faxes, you get on a plane and fly somewhere, you knock on somebody's door, send FedExes. You know, that was all very manual labor, just networking and trying to build a clientele. And then with Aerosmith, I got referred to them, and just went in for one small project and ended up never leaving.

Bryan Smith: And I see you worked with Ozzy Osborne and Brian Adams and Cher...

David Frangioni: Yep. 10 years with Ozzy. Brian, great friends, still to this day, you know, we're in touch. And I'm very blessed, you know, to- I never in a million years, even in my wildest dreams, thought that I could have the career that I've been able to have, and have now. But it just proves that with hard work and commitment that, you know, a lot of things are possible that you don't even realize.

Bryan Smith: What have you learned about the business side of this, in terms of working with artists like Kiss and Ozzy Osborne and Cher and Aerosmith, in terms of protecting yourself through contracts, and agents, and things like that versus, like, the Shep Gordon approach. Which- I watched the Shep Gordon documentary...

David

Frangioni:

Supermensch.

Bryan Smith: Yeah, *Supermensch*. A great, great documentary and just a fascinating man. But

he talks about how, I don't think he's ever had a contract with any of his clients. It's- everything is just, you know, *We're going to do this thing together and we're going to treat each other fairly.* So what kind of balance have you struck in that respect? 'Cause it sounds like you have these long, important relationships with artists, and you're friends with them, but you also have to make a living and you have to protect yourself. And can you tell our listeners about that dynamic?

David Frangioni: Well yeah, you have to be aware of that and practice it. You know it's certainly very important. I'm a believer in everything being in writing, so I always work with contracts and written agreements. You also have to understand timing, and the appropriate time and place. So, I wouldn't bring a contract up to an artist the first day that we're going to start creating something or, you know, you gotta know, like, when is the moment where you work out, what is this arrangement? Of course, it should always be done based on a spoken agreement, and you capture that in writing. I'm not a big fan of sending emails to people telling them what my ideas are, or asking them what a certain deal should be in replacement of a conversation. In addition to a conversation, I'm a huge proponent of that, but as a way of not confronting, I don't think that's the best way.

David Frangioni: I think artists like to talk about what's, what the deal's going to be or their handlers, will talk about it. It doesn't- sometimes the artist doesn't want to talk about it, but there is somebody responsible for talking about it. And so you've just got to make sure that things are clear. I was, you know, as I was learning, and as you talked about, you know, here today, I started very young, so I made all kinds of mistakes, had no clue. You know, when I was a kid, when I was a teenager, I don't have a clue about contracts and written agreements. And, of course, there weren't even emails or anything to send, so everything would have had to been a fax, or an in-person contract. So I learned all that, you know, you learn it the hard way. And I think the lesson that we'd like to have the listeners today take away is that: capture everything in writing, and just do it at the right time.

David Frangioni: In a traditional business deal timing is always everything, but there's a much greater window, and understanding, and latitude in a traditional business deal. Like, if you were going to buy a piece of real estate, you know, it's like having closing documents and having everything in writing is a given. You know, you don't have to worry about like, when do I show somebody the contract for a real estate transaction? It's the opposite. It's like, 'When am I going to see the contract?' In the music business, even though everything's based around contracts as well, it's a very different dynamic, because everybody knows that there's an agreement that has to be in place, but unlike a traditional business deal, there's all these emotions that are paramount, right? Every business deal has emotions, but the music business has, kind of, prevailing emotions where, if you ask an artist at the wrong time for either the contract itself or for a certain condition, or a pay increase or whatever, you ask them at the wrong time, you could lose the gig.

Bryan

Smith:
Yeah.

David Frangioni: So it's a very, very different world in that regard, that I'd like everybody to come away with today, with that understanding. It's like, hey, when you're making deals in anything to do with the music business, be sure to be very considerate and sensitive towards, what are the dynamics going on here? Who do I present documents to? When should I present the document? And I always, I learned from a brilliant investor when I was a really, really young kid, he said, "David, I'm going to die long before you, but I don't want my advice to die. So always remember: no such thing as too early, only too late." And I've never forgotten that since I was 14 years old. And I practice it. And it means, in this case that, don't let a mess ensue. Don't get into the studio, and you're working there for two months, and then you bring up, "Hey guys, when am I getting my first paycheck?"

