

## TRANSCRIPT

File Name: SLAC\_EP\_28\_Complete

Duration: 00:24:05

[Intro]

### **Robert:**

Hello, everybody! This is Robert Raymond Riopel. And I want to welcome you to Success Left a Clue, podcast episode number 28. Today, I have another amazing guest and this gentleman, instead of me, trying to introduce who he is. I'm just going to let you know that I am going to have him tell his story. But what I will tell you about him is you will want to listen to every single word he says because especially, especially if you are in business. You may think I don't know if this pertains to me, but I am going to tell you, it does. In life, you may think this not pertained to me but I am here to tell you, it does. So I want to welcome the one and only Mr. Andre Norman.

All right Andre, I really welcome you to this episode of my podcast. I want to thank you for being here. This is one of the podcasts that I have been looking forward to, because of just your story, your background, who you are and how you turned your life around, and now use it to benefit others. So a lot of my listeners probably don't have any idea of who you are, expect to the little intro I did prior to this call. But why don't you give us a little bit of your background and why you do what you do today.

### **Andre:**

I was born in Boston City. I was raised in Boston. And I made it to Miami. I used to grow up in a bad situation. Single mom, 6 kids in a city. And when my dad was around he was always bad, beating my mom, smash her, he was not doing right things for the kids. And one day he did get us and left. And when he left... And again, you heard this story. You've seen this story many times on TV. The single mom trying to raise 6 kids by herself, two jobs, and just go. I mean, I grew up in an area where those are 70s. I lived in Boston, which is a conscientious town. And the kids would throw rocks at us at our buses and call us niggers. In college, all kinds of racial names, Chicago bulls, the boxing crisis of the 70s.

And I was one of those kids on the buses. And when I got home, there was nothing there to tell me and help me, support my way through that. And I grew up with 3 basic lessons. One, it's okay to hit people. So if my mother can be hit, anybody can be hit. Two, I've got to protect myself because when those kids throw rocks at me, nobody came to help. And three, I don't have, I can walk on anybody. My dad walked over me so I can walk around anybody. Class, programs, life, it doesn't matter. And that was the land in which I grew up. So for a 7 year old, those are the 3 basic rules. And when I got to school, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, we moved because my mom was poor, we got kicked out of the house. At the new school, they found out I couldn't read so they put me in a dummy class. The kids who couldn't read and write, they put in this room and close the door.

And luckily for me, a teacher pulled me out of the room and she found my learning style. She helped me understand who and what I was. I started doing better. But it was classic. I had no guidance, no role models, no dreams. In short, I found my way to the street. Dropped out of school, joined the gang and ended up in prison. And they gave me initially a hundred years. It was a hundred years of my sentence when I first came in. I used to rob drug dealers. I used to throw up all crazy stuff. Why they grew up drug dealer? They have the money. So when I got to prison, my three little based crime had matured from, I mean, anybody whom I hit, I can protect myself and I can walk out to, I can really hurt people. I'm saying I'm going to dominate people in spaces and I don't care about the consequences. That was my attitude as an 18 year old man walking in Massachusetts prison.

### **Robert:**

Wow! When you know went in? So you weren't in obviously for a hundred years. If so, you'll still be in there. Somewhere in the conversation, I think you said you spent 14 years in prison. Is that correct?

### **Andre:**

I did it total of 14 year. Not a hundred. I was supposed to do about 26, 27 years total, but it added up, if you added it all up, it came to like 105 years.

**Robert:**

And what changed your attitude to get you out of prison?

**Andre:**

What changed my attitude was first, I had to go down before I came up. And I went in as, there's a packing order in prison. There's a number one guy and there's another 15,000 guys. You just got off the bus as the 15,000<sup>th</sup>. And I always had a leader. And an entrepreneurs spirit. And I wanted to be the number one guy. And you can't really announced that. But the short story is I fought stabbed and bloodied my way from 15,000 to number 3. There was a lot of bodies left in the wake. A lot of hurt feelings left in the wake. A lot of riots. A lot of madness that you name it and I have been through it. But I made it to number 3. And I was on track to becoming number 1 and it was a scenario where it was my goal, like I wanted to be the toughest guy in the worst place.

