

Interview of Dan the “Uber Man” Achee by Margot Bullock
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Abstract: Daniel Achee, informally known as Dan the Uber Man, has been driving for both Lyft and Uber for the last few years. Before his Ubering days, he was a bee remover, gator remover, and college student at Nicholls State University. Since moving to New Orleans, he has been an active driver, working 40 hours each week. Along with driving, he is a part-time high school math teacher, entrepreneur, and medical school hopeful. In this interview, Dan shares stories of his wildest rides, his ingenious business model, and the complexities of basing his income in the App Economy.

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[00:00:00.13] Margot Bullock: Well thank you so much for coming...

[00:00:03.15] Dan Achee: No problem.

[00:00:03.22] Margot Bullock: ... And doing this interview with me today.

[00:00:05.12] Dan Achee: Yeah.

[00:00:05.16] Margot Bullock: This is Margot Bullock, interviewing Dan the Uber Man...

[00:00:11.00] Dan Achee Yes.

[00:00:12.02] Margot Bullock ...Who was so gracious to come in and talk to me a little bit about what he does in the Uber industry and in the app industry and kind of how he can balance that with his real life. Um, so I think before we get into like, more complex thoughts, I guess we can start off with just some basic information about you, like where you're from, how long you've been doing this?

[00:00:35.01] Dan: All right, uh, so yeah, I am from Berg Louisiana, which is like, an hour south of New Orleans, um, and I moved here about two years ago, and that's when I started uber-ing. Um, so before this, I was a bee removal guy, like I'd remove beehives, hornets...

[00:00:50.22] Margot Bullock: No way!

[00:00:51.19] Dan Achee: ...Wasps nests, and that was my primary occupation. But it was just such a pain because I was just getting stung all the time, you know, I would get stung like 50 times a day, and I was always on like, a 30 foot tall ladder on a roof, like about to slide off. It's like, I just kept almost hurting myself...

[00:01:06.12] Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:01:07.05] Dan Achee: ...And then I found Ubering and I like... I think it was right when I turned 21, I was like, oh, I can actually Uber now. Or I found out that once you're over that age, so I was like, oh I'll try Ubering. And I did it for like, two days, and I was like, oh my God, I love this. You know it's just...

[00:01:21.10] Margot Bullock: Yeah, that's awesome.

[00:01:22.03] Dan Achee: ...Such a good time, such a good time. And I was like, you know what, I'm gonna retire from the, uh, the bee removal business. Um, yeah.

[00:01:29.06] Margot Bullock: How do you get into bee removal?

[00:01:31.14] Dan: That's a long one. So, I started actually with, uh, alligator removal.

[00:01:35.05] Margot Bullock: What?

[00:01:35.14] Dan: Um, so if you remember, uh... I think it was in 2016, there was like, record flooding in Baton Rouge? Um, and that flooding kind of like, spanned all the way from Baton Rouge to Thibodaux, Louisiana which is where I lived because I went to Nicholls State University at the time. And there was so much flooding that there was just alligators everywhere. Like there were alligators on campus, there were alligators people's yards, pools, you know, everywhere you can imagine, an alligator being there was, you know, there was an alligator in Walmart. Like not IN Walmart, but in the Walmart parking lot...

[00:02:02.20] Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:02:03.12] Dan Achee: ...Next to the doors, so it was just like, they were just rampant. So, I put an ad out in the Yellow Pages and on Google ads for alligator removal, and I just started removing alligators... and I did that for a few months, um a few... I removed a good bit of alligators, um but then I got a call from a woman

and she was like, "Hey do you remove bees?" And I was like, "no", and she's like, "Well, the cheapest quote I got was 500 dollars". I was like, "500 dollars to remove bees? I'll do it for 400". I ordered a bee suit on Amazon, I did that job, and then I put all that money into advertisements... and long story short, I thought that it would be like, a small business. Maybe I'd do a beehive a month or something, right? Turns out, I was the only bee man that advertised on Google within a four hour radius.

[00:02:49.09]Margot Bullock: Woah.

[00:02:49.23] Dan Achee: ...Right, so that first week that I started advertising, I got three jobs, made twelve hundred dollars in one week, which like, as a college kid, that's a lot of money.

[00:02:56.23]Margot Bullock:Yeah.

[00:02:57.08]Dan Achee: But then I upped the ad budget. Then I was doing five or six a week, and like, that's how it is, throughout the summer and spring times, I would do between five and ten bee jobs a week. Making absolute bank.

[00:03:09.09]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:03:09.14]Dan Achee: And...

[00:03:19.21]Margot Bullock: But you were doing this as a college student, too?

[00:03:21.05]Dan Achee: Yes.

[00:03:21.21]Margot Bullock: Wow.

[00:03:22.06]Dan Achee: Yeah, so whenever I was in college, I worked... a ridiculous amount. Um, because I double majored and I was trying to double minor. I ended up only getting one minor, but um, so I was cell and molecular biology and psychology as the majors, and then I was supposed to be chemistry and math as the minor. But I only got the chemistry minor so I was taken up to 23 hours a

semester. And I was still working above full-time. And a lot of times what I would do is I would do school during the day and then all night you know I was prescribed Adderall for ADHD, and I would just take Adderall, I'd stay up all night, and I would just remove bees until the morning came. Like people would call me to remove their bees and I'd be like all right just give me your address and you'll wake up in the morning and the bees will be gone. and I would just go remove it they'd mail me a check.

[00:04:04.08] Margot Bullock: What a nice schtick.

[00:04:06.12] Dan Achee: Yeah, no, I mean it went really well.

[00:04:07.11] Margot Bullock: So you didn't have to be licensed or anything to do bee removal?

[00:04:09.13] Dan Achee: No.

[00:04:09.21] Margot Bullock: You're just like, "I've got the suit, so..."

[00:04:11.21] Dan Achee: Yeah you really... Louisiana is pretty much a free-for-all, you really don't have to get licensed to do much. Anybody could be a bee removal guy anybody could be a gator removal guy um at least I'm pretty sure. I honestly, I just kind of disregarded the laws because it's Louisiana...

[00:04:28.16] Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:04:28.22] Dan Achee: But I think you're in the clear.

[00:04:30.05] Margot Bullock: Wow.

[00:04:30.16] Dan Achee: Um, so if you're listening this and you want to, do it.

[00:04:34.04] Margot Bullock: Everybody get into...

[00:04:34.21]Dan Achee: I encourage it.

[00:04:35.19]Margot Bullock: ...bee removal jobs. Wow, so then... how did you get from bee removal to New Orleans?

[00:04:43.22]Dan Achee: Okay... so... Another weird job that I've been working on is, for the last... I'd say since late 2020, so kind of towards the beginning of the pandemic, I started working on an education technology platform, it's basically... It's a self-paced course for the ACT and SAT that I'm trying to sell to school system so that's free for kids and you know I'm going to like particularly try to target like poor schools in the bayou region so the kids could actually get free tutoring right um because you know there's a there's Princeton Review and, uh you know, all these different test prep companies. Um, and...

[00:05:22.09]Margot Bullock: Like Khan Academy?

[00:05:23.19]Dan Achee: And Khan Academy is free, which is awesome, but they don't have like a specifically targeted ACT platform, but the ones that do like Princeton Review it's like 500 a kid, and it kind of sucks. Like it's like low quality and everything. I'm sorry that I'm giving the pitch for my thing...

[00:05:36.08]Margot Bullock: No, it's great.

[00:05:37.13]Dan Achee: ...But in the last like almost two years, I've probably filmed a thousand videos for the ACT and SAT. And I'm organizing it into a platform, and then I'm start trying to sell it to school systems, and I moved to New Orleans just because there's a ton of schools in New Orleans. Like, down the bayou we have a few schools. You know, or really down the bayou down the bayou, we have one school, South Terrebonne. You know, and I already know them, and I know that they will gladly use my product, but I wanted to come new on so I could work on the charter schools. You know, because there's a lot of, lot of underprivileged kids in those charter schools that never have access to ACT stuff. You know, so yeah. So that's why I moved to New Orleans. But that also enabled my uberling, you know, because you know it's not very good uberling in Thibodaux Louisiana...