David Frangioni: You know, like- and then on the flip side, don't be so early that you jumped the gun and you're making assumptions. So you really have to get a sense and a feel for, like, what's the right time? When is everybody expecting to go to the table, get the business stuff over with? 'Cause the crux of a music business deal, usually, has a lot of creative elements to it. And when those creative elements are flowing, and they're creating the value of what the deal is there to protect in the first place, you don't want the business stuff getting in the way. So, you do have to have a balance of both. Is that kind of clear? Did you understand that?

Bryan Smith: Yeah, it makes a lot of sense. And it sounds like, too, that the people that you're dealing with, these artists, they're, they're people that are being asked to do and give a lot of themselves, by a lot of different people.

David
Frangioni: All
the time.

Bryan Smith: They're being pulled in many different directions, and you have to be sensitive to that, because you don't want to come off as just another one of these people that's like, "Hey, what's in it for me? Can you do this for me? Let's..." You know, so you have to be diplomatic and know your audience.

David Frangioni: That's it. No, that's perfectly, Bryan, that's perfectly recapped, and that's really what people have to take from this. And, if they do, just that one bit of advice we've been talking about, you'll have something of huge value for your entire life and career

Bryan Smith: And the Audio One business that you have, of building these studios, do you find that the studio business has changed or been hurt by the advent of, you know, these basically laptop recording studios

that people are able to put together? Has that hurt your business, or do you- are you adapting in a way to kind of still be able to be in that space, and be successful in terms of building studios?

David Frangioni: Well, I'm building what you would classify as "real studios." So they're proper spaces to make records, or do podcasts, or do production- whatever it is that that's needed. And a proper space has good isolation, it has good acoustics of it, it has, you know, a myriad of elements that define it as a professional workplace. And that's something that's always going to be needed. There's no question that people might've been inclined a little bit more, years ago, to go with a simpler setup if- like they can now, having a choice, but it doesn't negate the fact, or change the fact much, that you still need Pro Studios and a lot of applications. So that's, that's what I do. And the demand is still there. It's one of those things that they'll always be a demand for it. You know, you've got, you've got colleges, and you've got houses of worship, and you've got professional producers and songwriters and artists.

David Frangioni: All of these spaces are, you know, need proper creative spaces. They need recording spaces, they need acoustically treated spaces. There's no way around that. And a lot of people don't want to go to a commercial external room to do it, or it's not even feasible for them to do that. Like, in the case of a college, you know, you don't want to have to send somebody off campus to another place to go to a quarter unquote studio. You want to have that right there, you know, under control. So there'll always be a need for what I do with studios. I think we've seen the heyday pass. There was definitely, like with everything that has to do with technology and cutting edge, you know, see changes. You know, there's always a time where it's a big rush, like everybody's excited and it's new. So that phase is past. But it's leveled off and there's plenty of people, and plenty of clients, that need studios.

Bryan Smith: The- it sounds like the core elements of what it takes to have an album sound good are never going to change in terms of acoustics and, you know, insulating one room from another. And that'll always be there. And then now we have this global pandemic happening, which I would imagine would even create more demand for building home studios. Because people are going to be like, hey, I need to get work done, but I'm not going to go travel all the way across Los Angeles to go to some studio where, you know, and you can have control over that environment and and get professional quality audio out of your own home studio.

David Frangioni: You're right. And it would seem to me that that would be what happens. You know, it still has to- that chapter, you know, we're at page one of, so we'll see how it plays out. But it would make perfect sense that, in a time like this where there's tremendous amount of quarantining and isolation going on, that people would want to have those kinds of spaces. And certainly all the studios I build are private, and they're very safe, of course, you know, just- they're a very controlled environment, unlike a commercial space. So yeah, it'll be interesting to see what happens with that and, you know, how it plays out.

