Nik White Podcast recording

[00:00:00] **Sally:** Hello and welcome to Talking Law Podcast. I'm Sally Penny mbe, and this week I have with me Nick White. Hello, Nick. Hi Sally. How are you? I'm good, thank you. Nick has been evading me all this time. I've finally trapped him, uh, in his own office, uh, where I'm going to ask him about his own career in law.

[00:00:29] Nick, can you just introduce yourself please? Um, you work here at bradner, but what's your role?

[00:00:35] **Nik:** So, I'm Nick. I am managing partner at Bradner, and I have a very simple career story because I'm a one firm person. I'm always slightly envious of, uh, we're intrigued by. Lawyers who've had, uh, a number of firms on their, see, they, I have one.

[00:00:51] I joined as a trainee in 1995. Wow. How

[00:00:54] **Sally:** old you born? And I'm

[00:00:56] **Nik:** in my dreams. I'm still here 28, 28 [00:01:00] years later. So I've been managing partners since 2018. Wow. By background, I'm a commercial lawyer. Great. I do relatively little client work these days, I must confess. Correct. Which is one slight drawback of, uh, A fairly full on

[00:01:14] **Sally:** managing partner.

[00:01:15] Managing partner. Yeah. Amazing. So I'm going to describe you as, um, for people who have watched, uh, the American series suits. You are the Jessica of the firm. Does that mean I've never seen Well, no. She just says she's a managing partner, certainly in the, I know you've never seen it, but, um, I'm very happy to be with Jessica.

[00:01:36] I'm actually happy selling. Yeah. Jessica's a managing partner who, um, usually dissimilar to you, um, wear sort of, you know, designer suits, looks at you to be in the front cover of the now expensive handbags. You on the other hand, and I've let you down by,

[00:01:52] **Nik:** in a t-shirt,

[00:01:53] **Sally:** sorry. No, not quite what I was expecting on the Thursday of a managing partner, but joking [00:02:00] aside, um, Nick, you know, um, that, that career history is quite interesting because you're right, there isn't an awful lot of people who, um, I've been in just one firm and have succeeded to your height.

[00:02:11] But let's go back to the beginning. Why did you choose law and I suppose commercial law, which is your specialism, if you like, when you started in law? Yeah. This

[00:02:20] **Nik:** might be an underwhelming answer, Harry. So I, why did I choose law? Uh, I mean, I am an accidental lawyer. Uh, I, um, I didn't know what degree to do, and it was my father who said, well, why don't you.

[00:02:37] Uh, applied to do law. Cause that way you'll have to do well in your A levels. Mm-hmm. So there was some logic to it. Yes. The iron is, I, I relatively speak in cocktail A levels, so it didn't work, but I managed to scrape through on clearing through the clearing system. Brilliant. With about three days ago.

[00:02:53] And I did, uh, it was about the time, this is the early nineties when dual honors were becoming a new thing. [00:03:00] Yes. And luckily for me, there was an undersubscribed course in law economics at last university. I didn't even know where Laster was. Mm-hmm. But I happily turned up, did my law degree, which I enjoyed law economics.

[00:03:12] And then, if I'm honest, I sort of blindly just went through the process. I went to Chester Law College through the LCC and applied for training contracts. I mean, I'm, I'm, you know, I'm, I'm very happy with the choice I made, but I wouldn't describe myself as. A lawyer who had this burning ambition to be a lawyer.

[00:03:31] Yeah. And I also think it's no coincidence I ended up being a commercial lawyer because, um, you know, I don't have your fierce intellect, Sally. So I think not a Thursday commercial is one of those areas where it's, uh, I guess what I aspired to be for clients was that, I know it's a bit cliche now, but trusted advisor.

[00:03:55] Yes. What I loved doing, and I think I was okay [00:04:00] with it, was really coming alongside clients and helping them negotiate and get deals done. It was, uh, you know, there's often when, when, uh, a sparing lawyer sort of asked, well, what is it you do? I think, I'm not sure there's actually that much law in what I do.

[00:04:14] It's just Yes. It's, it's being sort of commercially aware and savvy and knowing how to negotiate a good deal. Yeah. Um, yeah. So, uh, you know, I think luckily for me, I found an area of law. That didn't have that much law in it. I play to my limited strengths. Um, and I, I really enjoyed it.

[00:04:36] **Sally:** Yeah. Well, it, it, it's interesting and perhaps just whilst we're talking about, I could just ask this question now.