I had a moment of clarity and I realized, it was all about nothing. I was this angry young man who just became an angry older man and my life was this, I became a kind of nowhere. It's a way I described it. I was about to become the kind of nowhere. And I had that moment of clarity and I decided I didn't want to do it and I decided to do something else. So I set a goal for myself. I said I wanted to go home and be free. Then I looked around and all the people around me getting free, didn't stay free, didn't work. work with prison. They all come back at 70, 85 percent. So I said I want to be successful. I switched to word. One word - free to successful. I had to do successful period on to jail. I said I'll go home, go to Austin University, which was a local college in town. I didn't know the biggest college in the world and that was my goal.

**Robert:**

Nice. And one of the things that you and I connect over that I love when I first met you is that you know you have the opportunity, you travelled the world, and actually teach countries, how to keep their young people out of prison. That to me, I just got goose bumps even mentioning it. So I want to thank you for that work that you do. But the main reason I brought you on to this podcast is because one of the things you and I been talking about is that there's a lot of comparisons to the way that people in jail; there's actually people outside of jail they don't even realize they got themselves in a jail of a different kind. And one of the things you and I talked about is that out of the 14 years, how many years did you actually spend in solitary confinement?

**Andre:**

5 years, 5 years of solitary confinement. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week locked in so, about 2 to 2 and a half years I had no sunlight. No human contact. I couldn't come in contact with a living person and I was bodily strained. No human contact. No sunlight. So that was almost 4 years of my life. That's I tell people.

**Robert:**

Wow. And in real life, kind of hindsight, you actually kind of stole the sun from yourself, like most people do, not even realizing they're doing it. Would you agree with that?

**Andre:**

Oh I mean, everything they asked me in jail, I mean, I facilitate it. Nobody made me commit a crime. I had tons of people in the city who don't go to jail. There are tons of people who in up in jail who don't want to gang related. So it wasn't the system that made me do bad things. I put myself in those situations trying to achieve what I wanted to achieve. What I wanted to achieve came at the clock of being tortured.

**Robert:**

Yes.

**Andre:**

But it was a choice. I don't use drugs. I don't drink. Everything I've ever done in my life was a conscious intangible choice.

**Robert:**

And that's kind of one of the important things I want the listeners to this podcast understand. It is easy to get caught up in the victim world that this has happened to me and your journey is an example of universal principle. Everything happens for a reason. And that reason served me. And for you, the life that you went through is what's now allowing you to do your talks, allowing you to talk to different countries. And in reality, allowing you now to be able to approach business owners. Because a lot of business owners who are entrepreneurs they don't realize they are solopreneurs, which means they put themselves in solitary confinement which is the worst and really good in prison is because you, well, you tell me coz I don't have this experience but isn't it solitary confinement? The worst, you can put on a person?

**Andre:**

Solitary confinement is reserved for people who committed murder, attempted murder, stabbed and had huge, it means you have to commit a huge, huge rule violation, usually extreme and as a punishment, they put you anywhere from one to ten years in the cell by yourself. It's the worst punishment they have. And then on top of that, they would think four-point restraint where if you add up again they would change to the bed inside of your cell that's in the middle of nowhere.

**Robert:**

And that's the point I want to get to. Here, entrepreneurs who are really solopreneurs, they just do that. They think they have to do it all their own, so they put themselves into solitary confinement and the four-point restraint they chain them to their, themselves to their accounting. They've chained themselves to their debt, to their marketing. Thinking that they have to do absolutely everything and that is actually a punishment that they put on themselves. So that's what I wanted to talk about today on this podcast. When you are in solitary confinement and I want to talk to like an entrepreneur that in this right now, not even realizing, they've put themselves in solitary confinement. Any one or two tips that you used in life to get yourself through that and out of that when you were in prison?

**Andre:**

Well, I will first say that in order for them to identify if they are in solitary confinement as entrepreneur or solopreneurs, is you start blocking other people out. I mean you have to hunt them down and it's just your tunnel vision. Being solitary it's all about tunnel vision and it's all about mental capacity. Everything in your head, everything in front of you, is nasty, it's day to day moment to moment. What is crisis to crisis to crisis every minute of the day and that's where you focus and just of it, they have you focus solely on right now. You can't do anything. They just drag out. You never complete a task because there's always another task. And it's just, so what you have to, what I did was after I caught myself of going that road, is that I have to break that mode of solitary, which was sitting yourself and to have a routine and do the routine every day. I got up in the morning I did my work out, I ate my breakfast, I did another work out. I wrote some letters. I played chess. I had a consistent routine everyday and that routine made it possible for me to stay in solitary and stay blinded.