Bryan Smith: So the, the artists that you've worked with- and I'll just go through the list that I've done on my research here. The Rolling Stones, Ringo Starr, Elton John, Sting, Journey, Styx, Phil Collins, Shakira, Rascal Flatts, Chick Corea- the list goes on. Are any of these artists people that were influences to you when you were growing up, so that you were starstruck in any way when you were working with them, or had you sort of moved past that starstruck stage of that everybody has, I think, when you finally were working with these artists,?

David Frangioni: Well, many of them were huge influences on me, virtually everybody you mentioned on that list. And a lot more as well who I've had the chance to work with, and who have been inspirations for me; and some that I have not had the chance to work with, and have been inspirations to me. Yeah, I mean, 100%. And, and you know, I was star struck at the beginning because, especially when I started with Aerosmith, and, like, the first time I worked with Elton John, these guys were, and still are, musical heroes of mine. And so it was, you know, it was very exciting, really. But I think coming from such humble beginnings, when I met them I was a fan, but I was also so focused and so grateful to be there, that I really wanted to contribute and wanted to be a part of it.

David Frangioni: I just was taught really early on by my parents. It's like, you either go in there and you get a picture with them, which at that time was a big deal, right? 'Cause people didn't even really carry cameras and there were no cell phones. But the concept is, is the point of the story. It's like you can go in and get a picture with them, get their autograph, shake their hand, or you can go in there and be a peer of theirs, and you can go in and you can earn your stripes and later on if it works out, you'll get all the pictures you want. But bigger than that is, you'll be able to call them clients of yours, friends of yours, collaborators of yours. And that's much greater than any kind of fan thing. That's what they taught me. Right? That was, that had to be learned and understood and, you know, I had to be aware of that.

David Frangioni: And I was. And so I was able to, you know, just go in there and get the job done for all these different artists, and not really be frozen, or put off, or intimidated. If anything excited and motivated, and always driven. You know, I just always had a lot of drive and ambition, you know, they always say everything works out for the best. Whether we like it or not what happens is what happens, and, you know, we've got to make the best of that and see it for what it is. 'Cause it's the only thing we got, is whatever happened. And when I look back, coming from very little, as far as having means and opportunities of course no connections, that was really hard, but it ended up being amazing jet fuel for the future. So it was like, it was almost like a necessary thing that, like, okay you're gonna, you're going to come from nowhere and nothing, but through hard work and through focus, and passion, and consistency, you're going to get somewhere in a field that you love.

David Frangioni: Not a traditional like grinded out job, like I hate to be here, but in something

that you actually love every day and are very blessed to do. And I think that, because of that, you know, that had a huge impact on when I was working with these artists., I was thinking about to some extent like, *I got to keep this gig. Like I want to keep the gig, but I also have to keep the gig.* Right? So like, you know, I always- I was been working on a book for a while -would be my fourth book, if you can believe it I already have three books out- but it's it's called, *No Plan B.* And essentially, it's kind of the story of my life where, you know, I never looked at anything, like, 'If this doesn't work out, then I'll do this other thing.'

David

Frangioni:

No, I always looked at it like, *This is gonna work out.*

Bryan

Smith:

Right.

David Frangioni: *There is no other thing.* And I was half fooling myself, and half absolutely right. And so, I just never wanted to go back to just type of environment and upbringing of, you know, hanging on the streets, seeing where the kids- kids didn't go anywhere, and having very few options. Not practicing your passion, kind of getting stuck in a job, like, that whole blue collar, suburbia, lower class kind of upbringing. Just, I didn't like it, you know, and I want it to be on a stage. I wanted to play, I wanted it to be a great drummer. I wanted to make music, I wanted to contribute. I wanted to do artistic projects and make deals, and work with my idols, and just try to, you know, accomplish something bigger in my lifetime than anybody previously had in my family.