[00:06:22.07]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:06:22.19]Dan Achee: ...But in New Orleans, it's amazing, so, yeah, so, I'd say I moved here for a few reasons.

[00:06:28.14]Margot Bullock: Wow. Quite a bit of an entrepreneur, too.

[00:06:31.19]Dan Achee: Thank you.

[00:06:32.04]Margot Bullock: Yeah. So right when before we came in you were telling me about how you started also working at a high school?

[00:06:38.07]Dan Achee: Yes, yeah.

[00:06:40.09]Margot Bullock: So what do you do there?

[00:06:41.15]Dan Achee: So, I am a high school... so I teach advanced math pre-calc and, uh algebra 2.

[00:06:48.22]Margot Bullock: Wow and you're 25?

[00:06:51.13]Dan Achee: 25, yes.

[00:06:52.05]Margot Bullock: Wow.

[00:06:52.14]Dan: And I'm not certified to be a teacher. So it was actually, uh... yeah. I didn't apply for this job either, it's just, I used to go to school there, right?

[00:07:03.20]Margot Bullock: Okay.

[00:07:04.07]Dan Achee: ...And, you know I... and the teacher, so there's this teacher who I really love, his name is Mr. Tai, he's a brilliant teacher...

[00:07:10.18]Margot Bullock: And this is down the bayou?

[00:07:12.02]Dan Achee: So this is actually in Houma, Louisiana.

[00:07:13.12]Margot Bullock: Oh, in Houma, okay.

[00:07:14.10]Dan Achee: Yes, so in Houma, this teacher named Mr. Tai, who's just like, this genius brilliant teacher, he's been having some like, health issues because he's just overworking himself, so he wanted to take one day off every other day. So basically, they do A days and B days at that school, so they gave me all of the B days. Right, so I get all the same kids on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. But yeah.

[00:07:39.05]Margot Bullock: Wow. That's awesome.

[00:07:41.19]Dan Achee: Yeah, I started that yesterday and I loved it the kids are like, angels. You know, they're like so well behaved and they're just good kids, and yeah. I'm excited about that.

[00:07:50.09]Margot Bullock: Wow.

[00:07:51.02]Dan Achee: So now I'm gonna have three jobs.

[00:07:52.09]Margot Bullock: Yeah, so between that and your test prep company and Ubering like how— how much time do you spend now doing Uber?

[00:07:59.17]Dan Achee: Ah, doing Uber?

[00:08:01.04]Margot Bullock: Versus like when you started, maybe.

[00:08:03.00]Dan Achee: So, on weekends, on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, I always work over a 12 hour shift . And Uber and Lyft. So you can only Uber for 12 hours straight, and then they shut you off, right. Because it's like some weird law where, you know, they don't want truckers and transportation people falling asleep at the wheel, right? But you could do 12 hours of uber and then four hours of lift,

you know, because they don't communicate with each other. So, even if I'm working all week on my test prep platform and now I'm teaching high school, I'll still be able to work, you know, 40 hours a week, but just in a three-day period.

[00:08:37.17]Margot Bullock: In three days?

[00:08:38.16]Dan Achee: Yeah, yeah. Um... because you got to get it while the getting's good, you know, and the weekends are just very profitable as an Uber. Like in New Orleans, if you pull a 14, 15 hour shift on a Saturday, you're going to make 500 to 700 dollars in a day, which is good money.

[00:08:55.17]Margot Bullock: That's amazing. Wow.

[00:08:57.17]Dan Achee: Yeah, but I guess you kind of also have to know how to kind of work Uber very well, and to be honest, since this is about uber-ing, I Uber in a way that is like frantic. You know, when a passenger is not my car, I speed. You know, because I'm trying to maximize the amount of money I make in the shortest period of time because we don't get paid by the hour, we get paid by the trip.

[00:09:19.16]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:09:20.04]Dan Achee: Right, so in between trips I'm speeding. You know, if I need to use the restroom, there's so many construction sites in New Orleans right now, I just find a port a-potty, pull over, pee, and then go.

[00:09:30.08]Margot Bullock: Yeah

[00:09:30.19]Dan Achee: Right, I don't eat. Like, I don't stop to eat or take breaks. Like, when I do a 12 hour shift, there's a zero minute break in that 12 hour shift. Usually, like in the morning before I start, I'll buy like, just like a box of cereal, and I'll just like, munch on it as I'm driving. Yeah, so I go pretty hard with the, uh, with the uber-ing.

[00:09:52.09]Margot Bullock: So you're like you're really a hustler. Because that's 40 hours a week doing that plus, you know, 20 hours doing your new teaching profession...

[00:10:01.01]Dan Achee: yes.

[00:10:01.21]Margot Bullock: ...And then working on your other business in the meantime.

[00:10:06.09]Dan Achee: Yeah, yeah, well like, honestly, I don't find myself to be a particularly like hard-working person. Like, I'm not one of those people that just have the drive, you know. But I love all three of my jobs. You know, like Ubering, I just have such a good time just driving around people in New Orleans because everybody's so friendly and nice, like you, you're literally doing an interview with your Uber driver...

[00:10:27.12]Margot Bullock: Thank you.

[00:10:28.06]Dan Achee: ...And uh, no, I just love it. You meet all kinds of different people, they're usually kind, and you're just driving them around, having a 10-minute conversation with them, and so I love that. I love teaching, you know, even though I've only done it for a day, but my kids are amazing. They want to learn, they pay attention, they're smart kids. And then the— the test prep platform, I honestly, I've been working on that for no pay this entire time because I haven't even tried to sell it yet, I want to wait till it's completed. But hypothetically, even if I knew that I would never make a dollar from that, I would still do it. So like, all three of my jobs are jobs that I just love doing. So, it makes it easier. It makes it not feel like work.

[00:11:06.22]Margot Bullock: That's great.

[00:11:07.16]Dan Achee: ...And you know, the diversity of the jobs also is nice because it's not like I just Uber 90 hours a week. Or it's not like I just work on the platform 90 hours a week. It's like I have like a kind of equal balance of all three.

[00:11:18.16]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:11:19.06]Dan Achee: So yeah, it's nice.

[00:11:20.11]Margot Bullock: Does it ever feel weird for you that you're— even though you're working, like for Uber full-time, essentially, Uber and Lyft...

[00:11:27.21]Dan Achee: Yes.

[00:11:28.13]Margot Bullock: ...You know. But you don't... you don't receive any benefits from doing that, you know?

[00:11:34.03]Dan Achee: No.

[00:11:35.01]Margot Bullock: Do you get any kind of like benefits with your car, or insurance, or anything?

[00:11:39.08]Dan Achee: Ah, no no.

[00:11:40.06]Margot Bullock: None?

[00:11:40.22]Dan Achee: So really, like the the only benefits, quote unquote, or— you know, a lot of companies do discounts for Uber drivers like like take five oil change.

[00:11:51.01]Margot Bullock: Oh, really?

[00:11:51.23]Dan Achee: You know, so you get 25 percent off oil change. But that's not, like, a benefit from Uber.

[00:11:56.11]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:11:57.06]Dan Achee: But we don't get any like health insurance options, or dental options, or really any options whatsoever. Our only compensation is the money that we get deposited into our bank account from the trips. And um... yeah. And not a lot of people know this, but Uber drivers don't make a giant percentage of an Uber trip. You know, because it doesn't tell us exactly what percentage we're getting, but I'll Uber somebody from the airport, and the trip will be a 50 dollar trip, and I get like, 18 dollars off of it. So they pay us a definitely less than half...

[00:12:28.22]Margot Bullock: Yes.

[00:12:30.22]Dan Achee: ...Of the the total price. And if you really think about their running costs, I mean it's an online platform. They don't need a million employees, they don't pay for the gas, they don't pay for the insurance, they don't pay for the car, which is a depreciating asset. They really should have low expenses, ridiculously high profit margins. And they have people that are trying to support families. You know, I'm just lucky that I am not trying to support a family. Because I can make do without health insurance, but a lot of people can't. You know, and if I was sickly, or if something tragic happened, I would just be absolutely screwed. Yeah, yeah. So it is, it is weird not having the health insurance.