[00:04:43] Um, it's been the most kind of memorable case for you in your career and that may be taking you back. Um, and I ask it as well in this context because people who perhaps have never heard of, um, Branas have [00:05:00] now after, you know, wa Christi case. And I'll come back to that in a moment. And, you know, Brad's brilliant role and you've won lots of awards as a result, but can you remember what's been kind of the most memorable case for

[00:05:14] **Nik:** you?

[00:05:14] Yes. It's not really a case cause I'm not, not a litigator. Yeah. Uh, I think just, just before I answer the question, so I think the most enjoyable work I've done, um, of which there are, Manny. Were, so a lot of the work I used to do was acting for software game developers, so helping them negotiate development and publishing deals for computer software games.

[00:05:37] Yeah, so through the years I'll have done, you know, dozens with the sort of tech giants on the other side, Microsoft, Soine, Nintendo, you know, all the big publishers like ea, um, Activision Laterally, Tencent, wow. The emerging Chinese tech company. So that's the work I've enjoyed most because the nature of the work.

[00:05:59] Yeah. The subject matter. [00:06:00] I dare I say it generally, you'll find, uh, You know, software game developers are, are a fairly unconventional, fun bunch. Yes. Which is why I've turned up merchants and t-shirts. So sorry to you.

[00:06:17] **Sally:** I'm just stuck in, you know. Yeah. The bar, which is still, uh, little too high,

[00:06:23] **Nik:** but probably the most memorable job. And this, this, as I said before, this has actually been quite thought provoking for me. So I think, I think the job that I worked on, that I'm most proud of and probably had the biggest impact was, so one of our clients who we are really proud to represent is Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, which, uh, as the name suggests and is actually the world's oldest institution of its kind.

[00:06:52] So it's a teaching and research institution, uh, for tropical diseases and. I'm going back some way [00:07:00] now, but between 2005, 2007, I did a lot of work with them on two large projects that effectively, uh, were sort of, uh, connected. So they set up what's called I V C C, international Vector Control Consortium.

[00:07:16] So they lead and it continues to this day a consortium of international organizations, including US-based universities, which sitting alongside that, uh, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, um, uh, entered into a partnership with the school to fund I V C C and the school. Wow. That relationship continues 18 years on.

[00:07:40] Um, the, the Gates Foundation have funded to the tune of many hundreds of millions of dollars. And that's all about, um, you know, insect born diseases, predominantly malaria. Yeah. Um, you know, looking for, uh, developing new pesticides treatments. And yeah, I, I, uh, [00:08:00] I'd advised on all the contracts around the consortium, the grant, the funding agreements.

[00:08:04] Wow. Um, and yeah, actually this, this being asked this question by you has actually made me stop and think that there must be something with a deeper sense of purpose and just confuse yourself. And I guess that's it. And there, I mean, there are, there are real hidden gems that, as I said, hundred 25th anniversary this year.

[00:08:21] Wow. Really, really, uh, special client that we're really proud to be associated

[00:08:26] **Sally:** with. I mean, that, that's amazing because I think sometimes in the grind of the job, um, we forget some of the good work that, which is why I've asked you that question. Yeah. That actually, you know, it, it, it's law with a purpose.

[00:08:39] Um, and, um, it's, it's really, really interesting and I wouldn't thought you were say that. Mm-hmm. Um, now tell me, gosh, it's such cave of, um, information. What was Brad's involvement in Michael Christie? So we've we're, we're really name dropping here, aren't we? Yeah, we're going from Villa [00:09:00] Melinda, um, yeah. To then, you know, Colleen Rooney, um, and that whole case in the high court.

[00:09:08] Now, everything about that case is on public record. I'm not asking you to divulge any privilege, legal privilege, but, um, what was Brad's role in that? Um, because now we do know the Brads were involved and everybody was hooked on that case.

[00:09:22] **Nik:** Yeah, well, it came to us. Um, it's quite a simple answer, really. So, uh, triples, which is the agency which Paul Stratford heads up, which predominantly is a sports agency.

[00:09:36] Yeah. So they, they manage and always have managed Wayne Rudy's career, um, but also Colleen. And, uh, through that connection we were introduced to Colleen, um, when she needed help defunding the local claim that. Rebecca brought, it's as simple as that really. Yeah. So it did come through the sports route, but, um, [00:10:00] you know, political isn't a, a sport client.