**Robert:**

Okay, so if a person identified that they are in business solitary right now, so A. Start a routine. B. let me ask you this.

**Andre:**

Get away from a routine.

**Robert:**

Oh yeah, okay, good. Good. Okay. Yeah. Coz I don't want people to think, oh okay, the routines, it's the way to deal with it if you have to get into that hunt it down to get it done. But to really they need to be able to connect with other people and talk with another people to work with them. Would you agree?

**Andre:**

Right. Definitely. And solitary by yourself, caught up in your own existence and it is just you and your thoughts and a lot of people aren't really comfortable with their own thought so then they are not happy with their family or their community so they go all into business and they have to find a balance. If there is no balance, you'll fall that one hole really, really hard.

**Robert:**

But now, here's the thing. Andre, some of the people listening to this podcast, they are long loners. They think they have to do it on their own, all on their own. So you tell me, going back to your experience in prison, should you be the tough person in a prison on your own?

**Andre:**

No. It's not being the boss, the number guy in prison with general support. I had to build a network and a team. You may call it a gang, people to carry out my wishes, and to carry out and help me create my business. Coz were in business inside. And it calls for human interaction, it calls for it having to delegate and have people voice back because when you stop listening to people... I am a motivational speaker now and I tell people the key to motivational speaking is reflective listening. So the key to anything for being successful in order to build the idea with other people around you, when you can no longer hear the people there's a definite problem.

**Robert:**

Exactly. And so your gain in business that can be what you accountant, who else? Mentors?

**Andre:**

You have your accountant. You have your managers. You have your planning staff. You have your executives. You have your admin. You have your executive assistant who generally covers all of your dysfunction. So if you don't want to go dysfunction, go talk to your executive assistant and probably, she wouldn't tell you, but the truth is so many people lock themselves in and because you're the boss, people allow you to do that. They can't tell you you're doing something crazy coz it is their job on the line. I for the last 10 years have worked with agency, association called YPO and WPO and EO. That stands for Young Presidents' Association, the organization world presidents and entrepreneurs. And it is the bosses, the CEOs, and the bosses of these agencies, multi-billion dollar company and they exist because their employees share accountability; they don't want them to share the same mistake because their job is on the line. So if you say you want to do something or you are doing something, they are just going to give a thumbs up, it's your company. They're not going to tell you, hey, Robert, you are doing this thing, it looks kind of crazy. Your spending time kind of long while your kids are calling 3 times a day, they stop calling but they are still here. They disconnect you. People around you especially your admin will see you sleeping, but they don't have the authority to stop.

**Robert:**

And then where that listening come to?

**Andre:**

And that listening.

**Robert:**

Sorry. Yes. And so, in prison, if you weren't listening to the people around you, what would happen?

**Andre:**

We have a concept called get it right or die. If you don't pay attention to what is going on around you, you will die. Somebody will stab you and you will just die, especially if you are the boss because as a boss, I control the commerce, I control the business, I control everything.

So I am the center force around capitalism in prison. So any money made or not made runs through me. All these they run through me and everybody wants to be the boss, everybody needs a boss, so if you want to be the boss, you have to kill the boss.

So I used to wake up every morning at 5:30, out of my bed and say who's going to try to kill me today? Not who wants to, but who's going to try today. Coz everybody wants to including my own staff.

So if you are not paying attention and you only listen to yourself, so you need to engage with your inner self, you need to engage with your so-called friend. You need to engage with everybody and get a sense of what is going on around. You're not just shutting people out. It is problematic.

**Robert:**

I just got some goose bumps because some people listening to this maybe go, this is too extreme to be compared to my business and I am like listening to you and I am going that's wrong coz one of the things you just said listening to your enemies, that's your competition. That's why you got to listen to what they are doing to see if they're doing something that you've overlooked. Listen to your friends, this is where I would say empower your staff, empower your advisors, to be able to say, you know what, it is okay to disagree with me because I am willing to listen to you because I want to get better. And so, to me, I am glad. One of the reasons I am glad to have you on this episode is because it does take some extreme thinking sometimes to get out of the position that's holding so many people and it's either listen or die because in business, how many people are actually dying by going out to business, by going bankrupt, and yet they don't know why it is because of that solitary confinement that they put themselves in.