[00:13:12.05]Margot Bullock: Yeah. Especially since you're giving so much of yourself for this job and I mean...

[00:13:15.22]Dan Achee: Yeah .

[00:13:16.17]Margot Bullock: ...Like, I feel like Uber's kind of a high risk work environment.

[00:13:19.18]Dan Achee: Oh yeah, yeah oh it honestly, and it's getting riskier and riskier. Because in New Orleans, um like carjackings have just skyrocketed. I'm pretty sure they've doubled in the last two years, and they were already pretty high. Um, I see videos all the time, but I need to stop following these accounts, but I follow these accounts on like TikTok, and they'll just post dash cam videos of like, Uber drivers getting guns put to their head... I saw one the other day of this woman

being... basically the guy told her to drive to a back alley, and he executed her. Took her car. Um, actually I... so I took the Uber sticker off of my car. And the reason why I did that is because a lot of people assume, oh this car is parked and they have an Uber sticker. They're probably waiting for somebody to jump in the car, the door is going to be unlocked. So people will jump in the car, put a gun to them, and rob them. So yeah, it really is getting a little bit scarier, you know, as time goes by. Um...

[00:14:13.18]Margot Bullock: Yeah, and I remember you telling me that you had kind of been in witness to a stickier situation like that too.

[00:14:21.04]Dan Achee: Yeah, yeah, and that that's that's the other big thing about uberin, it's like, sometimes, you can just take an Uber, and it brings you to a really bad area. You know, and I ubered this girl. I'm not going to say where I ubered her to, but I ubered her into a bad neighborhood, and as I'm driving away, I see a woman on the side of the road being strangled against the hood of a car. And it was a much larger woman strangling a tiny woman, who, when at first glance, I thought it was a child. The woman was probably four foot eleven, and the woman who was like, six foot tall is strangling her with both hands and spitting in her face, and the smaller girl looks like she's like fighting for her life. Like, it looks like she's going to lose consciousness. So I pulled over, and I call the police. I asked them how long it'll take, the dispatcher is like, "we don't know yet." And I was thinking, the last thing I heard in New Orleans, the response times are up to two hours. So I was like, okay, if I just like let this happen, the woman's gonna be strangled to death. So I shot a two second clip of it, just so I had proof that she was in imminent danger, and then I jumped in. And basically, you know, I didn't do too much. Really the main thing that I did was— so me and another bystander restrained the larger woman, and she was on the ground being bear-hugged by the other woman bystander. And when that happened, I thought the fight was going to be over. But then, the smaller girl runs up and soccer kicks her in the face and starts stomping her head into the ground. And I'm talking like, stomping, stomping. So I was like, okay, I can't let this happen, so I went up behind her, and I made sure to do it in like a gentle way, because she was much smaller, but I like, bear hugged her, pinning her arms to her side, and kind of lifted her up and just walked away with her. So now I'm thinking, okay, now

the fight's over. But then the bigger girl gets up, starts running at us. So I'm trying to run to avoid her getting to the girl, but eventually she grabs her hair and starts beating the back of her head. So I let her down. And when I let her down, I actually did feel bad because I put her in like, a disadvantaged situation, like I allowed her hair to get grabbed. So I was like, "I'm sorry" and she's like B you held me... can I cuss?

[00:16:34.18]Margot Bullock: Yeah, you're fine.

[00:16:35.14]Dan Achee: She was like [__] you held me, [__] you held me, and she keeps saying [__] you held me, [__] you held me. And I'm like, a nerd, you know I was dressed in my Teacher's outfit because that was a day that I went to go shadow, so I'm in my teacher's outfit, I'm in a white Toyota Prius, looking as nerdy as possible. And I'm just trying to communicate with the woman, I'm like, "I'm so sorry, I wasn't trying to like, disadvantage you, I was trying to like help you, like I don't want you to go to jail for stomping this woman to death", and she just keeps saying it, [__] you held me, [__] you held me. And long story short, she eventually breaks the grip of the woman grabbing her hair and runs towards her car. So when she runs towards her car, I'm thinking oh, she's going to run me over. So I stand next to my car, I'm ready to jump on the roof so she can't pin me. Right, but she opens the back seat instead of the front seat, and that's when I was like, oh, it's about to go down.

[00:17:21.18]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:17:22.12]Dan Achee: So I jump in my Prius and I take off, and Priuses don't really take off, they go very, very slow. So I'm taking off, I'm looking in the rear view, she's fumbling with the gun, and eventually she puts it about a foot above her head, and I'm pretty sure she fired, like, 10 rounds.

[00:17:35.17]Margot Bullock: Just like, in your direction?

[00:17:37.04]Dan Achee: In my direc— I was really far away at that point. So, I tried to ask the police how many rounds she fired. Because um... like, whenever you're in

a state like that, a lot of people think that you would remember things clearer, but a lot of times, when you're in that state of panic, your brain just fills in the dots, you know what I'm saying? So, I don't know if she actually fired 10 times, you know what I'm saying, I just know that I saw a gun, I was far away, she's lifting it up in the air, and I'm like, you know, I was just petrified.

[00:18:01.18]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:18:02.13]Dan Achee: And sadly, my dash cam was not on. But I'm lucky I had that little two-minute — I mean, that two-second video.

[00:18:09.08]Margot Bullock: Yeah, so do you have a dash cam?

[00:18:11.00]Dan Achee: I do have a dash cam.

[00:18:13.09]Margot Bullock: Is that something that's given to you by Uber?

[00:18:15.18]Dan Achee: No. No, Uber doesn't give us anything. So, no dash cam from Uber. You have to buy it yourself.

[00:18:20.23]Margot Bullock: And that's another way to protect you?

[00:18:23.05]Dan Achee: Yes.

[00:18:23.20]Margot Bullock: But it's not a way that they want to give you protection.

[00:18:25.12]Dan Achee: Yes.

[00:18:26.06]Margot Bullock: Wow.

[00:18:26.21]Dan Achee: Yeah, so what I do with my dash cam, anytime I'm in between trips, I unplug it. And the reason why is because you only have a certain amount of storage on the, uh, the SD card. And I like to get, like a... you know,

probably two or three days of video, put it into my computer, put in a Dropbox, and save the videos. Just in case something happens in the future, where I need proof of like, a safely dropped off trip, you know. But you know, after trips I unplug it. And I unplugged it after my trip and I really wish I'd kept it on because you know. But they— to me, it seems ridiculous that Uber doesn't provide people with dash cams...

[00:19:03.11]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:19:04.00]Dan Achee: ...Because I've heard of so many Uber drivers getting their lives ruined, because that's their livelihood. Due to like, false accusations. So I had a woman. I remember this very specifically, her name was Ursula. Right, which is a horrible name, who names their daughter Ursula? Like, come on, bro. But I was driving her to the Golden Corral, right, and it was like, a really expensive Uber because there was like a big surge that day. Right, so I drop her off, and legit 10 seconds later, I get a notification, your account has been disabled. So I'm like, okay, what happened? So I'm trying to figure out what happened, right, so I call Uber support and they're like "your your account is permanently disabled". I was like, "permanently?" And they said it was because she reported me for drinking while driving. She said I was actively drinking while driving her to Golden Corral. Which is absurd like an Uber driver wouldn't just take a swig of...

[00:19:55.20]Margot Bullock: Also to... Golden Corral?

[00:19:56.19]Dan Achee: To Golden Corral, I know, like... and you know at this point, I had a five-star rating for like, over like, 5,000 trips, so it seems like Uber would kind of be like, "oh wait, this guy literally has a perfect Uber rating and 5,000 trips. Maybe, maybe he's not drinking while driving". But they immediately banned my account. And the way I got it unbanned is as soon as I got off the phone with them, which, this was probably 20 minutes after the allegation. I drive immediately to the emergency room, I got a full blood panel drawn so that I had proof that there was no alcohol or no drugs of any kind of my system, I emailed it to the Uber support, and I basically had to harass them. I emailed it to them like... like every 30 minutes until somebody responded. Because it's actually really hard to get in contact with

Uber support. Like, as an Uber driver, to actually get in contact with a human being, it takes a very, very, very long time. Like sometimes, they'll put you off for days at a time.