[00:10:02] No. Uh, and it, yeah, it's, it's, um, it's, it was a blessing and a curve. Look, it's you, you've got to embrace it and, and try and have some, I guess, fun with it and enjoy the moment in the spotlight. And we've had a lot of attention. We, we generally don't, we try not to be a sort of showy, shouty type of firm. We don't necessarily crave lots of PR publicity, but on this one we did sort of consciously think, which is why we did the podcast series afterwards.

[00:10:31] Yeah. You know what, if you can't enjoy your moment, your, your moment in the limelight on the back of something, That is as interesting as this has, has how this level of public attention then when will you ever Yeah. So hopefully in our own dataset, slightly quirky way without, uh, milking it too much and certainly without taking ourselves too seriously, we have, uh, we've, we've really enjoyed the, the profile and publicity we've had on the back of it.

[00:10:56] I know it's, it was an interesting case to be involved in, [00:11:00] as I hope came across in the statements that came out after the verdict. Uh, genuinely both our client, Colleen, and we would recognize it. It's a shame it went as far as it did. Yeah. Um, it would've been in many ways far better had it, uh, not, uh, gone that the, the, the sort of full distance and received on the public air, but, uh, it is what it is.

[00:11:24] Of

[00:11:24] **Sally:** course it is, of course. I mean, it continues to fascinate

[00:11:28] **Nik:** a blessing and curses, uh, It, it, it, and look, it's fine. It's no problems. It sort of dominates, uh, the sort of image it would seem of, of the firm. There's been so much attention around it. Yeah. And it's been a great, uh, case to be associated with, but there's lots of other,

[00:11:49] **Sally:** oh, of course there is.

[00:11:50] Well, obviously every, every guest I have on here, I've researched them. And this firm, you know, family law, there's a whole load of other areas, [00:12:00] um, that you do here. Lots of commercial litigation. The, the areas that I'm really interested in, cuz I often like referring people here, is a charity work Yes. That you do.

[00:12:08] And the pro bono work. Yeah. For a lot of charities, he wants to set up as charities and then they need law firms and see there's a massive unit doing that. So the whole, the areas, um, beyond that. So it's, it's quite interesting. Um, that's all sort of forgotten about for a bit. Well,

[00:12:25] **Nik:** but that's, can you pick up on that, Sally, because that's actually, that's really important to me and us.

[00:12:31] It's a relatively small part of the firm. The majority of the firm is sort of, you know, business b2b, it's corporate real estate. But actually if I go back to when I joined in the mid nineties, I artan senior partner guy called Lawrence Holden, who was a real sort of pioneer in the charity law world. And, and for example, that's how we ended up acting for the likes of local called Tropical Who Charity.

[00:12:53] Um, in terms of, you know, preserving the legacy and [00:13:00] maintaining perhaps some of the things that perhaps set us apart from many of. The other commercial firms out there doing work in the third sector, whether it be, you know, charity, social enterprise. We have a large team within the real estate group that work for, um, registered providers of social housing.

[00:13:17] Mm-hmm. And that's, that's actually really important. Uh, it kind of goes beyond the, the revenue and profit it generates. Yeah. Just in terms of actually demonstrating, perhaps there's a, dare I say, a slightly deeper sense of purpose. It's not, it's not just about being a sort of commercial law firm, which is here to.

[00:13:36] Generate revenue and profit, that there's a, there's a sort of deeper meaning. Yeah. Almost. Yeah. Which then comes back to maybe we'll touch upon it, you know, it's no coincidence we're a B Corp and, and maybe some of the ways in which we, we perhaps distinguish ourselves. So, yeah, it's interesting you pick up on charity because it is relatively small, small thing, but.

[00:13:56] It's, it's, it's, um, it's importance to us [00:14:00] perhaps outweighs its size, if that

[00:14:02] **Sally:** makes sense. Abso Absolutely, absolutely. Well, tell me a bit more about the phone. Cause I can tell you Mm, I get a lot of, um, messages predominantly via LinkedIn by aspiring lawyers who are in first class trainees and so on, who are like, I want to apply to Ness or, um, I know, I'm like, why?

[00:14:21] They're just like, you know, the is a scruff. He's always scruff. Wear a shirt next

[00:14:28] **Nik:** time.

[00:14:32] **Sally:** Um, no, but I mean, joking aside, it's a great firm. Mm-hmm. And I just wondered if you could just tell me a bit about what, what kind of strategies are in place? What else are you doing here, and how do you carry. Yourself because you know you've been here for a long time. Yeah. But actually you've got an open eye to learning.