**Andre:**

When you put yourself in a solitary confinement state of being you become anti-social. You might wave back to people without saying hello, how you doing, how's your family. But you are not emotionally there. You are not credible. You are the same that I understand that you have to be friends with people. If you are not present with people, you are locking yourself in this bottomless pit where there is no light, just you and this hole then you don't really feel people anymore. That is a horrible thing. You can't feel and sense other people. So it is extremely important that you listen to other folks.  
A

And again, I have been for the last 10 years, meeting with CEOs from around the world, from Saudi Arabia to Honduras, to Sweden, all throughout United States, YPOs, EOs, WPOs, and my staff do all these CEO. And I listen to some and watch the ones who just have total focus and their family doesn't talk to them. Nobody talks to them and they are hell bent to go nowhere. And I have seen the guys who is in our company. Let me get some input. Let me get some feedback. Let me not lock myself in this cage. I mean, your job is or your business isn't your world. If you make it your world, your isolation becomes your the world. Prison becomes your world and I got locked into this. This is where I am supposed to be and I really believe I will supposed to be in prison and in solitary that that was my right to place. And I believe that and you couldn't tell the others while I was there.

**Robert:**

Yup. When you're in it, you don't see it. And that is why...

**Andre:**

If you are in it, you don't see it.

**Robert:**

Yeah.

**Andre:**

When you're in it, you don't see it. You double down. I triple down every chance I got. Because I'm in it coz that what happens to entrepreneurs spirit you keep going down because you believe you're going to be successful. I saw success even inside of prison. I became the boss. I became in charge. I became feared. I, everytime I double down I could see tangible results. But what I wasn't seeing is I was going deeper the opposite way. I was to become the king of nowhere.

**Robert:**

Well, and you know what, that is, I don't know, it resonates on top of head only but I don't know if you thought of writing a book yet or you've written a book yet but I think is your title, The King of Nowhere. Because this lesson and this is why I look forward to having you on this podcast, this is why I want to do deeper things with you to get this word out to people. So people who listen to this podcast I know they want to be able to learn more from you on how to take the experience in prison into business, to be able to get through the day to day grind but also to get yourself moving in the direction you truly want to be in instead of solitary confinement. So someone to get hold of you, what is the best way to find out more about your information?

**Andre:**

The best way to find me is my website. It is really difficult. [www.andrenorman.com](http://www.andrenorman.com).

**Robert:**

And we'll put it in the show notes as well for people because I know you are already impacting the world, affecting people in a great way and you are going to continue to do that. So thank you so much for being on this and for all the listeners remember, if you are an entrepreneur chances are you are a solopreneur, which made you put yourself into solitary confinement. Take the lessons that Andre just went over with you on this episode and put them into your day to day life to move forward. To get yourself back not only to general population but then to eventually release yourself from that prison altogether because while you are in prison, you are only so good you are not able to get to the extreme success that you truly could have. So Andre, thank you so much. Any parting words you'd like to say to our listeners.

**Andre:**

I just want to say that if you are not understanding me, or you think this doesn't fit you or what is this guy talking about, I just say for the last 10 plus years, I've been travelling the world and I've met with tons of CEOs and entrepreneurs who didn't get it and understand the correlation. And I gave a speech one time at London Business School. It was a Deutsche bank. Actually, "Well, how do you want me to do this coz I have a gang history background?"

And this is what they told me, "You go tell your story and we'll draw the lines coz they are smart enough to figure it out." Coz I am trusting. I am going to tell you the story. And they are just smart enough to draw the lines. Your listeners have to draw the lines too. Is it a hundred percent correlation? Not only a hundred percent, but the lessons are there. I've been taking these lessons around the world, and I just want them to know this is all luck. I just want to see you try and thrive. I mean, my life I keep. If I could have written my life out and what it would be. It wouldn't have been this good. Once I came out of that hole and I actually, the skills set that your listeners have, and the ability that they have, when they come out, out of the hole and they come out solitary, they interact with other people, and they take input. There, those gifts will just explode. So they will just bless everything and everybody, their business, their family, their community, impact the world but you can't impact the world from solitary confinement. You will only impact the 8x12 ft cells.

**Robert:**

Got it. Thank you so much. And everybody check out the show notes. Learn more from this man. You'll love it. Have a great time! We'll talk to you on the next one. Thank you again Andre.

**Andre:**

Thank you so much.

[Outro]