[00:20:53.15]Margot Bullock: Wow, but this is like your paycheck.

[00:20:56.14]Dan Achee: That was my paycheck, and I was really thinking, oh I'm gonna have my life ruined.

[00:20:59.16]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:20:59.21]Dan Achee: I was thinking, I'm gonna get evicted or something, because that was before I had another paying job. All I had was Uber so, yeah.

[00:21:06.15]Margot Bullock: Yeah and so... you don't have the protection, the initial protection which is the dash cam that could have showed or...

[00:21:12.00]Dan Achee: Yes.

[00:21:12.13]Margot Bullock: ...That you weren't, and then you had to take yourself to the emergency room and pay an emergency room bill.

[00:21:15.12]Dan Achee: Yep.

[00:21:17.12]Margot Bullock: Right, and then Uber didn't pay that.

[00:21:19.10]Dan Achee: No.

[00:21:20.11]Margot Bullock: They were like, "okay thanks for proving"...

[00:21:21.20]Dan Achee: Yeah.

[00:21:22.16]Margot Bullock: And that's the end of that story.

[00:21:24.00]Dan Achee: Yes, yeah.

[00:21:24.23]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:21:25.09]Dan Achee: And um, I even like I even mentioned that to the um... the people that I was speaking to on like the Uber chat, and I was like, "well, shouldn't you all have to pay for that?" since like this was, like, a cost of doing like, you know, it was like a cost of employment, you know? And they just told me, they were like, "we didn't tell you to go to the emergency room". I was like, "well, you all told me my account was permanently disabled."

[00:21:45.08]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:21:46.01]Dan Achee: But yeah it was...

[00:21:47.19]Margot Bullock: And if you had been someone else, and your account was disabled, what would you... like, and you didn't have another option what would you have done? Except being evicted and...

[00:21:55.11]Dan Achee: Nothing! Yeah, yeah that I mean that's it! I had another problem, so this is a... this is a pandemic issue, if you don't mind me speaking about it.

[00:22:03.02]Margot Bullock: Go ahead, please.

[00:22:03.23]Dan Achee: So at the beginning of the pandemic, uberizing came to like, a grinding halt. Right, so I tried to apply for unemployment, right, but I was denied. I think that was before they passed the bill that allowed gig workers to get unemployment. But they rejected my unemployment. And I was already kind of, you know, I was working as much as I possibly could because at that time I only had Uber, I didn't have Lyft yet. So I was working 12 hours a day every single day. Like every day. Like, there was a, there was a month period where I literally worked the maximum amount that an Uber driver could possibly work. And I was barely paying my bills. Because New Orleans just shut down for the pandemic. Like it shut down,

shut down, because we have some... you know, our tourist population at any given time is almost larger than our actual native population.

[00:22:51.20]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:22:52.11]Dan Achee: So, you know when that shut off, Ubering shut off. And... Yeah. And there was this point where they said that um... Okay. Uber had this policy that they were talking about in the media, and they were really trying to make themselves look good, that if their Uber drivers got sick, they would pay them to stay home. Right, pay them what they would usually make to stay home. Right. So I get sick. It's obviously COVID. But I'm pretty sure this was at the point where tests were being rationed for old people and like, immunocompromised people, so I couldn't actually get a test to prove that I was sick. So I start taking off, they reject my, uh... they reject my payment, they don't pay me, and then I realized I don't have enough money to pay my bills. So I was like, I either... because I like you know... and I feel horrible for this, but these are my only two options. Either I quadruple mask and work, or I get evicted, and I don't pay my car payment, I get my car taken. Like, as an Uber driver, if you if you lose your car, you lose your livelihood. And I literally, like I literally had to Uber with COVID, four masks on... because we had no safety net. We didn't have a government safety net, we didn't have an Uber safety net, they lied to us about the Uber safety net, and um... I'm sure I'm not the only one that had to make that decision.

[00:24:18.11]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:24:19.10]Dan Achee: ...And like, for me, honestly, all of these decisions are like, much lighter decisions because I don't have a wife, I don't have kids, I don't have a family. You know?

[00:24:28.07]Margot Bullock: Yeah, totally.

[00:24:29.08]Dan Achee: ...But there's people that are, you know, 60 years old, who actually are vulnerable. They're a vulnerable population, and they had to work through COVID to pay for their entire family. Like, they have kids depending on

them. You know? Which like, is an even more weightier decision. So I can only imagine how many people have to do similar things during that time.

[00:24:50.17]Margot Bullock: Yeah, wow. And it's, but it's not even your fault.

[00:24:54.05]Dan Achee: Yeah.

[00:24:54.19]Margot Bullock: Did you ever get into like, doing UberEats delivery?

[00:24:57.18]Dan Achee: So honestly, I've never done Uber Eats. I just, I hate it. I hate, like, I hate dealing with people's food.

[00:25:03.21]Margot Bullock: Yeah that makes sense.

[00:25:05.02]Dan Achee: So, I used to be a Jimmy John's delivery driver, whenever I was in uh, I think this was like my last year high school, first year of college, right. And um... I hate dealing with people's food. I don't know why, it's just, it drives me nuts.

[00:25:20.13]Margot Bullock: Yeah, and you have to wait for it, and...

[00:25:22.22]Dan Achee: Yes... that's that's exactly it. It's like, there's so much, uh, and especially whenever... so Jimmy John's, you know, your company's making the sandwiches, you're going to deliver it. But like with UberEats, it's like, you're relying on all these other companies to be like, accurate with their predicted times of completion of the order. Um... yeah.

[00:25:41.13]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:25:42.08]Dan Achee: But honestly, I should have just done that. Like at the beginning, I should have done, I didn't even think of it!

[00:25:49.02]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:25:49.22]Dan Achee: You know, I guess it's like, it's like we talked about earlier, it's like when you're in that like panic mode, you know, it's like your brain kind of just shuts off. You know, whether you're in panic mode because somebody's shooting at you, or you're in panic mode because you don't know you're gonna make the bills, it's just like, your brain just... you get tunnel vision. You know, and you just like kind of double down, dig your heels in, and try to do what you're doing, you know?

[00:26:08.15]Margot Bullock: Yeah, and you shouldn't, also though, you shouldn't be subjected to doing a job you don't want to do just because the job that you have isn't giving you what you need.

[00:26:16.07]Dan Achee: Yeah, yeah.

[00:26:17.13]Margot Bullock: And it's through like the same kind of company, just a different branch of that company.

[00:26:20.22]Dan Achee: Yes, yeah. Yeah, that was... that was the most mad I've ever been at Uber. Whenever they said that they would take, like, whenever they would pay us, and they ended up not paying us. Like, I posted about it on Twitter, I tried to make it go like, viral or whatever, because I was like, I know if this goes viral they would pay me, you know. Um, but yeah, nothing ever happened.

[00:26:42.07]Margot Bullock: Wow.

[00:26:43.04]Dan Achee: But yeah.

[00:26:44.01]Margot Bullock: Yeah, I didn't realize— I didn't even know that there was like, a bill surrounding, like, the gig economy and...

[00:26:49.02]Dan Achee: Yes.

[00:26:50.06]Margot Bullock: ...protection during COVID.

[00:26:51.11]Dan Achee: I do think that was one of the first bills passed, so I was just unlucky because when I got COVID, it was like, at the very very beginning because I'm an Uber driver. You know, so it's like, most people were like, hunkered down, you know, and I was Ubering doctors and nurses to work. You know, so it's just, I got COVID so early on, it was before a lot of the bills that actually helped the people out.

[00:27:11.02]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:27:11.13]Dan Achee: You know what I'm saying? Um... yeah.

[00:27:14.08]Margot Bullock: Wow.

[00:27:15.02]Dan Achee: Yeah.

[00:27:15.20]Margot Bullock: That's insane.

[00:27:16.21]Dan Achee: Yeah. Yeah, that was a unique time for sure.