[00:14:52] Yeah. And, um, and keep evolving. I mean, know, for instance, when you became managing partner, um, you contacted all the other [00:15:00] managing partners in Manchester to say, yeah, hey, I'm here. Um, be nice to meet up or whatever. And mean, I don't think many respondent, I don't, but they're probably like competitors.

[00:15:11] They're not competitors after collaboration. And Dutch,

[00:15:14] **Nik:** I've, I've some lasting friendships in my group. Fantastic. So unconventional. I was very conscious that when I became managing partner, um, I was far less well known in Manchester. Yeah. Um, home for me is South Liverpool. Um, you know, I joined a firm, Bradner Holden, as was in the mid nineties.

[00:15:34] That was only in Liverpool, in Preston. So it was only, uh, You know, into the two thousands that we, we established a presence in Manchester Sister. That maybe that's just me being, um, I don't know, uh, very open. Yeah. Direct, dare say trying to be friendly. And, and there was, there was also an element of, uh, I guess recognizing the, and [00:16:00] I don't mind it.

[00:16:01] There are times when it's a bit of a lonely hearts club. Of

[00:16:04] **Sally:** course it is. You're the big boss managing partners.

[00:16:06] **Nik:** So, so it's almost a case of, uh, building a new network outside the firm. Yes. And, and actually, uh, yes, other firms on the face of the arrivals, but the reality is we're all in it together. We've got huge shared vested interests.

[00:16:22] There's, there's space enough in the market for all of us. And, um, yeah, I'm sort of, my, my instinct is never to, uh, descend into sort of rivalry. I. I think it's far better to embrace the competition and, and, and, you know, wherever possible, establish good relationships.

[00:16:45] **Sally:** Good relationships. Yeah. Yeah. I, I agree with you.

[00:16:47] I was only teasing you about that because it is unheard of, but there's no reason why not. And actually it's good to keep being open about it. Yeah. Yes. But I want to learn a bit more about Ness, right? Mm-hmm. Um, [00:17:00] I'm in your very exciting offices, um, in the center of Manchester, and the views across the city are amazing.

[00:17:08] Yeah. You can see Manchester Central, which hosts every conference that comes here. I mean, you know, you're in the hub. Mm-hmm. And you've got offices throughout, um, the northwest. You've expanded north? No. Oh,

[00:17:18] **Nik:** leads, wow. You can't say just Northwest.

[00:17:21] **Sally:** I'll take it back. Yeah. Yeah. Leveling, leveling up. Yeah. So what, what are the strategies?

[00:17:27] I haven't been on your website. I can see, you know, um, Or you talk about where you wanna go, your vision, your mission, all those things. But what do you want to see Brads doing in terms of that, that space and

[00:17:41] **Nik:** Yeah. So I, I, what, what I hope comes across is I, I, I think, um, I think, I think our firm strikes a nice balance between, on the one hand being of a, of a size such that, you know, we, we, we can undo, attract [00:18:00] really good blue chip clients.

[00:18:02] Mm-hmm. We can undo, attract great lawyers. Um, but we're not just a, another corporate law firm. We don't aspire to be a large national corporate behemoth. Mm-hmm. I think, um, you know, we talk a lot about our independence and our sense of independence and, uh, like doing things a bit differently. Yeah. Um, Some might say I'm slightly unconventional, um, as a managing partner, maybe that's no coincidence.

[00:18:32] Uh, maybe I wouldn't be a managing partner at many other law firms. So I think, I think there's a, there's a, there's, there's space in the market and demand for a firm like us where, you know, we, we do and we can demonstrate we have national reach, but we're anchored from offices in the north. Yeah. Um, and from a, from a sort of talent perspective, it's again, striking balance between, you know, come here, [00:19:00] we want people who are ambitious with drive.

[00:19:03] We'll get to do great work, work with alongside great lawyers. Mm-hmm. But bluntly, um, there's more to life. Yes. You know, we don't take ourselves too seriously. We genuinely put, uh, true value on life balance. Yeah. So it's not a workshop. It's not, uh, you know, I, I wouldn't ever wanna correct the impression it comes Brads friend for an easy ride.

[00:19:24] Oh gosh. Yeah. We do. We, we, we, we, we like ambitious driven people. Mm-hmm. Um, but we're proud of our pil. We, we love being a bit different. Dara said, there's some things that we do that might be a little bit quirky in left field. It's not a firm where there's, uh, any real sense of sort of hierarchy. There's no place where ego sharp elbows.

[00:19:46] Yeah. It's a very unpolitical place. And there's, there's a. There's a real family feel to it. I mean, when, when the managing partner, when I joined Michael Bradner, whose name we carry, whose family name we carry with pride. Mm-hmm. [00:20:00] Um, I think, you know, he was fourth or fifth generation. And the, in many ways it does feel like a family business.