David Frangioni: And bigger than even myself in, say like writing the books, to where after I'm gone, there's going to be three books for people to read that wouldn't be here if I hadn't been alive. That's a bigger legacy to me than, you know, just doing projects and just working on certain things. Like, same thing with the music. If I look at *Get a Grip*, you know, over 20 million copies sold, you know, being a part of when *Cryin'* was written and, and *Crazy*, and *Living on the Edge*, and you know, all these songs that are gonna way outlast, all of us here today on this podcast listening. And to me that was the contribution that I wanted to make, and what I work on making every day.

Bryan Smith: Nice. You know, it's interesting that you have this book title, *No plan B*, because I was interviewed on a podcast a couple of weeks ago, and I think it'll be coming out shortly about- they're asking about lessons that I learned talking to folks like you, because I talk to artists, musicians, and writers, and filmmakers. And they're like, "What's the common denominator with these people that you talk to, these creatives? How do they get there? How do they become successful?" And even though I didn't use the words, "no plan B," that was the

idea of my answer. 'Cause that's what I've gleaned from talking to passionate artists. They don't go into it thinking, "Well let's just see if this works out..."

David
Frangioni: Not
at all.

Bryan Smith: "...Maybe I can, maybe I can make a living out of this." It's just, there are no other options. This is what I'm doing. This is my passion, this is what I care about. And whether- I think when you have that attitude, you're going to find a way to earn a living from that. You may not be a superstar, and you may not be a platinum album artist, or an Oscar winning film director -even though I've interviewed an Oscar winning film director and that was, that was her attitude- But it's really profound how common that characteristic is in people just like you, David. And I'm glad that you brought that up and I would love to read that book when it comes out.

David
Frangioni:
Well, start with *Clint Eastwood: Icon* and *CRASH: the World's Greatest Drum Kit*. Which are the two that are out now of my three. So, you can start with those two, but thank you for that. I'm glad that you know that I'm following in a path that's consistent with other people that have achieved things. And, you know, when I finished that book, I think it'll add value. You know, the key thing for me is just always bring more value than you take.

Bryan Smith: Yeah. So tell me about the Clint Eastwood focus, and why you wrote those books.

David Frangioni: Well, I have a really great Clint Eastwood film poster, a memorabilia collection, and I just felt like I wanted to share it in a way that was impactful, and kind of write a book that I would want to read if I were into clinics were films, or movie memorabilia, or movie posters, or all of the above. So I wrote that book. I got it published by a great publisher, Insight Additions, and got Clint involved and he thought it was cool. So, I got his blessing. You know it's- all the money goes to charity from the book, and then I followed it up. My publisher insight came back to me, said, 'Look, *Clint Eastwood: Icon* was a success. How about we do another one?' So, we did a revised and expanded edition of that in 2018 which is out now. *Clint Eastwood: Icon* revised and expanded.

David Frangioni: Clint also thought it was cool. And then the publisher came to me and said, "All right, well, we've done the Clint Eastwood thing twice in 10 years, it's done really well. What else are you thinking?" And, of course, being a drummer and having a drum set collection, and a museum as part of my foundation: Frangioni Foundation, it's a nonprofit to help kids, you know, get music when they need it most. I wrote, *CRASH: the World's Greatest Drum Kit*, and that's,

you know, another book that's just coffee, both- all of them coffee table books that you can really enjoy that subject in a way, that if you want to read it, there's a lot of cool information. But if you just want to look at a book, a lot of times I just like to look at pictures and look at ideas visually, and not necessarily have a deep read. And so, my books are based around either of those. You can go deep and read all, and become an expert in different aspects, or you can just have fun and look at the pictures and it never gets old. And they're available on Amazon. They're available at Barnes and Noble. So everywhere you would buy a book, you can find *Clint Eastwood: Icon*, and *CRASH: the World's Greatest Drum Kit*, and the money for all of them. Not just Clint Eastwood's books, but *CRASH*, goes to charity.

Bryan Smith: That- and that charity of involving children, and getting music, and kids involved in music sounds so important right now, because of the cut in funding in arts and in music especially, that has been going on for decades.

David

Frangioni:

Yep.