[00:27:21.16]Margot Bullock: Yeah. It seems like kind of a bit of a low time. So why did you...

[00:27:26.01]Dan Achee: Oh yeah.

[00:27:26.16]Margot Bullock: ...Keep working with Uber, even after this period?

[00:27:31.00]Dan Achee: Honestly, as much as I dislike Uber as a company, I love the job. You know? If I could be a taxi driver instead, I would love to do that. You know what I'm saying? I just, I love having 10 to 20 minute conversations with nice strangers that I've never met before, and getting to know them. You know, and a lot of times they will... you know, whenever you're a kind stranger, and you're in the comfort of somebody else's car, it's one-on-one. People feel comfortable to like, confess things that they wouldn't even confess to a therapist. You know? I've had people tell me things that have legitimately haunted me. You know, and it's just...

people feel comfortable, you know? If you're a kind stranger, people just feel so much comfort with a kind stranger. And, and honestly like, I like, live for that.

[00:28:19.03]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:28:19.18]Dan Achee: Like, when I get like a wild Uber confession, it makes my night. You know, or if I... and honestly, like sometimes, like... you, you get to kind of act like a therapist. You know, I have a degree in Psychology, but I'm not a therapist, but sometimes, I do feel like a therapist, because you know, people ask advice, people like, really talk to you at a level that they wouldn't even talk to a loved one. Because, you know, with our loved ones, there's so many uh... you know, like as a man, you might not want to look weak in front of your best friend, so you don't tell them things that you should tell them because you're in a bad space. But with your Uber driver, you know you're never going to see him again, so you can.

[00:28:56.00]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:28:57.01]Dan Achee: You know, you feel more comfortable. Um, and... you know, it's just a lot of people just don't have somebody that they can actually talk to about the real things, or they think they don't.

[00:29:06.17]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:29:07.09]Dan Achee: But their Uber driver is somebody they could talk to.

[00:29:09.23]Margot Bullock: So would you say that's like one of your favorite parts of the job, or the best part?

[00:29:13.13]Dan Achee: Oh yeah, I definitely think that's the best part. And it's just like... it's not only the confessions, but it's just the openness. You know what I'm saying? Like, even if people don't confess things, I just like the openness of it. You know, they might not have anything to confess, but, um... I just feel like all of my passengers are just... like, I don't even know what it is, but they just open up in an Uber. You know, and it's just, it's a good conversation. Because like, I don't think in

everyday life, we ever really have non-forced conversations with strangers. You know, like, if me and you were sitting together in an airplane, right, it's kind of like a... I feel like it's like a weird thing. You know, it's a weird thing to just, like, talk to somebody on airplane. It's like a weird thing whenever you're like trying to like sell somebody on something, or you're doing sales calls, or if you're talking to people for your business, or you're working at Jimmy John's and you're taking an order, it's like all the strangers that you talk to, you're talking to them for a reason. Like, there's like, an end goal for the reason that you're talking...

[00:30:18.22]Margot Bullock: Yeah

[00:30:19.10]Dan Achee: ...Or even if you're talking to somebody at a bar! You know, if you're approaching somebody at a bar, it likely means that you think they're attractive, and you're trying to flirt with them. You know, it's like, like almost all of our interactions are like, goal oriented.

[00:30:29.09]Margot Bullock: Yeah, to meet an end.

[00:30:30.09]Dan Achee: ...But like, Ubering it's literally just... that is just non-existent. There's no goal to the interaction the only goal is just to kind of brighten their day, brighten my day, just make Ubering fly by a little bit quicker. So, I just feel like the conversations are always awesome. You know, sometimes we'll go deeply philosophical. You know, sometimes they'll get really sad, and especially in New Orleans, people are open already. So, I'll be like, "hey, how are you doing?" and you know in another city, people would go, "oh, I'm doing fine", but in New Orleans, they might be, "oh, well I had a miscarriage yesterday". You know, it's like, they might go immediately deep.

[00:31:07.22]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:31:09.03]Dan Achee: You know, and I mean, I love that. I mean it might be sad in the moment, but you know I'll Uber people, I'll be like, "how you doing?" and they'll be like, "my wife left me. I'm doing horrible." And they'll just spill it to me.

[00:31:21.19]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:31:22.12]Dan Achee: You know...

[00:31:23.18]Margot Bullock: You like being that person that can listen to them.

[00:31:25.11]Dan Achee: I like being that person.

[00:31:26.13]Margot Bullock: It's also a good way I guess to keep up the practice with your degree...

[00:31:29.19]Dan Achee: Yeah!

[00:31:30.04]Margot Bullock: ...in case you never need to use it again.

[00:31:31.01]Dan Achee: No, 100 percent, 100 percent. I'm thinking about psychiatry in medical school.

[00:31:35.15]Margot Bullock: Right.

[00:31:37.03]Dan Achee: So I mean, this would give me a little bit of help with that. You know a little bit of practice. And I have, yeah...

[00:31:43.13]Margot Bullock: So, when are you thinking... when would Medical School fit on your timeline?

[00:31:49.15]Dan Achee: So, hopefully August.

[00:31:51.05]Margot Bullock: Okay.

[00:31:52.05]Dan Achee: Like August 2023. So not too... not too long from now. But I already submitted all my med school applications, and I'm just waiting to hear back about interviews and stuff like that. Or just rejections across the board, you know

you never know. Um... but uh, yeah so hopefully August. But honestly, even when I'm in med school, I will definitely Uber. Even if it's just like once a month.

[00:32:17.08]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:32:18.01]Dan Achee: I'll definitely do it occasionally... yeah.

[00:32:22.01]Margot Bullock: So where do you think you're going to be applying? Or where have you applied for med school?

[00:32:25.14]Dan Achee: So I applied at a ton. I applied 20 different schools.

[00:32:29.13]Margot Bullock: Wow.

[00:32:30.04]Dan Achee: And uh, so the main ones that I really want to get into is LSU New Orleans because I want to stay in New Orleans, Tulane New Orleans, again because I really want to stay in New Orleans, and then LSU Shreveport because I really want to stay in Louisiana. But then I prefer south Louisiana.

[00:32:44.23]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:32:46.01]Dan Achee: But other than that, you know, I applied to some dream schools. You know, everybody applies to like, Harvard and Stanford, you know, everybody applies at like, the dream schools, even if you have like, no chance of getting in, which I have no chance of getting into those places. But you know you gotta apply anyway, you never know.

[00:33:00.10]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:33:01.17]Dan Achee: But yeah. But I'm— I really am hoping to stay in Louisiana.

[00:33:06.16]Margot Bullock: So, when did you realize this like desire to go to med school though?

[00:33:10.11]Dan Achee: Four months ago.

[00:33:11.05]Margot Bullock: Four months ago?

[00:33:12.13]Dan Achee: Yeah, this was actually kind of a weird story, if you...

[00:33:15.20]Margot Bullock: Go ahead, yeah, of course.

[00:33:17.20]Dan Achee: So, I originally wanted to do a PhD in Neuroscience. That was the goal, because I think neuroscience is the coolest stuff. Right, and I wanted to work in like, the domain of like, neurological devices because I think that's the future of psychiatry. You know, I think the future of psychiatry is going to be much more directed neurological devices rather than, um... you know, drugs that actually change the chemical makeup of the entire brain. You know, things that are much more specific. You know, and so, I wanted to go into neuroscience. Um... but I just woke up one morning and just changed my mind. And that was like four months ago. I just woke up and I was like, "no I'm gonna go to med school." Because like, all the things that I wanted to do with a PhD I could do with an MD.

[00:34:08.08]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:34:08.23]Dan Achee: Like, and I could actually do it better. You know, you could you could do research with an MD, nobody's gonna be like, "oh, you can't do research with me, you have an MD, not a PhD." You know, nobody thinks like that. And also like a lot of the type of research that I want to do, it would actually benefit me to be a practitioner of medicine. You know what I'm saying, it would benefit me to actually be able to have, like, a clinical experience with the people rather than just be typed in the papers and crunching the numbers, you know? Um, okay. So I woke up decided that, and I literally, I Googled "how to sign up for the MCAT". I scheduled the MCAT for three and a half weeks from that day like...