[00:20:06] Yeah. And I genuinely see my role as merely being, you know, a custodian for what would be a relatively short space of time in, in the long history of a firm that's Heritage goes back 200 plus years. Yeah. And that's, you know, come to what sort of firm are we? Um, I, I, again, I'm biased. It's all I've ever known.

[00:20:31] I, I think we've always been a great firm. We can point to lots of law firms, rightly talk about culture, but I think we can back up with sort of awards and accolades enough to demonstrate, you know, ours is real. It does exist. And we're very proud of it and precious of it. Yeah. But we also want to. Be a great firm, a great business.

[00:20:50] Mm-hmm. Uh, a profitable, sustainable business. But I think you can have it both ways. You don't, you don't have to sort of sell your soul risky culture No. At the altar of [00:21:00] trying to be a great well run business, which is great. It's all, it's all about balance. Everything's come back to just maintaining bonds.

[00:21:08] Yes. And again, as I said before, you know, not taking sales too seriously.

[00:21:13] **Sally:** Absolutely. Yeah. Absolutely. Now I'm gonna come back to sustainability a bit later. Yeah. But whilst I remember now, um, I want to ask you, uh, some questions I always love asking, um, which is about your favorite book. Have you got a favorite book?

[00:21:28] Uh, secondly, have you got a favorite fictional legal character? And, um, Um, I'll come back to my next question, which is all about wellbeing. Cause I know you've knackered your should, so that might have to beed. Um, but just firstly those two, have you got a me, uh, a favorite book and why? And, um, have you got a favorite legal Yeah.

[00:21:55] Character.

[00:21:57] **Nik:** It's a favorite book. I'll make a confession. [00:22:00] Um, back to me not having your fierce intellect, Sally. So I'm, I'm not the most bookish people other, other than reading when I'm on holiday. My big challenge is I tend to read, I've always got a book on the go, but I tend to read late night before going to sleep.

[00:22:19] Sleep. Yeah. And I reckon average about two pages now before nodding off. And usually, uh, the first page is the second rereading the same page. So I read snails pace, so perhaps it's no surprise that. The answer to the question, and I have thought about this and I've chosen it because it's the only book I've read more than once.

[00:22:41] I've read it three times and it's very short and concise. Um, it's a book called From about eight years ago, reasons to Stay Alive by, uh, Matt Hay. Um, now Matt Hayes. He's a

[00:22:54] **Sally:** great author. I follow him. He's a

[00:22:55] **Nik:** fiction author. This was his first non-fiction book, and it's [00:23:00] fascinating. It's, um, uh, it, it's a sort of mix between a novel and a memoir, and it's essentially, um, Taking us through the journey of his mental breakdown and battle with depression.

[00:23:15] Mm-hmm. And it's a completely unconventional book. It's a mishmash of autobiographical content, thought dumps on, you know, lists of different things. And I, it, it's, it's unique, but, um, I know it might sound really dark and heavy, but I have to say, I think it's the most uplifting, life-affirming, positive book I've ever read.

[00:23:40] Mm. Um, and I would recommend it to anyone ah, because it is relatively short and concise. It's not a massive read. Yes. But it was a really thought provoking, heartwarming book, which given them the nature of the subject matter. Yeah. Um, they're saying something I think,

[00:23:56] **Sally:** Well, um, we'll probably come back then, the wellbeing.

[00:23:59] [00:24:00] And, and what about, we know you didn't watch the American Series suit, which of course starred Meghan Markle to younger people. Um, and I dunno if you've ever seen law, you're

[00:24:09] **Nik:** writing me off as not a person. Well, we talk about Ali

[00:24:15] **Sally:** Law, which is

[00:24:16] **Nik:** what said I'm an accidental lawyer. I didn't grow up aspiring to be a lawyer.

[00:24:20] **Sally:** Oh gosh. But, um, have you got, so you have you got a, uh, a favorite le legal character? Like I would say Rumpel the Bailey? Yeah. I have a long Li Atticus Finch.

[00:24:31] **Nik:** Well, that's, that's, that's the obvious one is I was thinking, I can't go for a, a comic character, which would've been judge dread. That's not, that's not serious enough.

[00:24:42] There was the character that Tom Cruise played in A Few Good Men. If you remember, I think he was a military lawyer. He was a navel on that brilliant scene with Nicholson. When I think Tom says, um, what's the line? I want the truth Yes. To which Jack replies, you [00:25:00] can't handle the truth. So maybe it's Tom Cruise's character.