Bryan Smith: And it's just a- it's a real shame that we aren't seeing more arts programs actually have additional funding. Let's, let's keep them at the same funding, or add more as opposed to cutting the funding.

David

Frangioni: It's

true.

Bryan Smith: Because, you know, we're really suffering in the... Yeah- just talking about education, I just want to thank you for focusing on the arts with your charity for kids and music, especially for kids. I think it adds so much value to their lives, and they carry it with them for, you know, throughout adulthood and they pass it on themselves. And I know we're running out of time, so I want to ask you one last question. There's so much more to talk about. Maybe we can have a second chat down the road.

David Frangioni: Let's do a volume two. It's been great, Bryan, and audience is great and I think we have a lot more, we can share in number two.

Bryan Smith: So let me ask you one question. I did not want- I'd be remiss if I didn't ask this, because Neil Peart was a huge influence for me growing up. Rush was, I think, my favorite band starting in, you know, grade school all the way through college and beyond. I have one poster in my weight room, and it's a Rush poster. And I know you have an article on your website about his passing and what he meant to you. Can you tell our listeners what Neil Peart meant to, and how he influenced you as an artist and a drummer?

David Frangioni: You know, Peart was a huge, huge influence, has been my whole life and career. I first saw him when I was in high school, I think I was 15, probably you know, sophomore, maybe in high school, very, very young and had already been listening to his records, and it was the moving pictures tour. And... the funny thing is I just remember every- normally at a concert you want the first 10 rows, but at Rush concerts, as I would learn at that time and going forward, the seats closest, the seats on the side closest to Neil, even if you were in a balcony, were the ones that sold out first. So, it was really funny. And so I got pretty good seats, and I remember him first time I ever saw him live and doing his drum solo, and just not believing what I saw.

David Frangioni: Like it was hard to even comprehend where to start after hearing and seeing him play live. It just showed me how unlimited the instrument can be when you really master it, and how far you can take it. And it was like when I saw Buddy Rich or heard Carl Palmer for the first time, you know, you struggle with practicing harder or quitting. You know, when you see and hear somebody that phenomenal that's taken the instrument to a place that, nevermind, you never even imagined, like you didn't even- it wasn't even in your thought process. And Neil Peart represented that. And that's to his credit, to be one of the icons and inspirations forever, and to be in that hallowed group of drummers with, you know, Carl Palmer and Buddy Rich and Dave Weckl and you know, Vinnie Colaiuta, and just the greatest drummers, Joe Morello, Louie Bellson, the greatest drummers that will ever live was, you know, a real testament and we're going to miss him.

David

Frangioni:

And Neil was so extraordinary. He left us with so much content. Educational material, articles, 'course all the recorded works, tremendous amount of really, really well done video concerts that Rush put out that Neil was a big part of. So, you literally could spend however old you are right now listening to this podcast, you could spend the rest of your life just going through all of the things that Neil left us, and truly be challenged and inspired for your entire life. It's incredible.

Bryan Smith: Yeah. And his contribution to lyrics too. I mean, he's such a literate guy.

David

Frangioni:

Absolutely.

Bryan Smith: To have that type of knowledge of, of literature. So, I'm still grieving for that loss...

Bryan Smith: We really will for a long time, man, we really will. You don't get over, you never really get over a loss that big. You know, you just, you just find better coping mechanisms as time goes on, 'cause It's a natural healer.

Bryan Smith: Well,, I'm so glad that we were able to connect today. I know there's a lot going on in the world with the the virus and everybody's isolating, and quarantining, and here you are spending time with me, and my listeners are really gonna appreciate it too. So, thank you David Frangioni for your time, and be well.

David Frangioni: Well, thank you Bryan. Thank you everyone for listening. No contact will have to be initiated physically to go to davidfrangioni.com. It's virus free. You're safe to go there. So, anybody that wants to correspond, you can find me at davidfrangioni.com and my socials' at David Frangioni. And it's been a real honor and privilege to spend the time here together with everyone. And thank you Bryan, and I look forward to talking to you again soon.