[00:34:44.01]Margot Bullock: Wow.

[00:34:45.09]Dan Achee: ...Immediately, like I was just like, I'm just taking MCAT immediately. I went to uh Barnes Noble, I bought all of the MCAT books that I could find and just started reading them. And I studied for again, probably 14 hours a day, every single day, other than the days that I worked. I was able to just work three days a week, so I would study four days, work three days, study four days, work three days, so really, I only got like a total of probably like, 16 days of studying before the MCAT. And I took it and recently got my scores back, and I'm applying.

[00:35:17.11]Margot Bullock: Yeah, and you did well enough to apply? To feel comfortable applying?

[00:35:21.09]Dan Achee: Yeah.

[00:35:21.12]Margot Bullock: That's insane. Like, good for you

[00:35:23.19]Dan Achee: [Whispers test scores]

[00:35:25.20]Margot Bullock: Wow! That's really awesome.

[00:35:28.16]Dan Achee: Thank you, I'm good with standardized testing, that's why I'm making the standardized testing platform...

[00:35:32.16]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:35:33.10]Dan Achee: ...you know, so it's it's kind of cheating because I have so much experience with other standardized tests...

[00:35:37.08]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:35:38.00]Dan Achee: ...And really, when it comes down to it, most standardized tests are kind of the same, but just with different... different jargon. You know, like in my opinion, the MCAT is just all a reading comprehension test that just uses medical jargon and medical terminology that you have to know the background of.

But once you know all that background, everything found in those books that I read... Once you know that, it's just a reading comprehension test, um...

[00:36:03.16]Margot Bullock: Wow. So did you do well, like on standardized tests in high school and stuff like that?

[00:36:08.20]Dan Achee: Yeah, I always— I always did good on those. So... I took the ACT for the first time the summer of my ninth grade year and I got a 31. So I did really well. I'm just good with standardized tests.

[00:36:21.20]Margot Bullock: It just makes sense to you.

[00:36:22.20]Dan Achee: It just makes sense to me. And you know, it it kind of makes me feel bad sometimes talking about it, because I know some people that are like absolutely geniuses, like much smarter than me, that do not do good on standardized tests. And then there's people like me that are like, much less smart than those people, but I just do better on standardized exams. Like, I think standardized tests, you know, they're not always an accurate predictor. You know, sometimes they're inaccurate.

[00:36:45.01]Margot Bullock: If you know how to rig it, especially.

[00:36:46.16]Dan Achee: You got to rig it! 100 percent, that really is it. If you know how to rig it, if you know how to think about it, it can way over-predict your intelligence. You know what I'm saying? And I'm just lucky that I am in that category of being good at standardized tests because they mean so much in our lives. Like they mean way too much in our lives, honestly. Because if you're really good at standardized tests, you're kind of like allowed to do whatever in this world. You know it's, it's honestly ridiculous.

[00:37:14.03]Margot Bullock: Totally.

[00:37:15.14]Dan Achee: Like I don't know. Like, like you could literally have a 4.0 majoring in like, the hardest subject. You could major in, like astrophysics and

biochem, get a 4.0, but if you make like a 495 on the MCAT, they will never let you into med school. Like it's, it's ridiculous. But like, the fact that you did that good in hard majors shows that— that's a better prediction of how smart you are than the MCAT is.

[00:37:43.17]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:37:44.10]Dan Achee: So it's like, it's kind of ridiculous. But again, I'm not going to complain too much um yeah, because it helps me.

[00:37:52.15]Margot Bullock: No yeah, I mean... I'm with you on that.

[00:37:54.23]Dan Achee: Yeah.

[00:37:55.11]Margot Bullock: I think it I think it is kind of ridiculous that it's... but I mean, it makes people like you with this new company, makes you be in a good position.

[00:38:03.23]Dan Achee: Yes it does, yeah absolutely.

[00:38:06.03]Margot Bullock: So, what's your timeline with that company?

[00:38:09.18]Dan Achee: Okay. So I think that I should be done by the end of this school year. And I really want to be done by the new school year because I'm going to be starting medical school in August. Hopefully going to be starting med school in August, I should say. Um... but yeah, I'm hoping to be done with it by then. But if that ends up being successful and helps a lot of people, I would like to then, while I'm in medical school, make one for the MCAT. Because whereas ACT prep courses might be five hundred dollars, the MCAT prep courses are like three thousand dollars.

[00:38:39.19]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:38:40.12]Dan Achee: It's a money racket. And my biggest thing with standardized test, I think if... so if everybody got equal preparation, it still wouldn't be a perfect predictor, but it would be much fairer. But you know, whenever I Uber parents at a private school that I'm not going to mention, nearby...

[00:39:00.06]Margot: Not Loyola, it's the other one.

[00:39:03.22]Dan Achee: When I Uber those parents, I always would talk to them about what they did for their children for the ACT, SAT, and college admissions. And they'll be like, "oh yeah we probably spent 10 grand on prep."

[00:39:15.04]Margot Bullock: Oh.

[00:39:15.19]Dan Achee: "What?" They'll pay these tutors 100 dollars an hour to tutor their kid twice a week from 10th grade to 12th grade. Right...

[00:39:25.07]Margot Bullock: Wow.

[00:39:25.23]Dan Achee: And so, I used to do one-on-one ACT tutoring as well. And you know, I had a student go from like a mid-20 score, which is like you know 60th percentile, all the way up to 35. But I tutor him once a week from his sophomore year to his senior year. So you can get a 10-point score jump if your parents are willing to spend a lot of money and force you to spend a lot of time working on it. Right, um and you know... I think that's messed up. Um... yeah...

[00:39:58.16]Margot Bullock: Super messed up.

[00:39:59.05]Dan Achee: ...Because that just so disadvantages certain people. And... I don't know, it's like, it's a horrible circumstance, and that's why I wanted to make the program, because I kind of wanted to even the odds, you know, like help people out. Um, but... so I probably tutored 100 people for the ACT, right, I would just put ads around, and um... people would like, call me, you know, I had like, little signs and stuff. And in my entire time doing it, like the demographics of the people that I ubered was like, it was literally like, it would appall you. You know what I'm saying,

like every single person I was ubering was like, a doctor's kid. You know what I'm saying?

[00:40:39.21]Margot Bullock: Ubering or tutoring?

[00:40:40.19]Dan Achee: Oh my bad, tutoring.

[00:40:41.16]Margot Bullock: Okay.

[00:40:43.21]Dan Achee: Um... but every single person that I tutored was like, doctors kids, lawyers kids, like it's never that I was Uber— it's never that I was tutoring like, uh middle class kids, or lower class kids, like it was just all kids whose parents could already afford for them to go to college. So I'm getting paid to make these kids better at a test so that they could go to college for free, even though their parents aren't rich and they could pay for it, whereas the kids that actually need it, their parents can't afford tutoring.

[00:41:13.07]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:41:14.03]Dan Achee: And they can't afford tutoring, so they don't get a good ACT score, don't get a good SAT score. So they have to pay out the Wazoo for college, but their parents can't afford that. So they just go into a ridiculous amount of debt, or they choose not to go to college. Like, the system, like the prep system...

[00:41:28.18]Margot Bullock: It's just so cyclical...

[00:41:30.00]Dan Achee: ...Is exactly inverted. Like all the like, the prep should be going to the kids who can't afford college. That should be where 90 percent of the ACT prep goes to. But it's completely inverted. Probably 95 to— honestly, I wouldn't be surprised it was 99 percent of the ACT prep happens to kids that are upper middle class and above. Um, so yeah.

[00:41:51.01]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:41:51.14]Dan Achee: The goal is to kind of tilt it.

[00:41:53.17]Margot Bullock: The same thing is true with like, the majority of the school systems, like in the United States, like we have... any kind of public univers— or public high school that's doing well is going to get more Federal funding...

[00:42:05.05]Dan Achee: Yes.

[00:42:05.18]Margot Bullock: ...than the public school that's doing poorly in the next District over.