[00:25:05] Um, but I guess joking aside, Atticus Finch, so Harper Is To Kill A Mockingbird, I think is possibly the only book I. Read at school because I was required to read it that I particularly enjoyed. Yeah. And this, I think Catch 22 was okay, but it was a bit too quirky for me. But To Kill a Mockingbird, I can vividly remember reading as a school boy.

[00:25:28] And of course the film adaptation from the, I'm getting early sixties with Gregory Page Peck. Yeah. Um, but that's, I mean, I think that character's probably often held out as a sort of hero of American cinema. Yeah. And brilliant Rilliant, brilliant book, brilliant, brilliant film after Gregory Pack.

[00:25:45] Fantastic actor. But, but the character, I'm, I'm the context, you know, lawyer in, uh, you know, Alabama, I think. Yeah. Um, but yeah, someone I guess swimming against the tide, uh, a white lawyer in that scenario. [00:26:00] Willing to, you know, support. Support, yeah. Social outcasts, victims of prejudice in spite of it all. Um, so it's probably not the most original answer, but actually you, you,

[00:26:11] **Sally:** you answered it before I had a chance.

[00:26:12] I know. Sorry, I don't do that in court. Oh, sorry. Sorry. I didn't know I, well, I never know what people are gonna say, but, uh, a few good men as a film, it's also good. Yeah. Um, Nick, just wellbeing, I said I would ask you this question. I know you've hurt your shoulder. You know, being the managing partner is a big job, right?

[00:26:30] Yeah. The lo my branch of the profession is a big job. Yours, uh, is a big job in, in terms of solicitors and being, you know, leading a firm or, uh, an organization with multiple locations and offices and so on. Yeah. Comes with it. Additional pressures to all our jobs. Uh, you know, the law, I think it was Christina Black Laws on here.

[00:26:51] Um, when I asked her, said, you know, the former president of, um, law Society said it's not really a job for the Feng hearten. I think that's gotta be right, [00:27:00] but the burnout rate is high and we need to look after our wellbeing. So, two questions. One, what do you do for your wellbeing? Um, and two, what, what would you like to do?

[00:27:11] Um, feel wellbeing. Right? Um, Re, you know, in an ideal world, look, I, you know, I think I've been surviving on coffee. I've been in court before I came here to interview you. Uh, I'd love to do more yoga. I'm running a marathon. I probably will die. Fundraise re cancer. That was a bit dark. I know, I know. I'm not gonna die.

[00:27:34] You. Well, you know, breast prevent the money, but, but, you know, this is just about doing some extra stuff. But I think I'm probably, you know, um, I, I like extreme challenges and that, and that's it. So what, what do you do? Shut yourself.

[00:27:51] **Nik:** You're right. It's, uh, I mean, I, I genuinely love the role. I don't see it as a job.

[00:27:57] I, I genuinely see it as a, [00:28:00] almost a vocation. It's, it's an absolute privilege. To, to be managing partner of this firm, it being a firm that means so much. Yeah. But yeah, it's, I guess there are times when you could say it can be a, um, a fairly lonely role. Yeah. Cause ultimately the book I do, I do take that responsibility seriously.

[00:28:19] And ultimately the book stops with me or in my mind it, it does. Yeah. And also, uh, maybe this carries back to just personality type I, I, I must enjoyed being the sponge that soaks of other people's challenges. Mm-hmm. And I pride myself on hopefully coming across as being very open and approachable. And maybe because of that, you know, lots of people will come to me with their challenges and I like them.

[00:28:47] Mm-hmm. And people do actually ask, uh, you know, they sort of offload their challenge onto me. And every, so someone will say something like, So what's the equivalent to, for you? Where do you go? Yeah. And I [00:29:00] sort a smile and say, well, no, were really, I'm just the end. I'm the end of the line. No, look, there are times when my sponge saturated exactly.

[00:29:09] Need to just go off a dark and give it. No. Joking aside, I, um, surround myself with brilliant people, loads of amazing colleagues. I, um, I am very open and I don't suffer in silence. Yeah. So I will talk through and share my challenges. On the one hand, you know, I pride myself on being robust and resilient.

[00:29:36] Yeah. But on the other hand, I'm very comfortable talking about what might be perceived as weaknesses or vulnerability. So I'm not hearsay. I've got all the answers on Bulletproof. Yeah. That's certainly not the case. And I think that helps. Yeah. Um, so I do ask, I demand a lot of myself, but I think I'm sufficiently self-aware that, you [00:30:00] know, if if things are getting on top of me yeah.

[00:30:04] Um, I need to deal with it. Yeah. So I don't suffer in silence quite the opposite. I'm, I'm, I'm, I'm probably, uh, if anything ing on the side of being almost too open and talking too much, which might be a bit unnerving. No, I depends, but I, I, again, it's just back to being comfortable, uh, uh, um, sharing vulnerabilities.

[00:30:28] I'm, I'm, I'm, yeah. I, for me, a lot does boil down to talking. Yeah. Being open. Problem shared as a problem, Hal and all

[00:30:37] **Sally:** that. Absolutely. I, I totally agree. Now, um, if, if I was a young person aspiring you still, uh, in my head Yeah. Um, to come to the profession, your branch, well, as a profession as a whole, I wondered if you had any advice for those entering [00:31:00] now Yeah.

[00:31:00] Entering the law, because, you know, we've been through covid. Um, you've had to manage that in your role, um, as managing partner and, and so on, you know, on the way here, met the trainee who just qualified as a solicitor, so that, you know, has two years of, um, one's life. So have you got perhaps three things you would say to someone?

[00:31:21] Careers advice, really aspiring to enter the law? Um, now,

[00:31:28] **Nik:** Only three.

[00:31:29] **Sally:** Gosh. Um, well, I'm limiting you. I've got other questions I want to ask you. So I'd say, I'd

[00:31:33] **Nik:** say be open-minded and curious. Um, and I say that partly because I, I think unlike I'd say my generation, I, I suspect I'm probably one of a dying breed, you know, single firm person.

[00:31:50] And yeah, dare I'll say it, you know, we're now into the era of the hundred year life. My kids are million hundred. So not only would they, if they're gonna [00:32:00] be a lawyer, work at the same firm, they probably won't be a, just a lawyer for their career. They'll have multiple careers. So, you know, be open-minded and curious, and always embrace opportunities to develop.

[00:32:12] Um, Um, I guess following on from that one, this might seem a cliche, but it's so true. You know, you do get out what you put in and, you know, look beyond chargeable hours and, and fee income, just look to develop and contribute more broadly. Yeah. Whether it's client development opportunities, business development in you, engaging with committees, initiatives, you know, non-chargeable stuff.

[00:32:37] Yeah. Um, I also say you, you, it's never too early to start building out your network. I, I still have close professional contacts who I first met and connected with when I was a trainee. So, you know, just really jump in the deep end and embrace it. Um, you'll get out what you put in. Um, and then I would [00:33:00] say yes, be ambitious and be driven, but be a team player.

[00:33:05] Don't allow ego or arrogance to get in the way. Um, You don't have to be liked to progress in your career, but you do have to be trusted. Yes. So be genuine, be sincere, be empathetic. Uh, and remember, it's cool to be kind. Yeah. Um, and my fourth one, which I know you might edit out cause I was only allowed three.

[00:33:29] Don't take yourself too seriously. You know, this is a, i I I think it's a, it's a really rewarding profession and career, but it's not necessarily for the fainthearted. So it's tough enough as it is. Any opportunities to seek out and embrace enjoyment, however, and wherever you can take it. You know, don't, don't be a fun sponge or a mood Hoover.

[00:33:56] Yeah. Um, and, uh, you know, savor [00:34:00] those moments. Yeah,

[00:34:02] **Sally:** I love those. I'm, I'm writing these down for me thing. I need to remember some of these. You're definitely not a fun stage. Well, I'm maybe in court. Uh, okay. Uh, but there we are. Um, no, that's really great. Um, Nick, I wanted to ask you about some, some stuff I've asked you a lot about the firm because it is a unique firm for extent, and your career here has been u unique.

[00:34:25] But I met one of your colleagues recently, an Irish fellow, when we were doing a round table, um, about the future of the legal profession. Mm-hmm. And in terms of real estate and the working scenario and how that, what that will look like, hybrid or not, will we need offices and so on. And, uh, he, he told me, uh, as I was chairing this, it was a C B R E, which was a, a, a great round table with, um, other lawyers from that, from the northwest, from different firms about, um, the bog.

[00:34:59] And some of the [00:35:00] things you've been doing Yeah. On ESG sustainability. Mm-hmm. And the, the main reason I'm asking you is actually our profession feels like it's a bit behind on sustainability. You know, even the NHS is talking about would you sing, you know, certain meds on the basis of, um, the carbon print and sustainability.