[00:42:08.21]Dan Achee: Yeah.

[00:42:09.10]Margot Bullock: It's like, why are you going to keep— continue to benefit someone who already is benefited?

[00:42:13.14]Dan Achee: Yes, yeah it's it's completely inverted.

[00:42:16.05]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:42:17.02]Dan Achee: You know.

[00:42:18.08]Margot Bullock: It's interesting though that you've been able to use Uber as a way for you to conduct this informal research.

[00:42:23.01]Dan Achee: Yes, yes, so anytime I need like, an opinion poll about something. I use Uber.

[00:42:28.17]Margot Bullock: That's awesome.

[00:42:29.10]Dan Achee: So whenever I first started working on my product, I legitimately had my big old iPad, and while I was driving, I would drive with my knee, and I would give them the demo. Which is horrible, you know it's dangerous, but um... I just wanted to you know, get their opinions. Or if there's anything, like,

political going on, and I want to see how, like, Louisiana actually feels about it, I just ask a bunch of people. You know, and I really like it because it's such a good tool because of the openness of Uber. And really, Uber is a perfect slice of the population. You know, it's not like only certain demographics Uber, it's not like only certain political parties Uber, it's like everybody Ubers. Um... so, I get to meet people that I never would have met before, get out of my bubble, and actually, like, talk to people that believe, like, vastly different things for me. You know like— like Ubering through the pandemic, uh, I did not believe how many people believe that uh COVID was really 5G, like, destroying our DNA. Or like, that, you know, there's microchips in the vaccine. Or... you know, and people believe wild things on both sides. You know, they would just tell me things that would just blow my mind. You know, and uh... I enjoyed that because I got to go, "oh, so people actually do believe that."

[00:43:45.08]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:43:46.10]Dan Achee: You know, because I always thought, whenever I'd see that, I was— I think, oh that's just memes, like nobody actually believes that...

[00:43:50.21]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:43:51.17]Dan Achee: ...Like people just think it's funny, the idea that somebody could believe that. No, people actually believe in the Flat Earth, and they're willing to to debate you about it.

[00:43:59.06]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:43:59.23]Dan Achee: People actually believe that like, 5G is killing us, and microchips, and all that stuff.

[00:44:04.11]Margot Bullock: Yeah, I one time had— like, it was the first summer after COVID, and I was at this wedding party, and I was talking to this woman whose child had just come to school in New Orleans, too and we were talking about COVID and the vaccine, and I was like, "oh yeah like I just got my third vaccine dosage." And

she was like, "oh I haven't gotten a single one". And I'm like, "oh, haha, why?" And she's like, "oh, because of the microchip." And I go, "are you kidding?"

[00:44:28.13]Dan Achee: Ah, yeah.

[00:44:29.22]Margot Bullock: And she's like, this 50 year old, like grown, you know, well-off financially woman...

[00:44:34.03]Dan Achee: Yes.

[00:44:34.16]Margot Bullock: ...Who just like... they get stuck in these crazy mind loops, and it's like, where do you even find that information?

[00:44:43.03]Dan Achee: It's genuinely...

[00:44:44.11]Margot Bullock: You can open that, it won't pick it up.

[00:44:46.01]Dan Achee: Okay, thank you. But, um... yeah, and I mean... I think on most issues, there's reasonable reasons to be on both sides. Like me personally, I'm vaccinated, but if I was talking to somebody and they said, "ah, well, it's just so new. You know, like it's just, it's only been around for like, a year, and like, a lot of drugs get pulled off the market after five years, ten years." I'd be like, "okay, well I guess that's not crazy."

[00:45:08.18]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:45:09.08]Dan Achee: You know, but then some people are like, "oh it is a bioweapon designed by the founder of Microsoft Word"...

[00:45:14.21]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:45:16.02]Dan Achee: ..."to kill us." You know, then I'm like, okay, that's a little wild.

[00:45:18.15]Margot Bullock: So this brings me to like, an interesting question. Did you ever... as an Uber driver, was it ever a requirement to like, see proof of vaccination for people to get in your car?

[00:45:28.02]Dan Achee: No.

[00:45:29.02]Margot Bullock: Was that because Uber didn't— it was like, not regulated by Uber? Or like...

[00:45:33.21]Dan Achee: Well, they knew that they wouldn't have had enough passengers, and they knew that they wouldn't have had enough drivers.

[00:45:38.09]Margot Bullock: Wow.

[00:45:39.13]Dan Achee: Um, so... that was like, a big thing with a lot of companies, like they originally wanted to do, like vaccine mandates in a lot of companies, but then they realized like, oh we're gonna have like a shortage of employees, and it's going to cut into the money. And you know, they're not going to cut into the money.

[00:45:54.13]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:45:55.06]Dan Achee: Like, you think Uber is going to give up... because, what percentage of the population was unvaccinated at the beginning of the pandemic, what like... 30?

[00:46:01.17]Margot Bullock: Yeah, the majority.

[00:46:03.03]Dan Achee: So that would be 30 of their profits. You know what I'm saying? Like, like even once the vaccines came out and they were available for everybody, I'm sure in Louisiana, it's probably higher than 30 percent that are unvaccinated. You think they're going to give up 50 percent of their profits? No.

[00:46:17.13]Margot Bullock: Yeah. That's a great point.

[00:46:19.07]Dan Achee: Yeah.

[00:46:20.18]Margot Bullock: Did that ever make you feel kind of like unsafe? Or...

[00:46:23.06]Dan Achee: Ah, no.

[00:46:24.18]Margot Bullock: ...frustrated...

[00:46:25.10]Dan Achee: No, I'm lucky, um... because first off, like most people in our age bracket did pretty okay with COVID, you know, just statistically speaking. So I wasn't like, petrified of it, but I was still— I had like, a healthy fear of it. But I got COVID at the very beginning of the pandemic, like the very, very, very beginning. And, you know, for me it— I didn't really respond that bad, you know, some people have it horrible. Some people my age die of it, you know, but I'm just lucky I was one of those people that, I just didn't respond very heavily to it. Um... and once I had it the first time, I was like, oh, well the chances of me having it worse the second time are very slim, because that's not how the immune system works, you know. So even after that... and then I got vaccinated, and then I was like, double confident, and I actually did get COVID three separate times, but the last two times I was asymptomatic both times, and I just knew because I would test myself before I would go and visit certain people. Um, so, because I had already had it, and because I was vaccinated, I wasn't concerned about me dying at that point. Um... but I could see how if you're an Uber driver, and you were old, or if you were immunocompromised, and you had to work, or if you had to take care of like a grandmother or grandfather, a loved one, like, that would make you freaked out.

[00:47:40.01]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:47:40.15]Dan Achee: You know what I'm saying? Um... yeah, yeah. I definitely think Uber drivers should have been allowed to... like, if— if you're an Uber driver, I think you should be allowed to like, check a box on the Uber app that says "I will only allow vaccinated individuals in my car." Like, I think that's something where, if you're allowing somebody into your vehicle, you have the right to ask them for anything before they get in your vehicle.

[00:48:04.21]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:48:05.13]Dan Achee: You know, so if you're an older Uber driver, and you wanted the vaccine, or if you're a younger Uber driver, and you want the proof of vaccine, I think the driver should be in charge of whether or not that happens.

[00:48:14.13]Margot Bullock: I totally agree.

[00:48:15.03]Dan Achee: Does that makes sense?

[00:48:16.05]Margot Bullock: Yeah, I mean— because it's not like you're stepping into Uber's car, you're stepping into to Dan's Car.

[00:48:20.10]Dan Achee: Yes, yeah.

[00:48:21.04]Margot: ...And so Dan should be able to say...

[00:48:22.12]Dan Achee: Yeah.

[00:48:23.17]Margot Bullock: ...What goes or not. But they never— that wasn't even an option for you guys.

[00:48:27.19]Dan Achee: No, no it was not.

[00:48:29.19]Margot Bullock: Wow.

[00:48:30.04]Dan Achee: Yeah. Yeah, definitely wasn't.

[00:48:31.12]Margot Bullock: And do you... I guess you don't know how much Uber's making per ride, but like, the cost... or, the income for you per trip didn't change drastically during...

[00:48:42.18]Dan Achee: No.

[00:48:43.08]Margot Bullock: that time.

[00:48:45.00]Dan Achee: Um... recently, they've upped the price per trip by about 50 cents per trip, um because of gas price increases...

[00:48:52.10]Margot Bullock: The price for the trip, or what you're getting paid?

[00:48:55.18]Dan Achee: Um, both the price and what I'm getting paid. So we get 100 of that recent price increase, but it's 50 cents.

[00:49:01.02]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:49:01.20]Dan Achee: But uh...

[00:49:02.14]Margot Bullock: 100 percent of 50!

[00:49:03.20]Dan Achee: Yeah, that's pretty good, I'm pretty much a millionaire now. But uh... yeah, yeah. But they didn't up it during COVID I don't believe.

[00:49:13.23]Margot Bullock: Yeah so like, during the summer— so I was in Montana for the summer, so I don't really know what the gas prices here were...

[00:49:18.19]Dan Achee: Yeah.

[00:49:19.07]Margot Bullock: ...they were like five bucks per gallon.

[00:49:20.10]Dan Achee: Yeah, like they were like, four, okay.

[00:49:22.06]Margot Bullock: So that... all you got from that was 50 cents, and that didn't happen until...

[00:49:28.06]Dan Achee: Nope.

[00:49:30.04]Margot Bullock: ...September?

[00:49:30.23]Dan Achee: A few months ago.

[00:49:31.14]Margot Achee: Wow.

[00:49:32.00]Dan Achee: Yeah, um... but you know, I'm lucky because, you know I have a Prius, which I love my Prius. You know, I get 55 miles to the gallon. So the gas prices didn't affect me too much. But other drivers, like... if you're like, an Uber Black driver, like— which, if you don't know, Uber Black is like, where you drive like, a nice vehicle, usually like, a... you know like, an expedition or something, I think it's an expedition.

[00:49:57.23]Margot Bullock: Yeah, yeah.

[00:49:58.16]Dan Achee: Yeah, like the big Vans.

[00:50:00.11]Margot Bullock: Yeah, they're usually black, and...

[00:50:01.22]Dan Achee: Yes.

[00:50:02.13]Margot Bullock: ...Sleek looking.

[00:50:04.00]Dan Achee: Yes, yeah it's like the cool looking ones, yeah. I actually have a really funny story about that, so... okay, I got sidetracked, let me finish this real quick.

[00:50:13.06]Margot Bullock: Okay.

[00:50:14.12]Dan Achee: Okay, so but if you're driving for Uber Black, and you have like, the big vans, and you're getting 13 miles to the gallon, then, you know, five dollars a gallon really affects you. Like, that really affects your profit margin.

[00:50:25.02]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:50:25.19]Dan Achee: So, for them it should have been upped even more. You know, but uh, okay. So, speaking of black Escalades. So I was driving in the French Quarter, and I was behind a black Escalade, and I see the black Escalade hits a kid on a scooter. Right, not very hard, it was like a gentle tap. The kid gets up, he's limping to the side, but he's okay. Right, so the black Escalade goes to pull over, and the guy in the back seat rolls the window down, and it was Denzel Washington.

[00:50:55.04]Margot Bullock: No way.

[00:50:56.08]Dan Achee: So Denzel Washington, he wasn't the driver, he was in the back seat, but they nudged the kid. The kid— and as soon as he rolls the window down, all the kids start freaking out, even the kid that was limping just like, sprints to the car, like he stopped limping, and like, Denzel, like, got out and takes pictures with him, and I waved at him, and he waved at me, and he seemed really nice, but it was so funny, though. Because I was just driving...

[00:51:14.12]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:51:15.10]Dan Achee: ...and looking at this black Escalade and it, just, bam, hits a kid...

[00:51:18.02]Margot Bullock: Wow.

[00:51:18.15]Dan Achee: ...and then Denzel. Denzel jumps out.

[00:51:20.16]Margot Bullock: Wow. I guess that's like, kind of good enough reparations for being knocked off your scooter.

[00:51:25.12]Dan Achee: No for real. Honestly, I would let somebody hit me with a car to meet Denzel.

[00:51:30.15]Margot Bullock: Wow.

[00:51:32.01]Dan Achee: Yeah.

[00:51:34.11]Margot Bullock: Well, that's awesome.

[00:51:35.08]Dan Achee: Uber in New Orleans, you see a lot of weird stuff. A lot of weird stuff. I usually try to like, take pictures of it when I see it, you know.

[00:51:42.18]Margot Bullock: Yeah.

[00:51:43.21]Dan Achee: Um... but... got a lot of wild people in New Orleans, you know.

[00:51:48.22]Margot Bullock: Yeah, I guess you kind of are in the best position to see...

[00:51:51.15]Dan Achee: Yeah.

[00:51:52.12]Margot Bullock: ...see all of that.

[00:51:54.12]Dan Achee: Yeah, yeah. I get to Uber the vampires, and I don't know if you know, there's like, there's people in New Orleans that file their teeth down because they believe that they're vampires.

[00:52:04.01]Margot Bullock: Wow.

[00:52:05.01]Dan Achee: Yeah, and I've ubered plenty of those people.

[00:52:07.22]Margot Bullock: Wow. There's a big enough population of those people that you've had them more than once?

[00:52:14.03]Dan Achee: Three or four times...

[00:52:15.02]Margot Bullock: Wow.

[00:52:15.14]Dan Achee: ...I'd say. Um... yeah, I don't think it's a big population, but like, they— it's enough, it's enough, you know. And it kind of freaks me out, not to discriminate against vampires, but I'm low-key scared they're gonna bite me. Because they've told me some weird stuff. So I had this one girl told me that her and her, um, her husband got married by taking vials of each other's blood and injecting it into each other. So like they didn't just have vials of each other's blood, they actually swapped blood.

[00:52:45.04]Margot Bullock: Oh.

[00:52:45.16]Dan Achee: And I told them, I was like, "y'all realize y'all had like, a 9 out of 10 chance of, like, rejecting your partner's blood and dying?" I was like, "did you get blood typed?" And they're like, "no".

[00:52:53.05]Margot Bullock: So they were just like, whatever let's...

[00:52:54.22]Dan Achee: They just knew it would happen. And they were on a LSD, so they were like kind of tripping.

[00:52:59.00]Margot Bullock: Oh, man.

[00:53:00.03]Dan Achee: Yeah.

[00:53:00.16]Margot Bullock: So they just were like, really putting themselves at risk.

[00:53:03.07]Dan Achee: Yes. Oh yeah, oh yeah. But yeah.

[00:53:07.07]Margot Bullock: Wow. Well, speaking of vampires, I accidentally cut my finger.

[00:53:12.14]Dan Achee: Oh, I'm sorry to hear that.

[00:53:14.20]Margot Bullock: But yeah, I guess this would be a great place for us to, kind of, end this conversation.

[00:53:20.09]Dan Achee: Sounds good.

[00:53:21.09]Margot Bullock: Thank you so much for sharing all of these stories.

[00:53:23.02]Dan Achee: Oh, no problem. I enjoyed talking, how did you cut your finger?

[00:53:26.05]Margot Bullock: I just picked at it.

[00:53:27.11]Dan Achee: Okay, I do the same thing, I do it so much...

[00:53:28.22]Margot Bullock: And it's funny...

[00:53:29.13]Dan Achee: ...I got that right there...

[00:53:30.12]Margot Bullock: Yeah, it just happened right as we were talking about vampires, so...

[00:53:32.14]Dan Achee: Yeah.

[00:53:33.09]Margot Bullock: Yeah, I should probably take care of it, though. But yeah, thank you so much, Dan.

[00:53:37.20]Dan Achee: Oh, no problem.

[00:53:38.20]Margot Bullock: It's been great getting to know you and your work.

[00:53:41.06]Dan Achee: Thank you, it was good talking, you're a good interviewer.

[00:53:43.03]Margot Bullock: Thank you! Okay, ending.