[00:35:21] Um, but law firms, but not quite talking about it fully in as much way except for you. No,

[00:35:27] **Nik:** it's not just except for us. Well, I, I think the profession, this goes beyond just sustainability. I think, you know, diversity, um, much more broadly. I, if, if I, where we sort of started and how I described the firm, we have a clear sense of purpose.

[00:35:43] Yeah. And, you know, genuinely, We believe business can and should bring about positive change Business, isn't it? Need to be a dirty word. It can be part of the solution, not part of the problem. Yeah. Um, and I, I think our profession, [00:36:00] yes, maybe it has, has some catching up to do, but I, I think there's some real momentum now being built.

[00:36:07] Being built and because I like to think it's for the right reasons, but being cynical for a second, you know, in terms of the challenge of, you know, the war for talent as it's described, it's that sort of generational societal change where, Um, I'll say the next generation, they expect more than perhaps my generation did.

[00:36:30] Yeah. So, yes. You know, they wanna do good work and get paid well, but that alone isn't enough for many now. Absolutely. So

[00:36:37] **Sally:** they're, they want

[00:36:37] **Nik:** to feel like there's a deeper sense of purpose to the organization that they're,

[00:36:41] **Sally:** they're working and they're asking you in your interviews. Yeah. You know, what, what are you doing for.

[00:36:46] Environmental hes and sustainability. So that's why I'm interested in how it came about that, cuz I think your special knowledge if your mastermind would be a Pete Barwin.

[00:36:57] **Nik:** Yeah. Well it's fascinating. So again, back to [00:37:00] being a little bit different, and by no means knocking the Manny who do great work with funding tree planting, but we just thought let's do something a bit quirky and different.

[00:37:08] So, oh right.

[00:37:09] **Sally:** Does that start from the beginning?

[00:37:10] **Nik:** Yeah. So the piland, so it's the, the project you were referring to, which I'm glad you call it the, at the, it's aland restoration project and I can't remember who, colleague, so we should call, its. And our, our, the, the very professional marketing advice at the time was, that's just not, that's just a bit too left field, but it kind of stuck as an internal badge.

[00:37:34] But, um, I think they've accepted that. Everyone just knows it as the brightness. Um, so the background is, uh, quick bit of, uh, sort of facts for you. Yeah. So interestingly, um, I might get these figures slightly out, but soland bogs cover about 3% of the planet's surface, but in the UK it's about 12 or 13%. Oh, right.

[00:37:56] So the UK actually has a disproportionately large amount of [00:38:00] bogs. So what's the relevance to that? People and bogs, uh, store and capture twice the amount of carbonide worldwide than all the world's forests put together and trees. So, uh, it might seem a bit dirty and unsexy, but actually it's a very effective way of storing carbon.

[00:38:20] Yeah. So the problem that we encountered and that we are playing a small part in helping to resolve is there's a farm. Kingsdale Health Farm in North Yorkshire covers about a one and a half thousand acre site that was, uh, previously, uh, Poland BOG site. Oh, right. But through overgrazing. Um, the bog was in poor health.

[00:38:43] It was seasoning to capture carbon. I'm simplifying things. I actually can't remember how we were introduced to the owners of the farm, but we were, and we thought, let's do something a bit different. And we committed a. Significant amount of funding. Yeah. Which both in and of [00:39:00] itself was helpful, but critically enabled them having secured private sector funding to unlock a significant amount of public grant funding.

[00:39:08] And collectively that funding is funding the restoration of the, of the bog. So through a number of ways. And tree planting is part of it. Yeah. But it's, uh, it's um, uh, dealing with drainage issue issues and the like, and it's fascinating. So we've been, it's really captured the imagination internally. So we have volunteering days up there.

[00:39:29] Right. So the bulk, you know, a healthy Pete, it stores captures and stores carbon. It acts as a natural flood defense. It promotes biodiversity. Um, and yeah, it's, um, it's, yeah, it ended up getting more attention than ever different, uh, Yeah, we're quite proud of

[00:39:54] **Sally:** it. Well, at the round table, everybody was saying we'd like a bog.

[00:39:58] Yeah. Um, and, and [00:40:00] actually enables you to, to be doing, you know, leading, um, with purpose. So it sounds really exciting. And then the other thing you've managed to do, you know, we are in this kind of in between where there are people still working from home. Yeah. Um, and people who follow me now I've written several articles about four day weeks of efficiency and productivity.

[00:40:18] I sit on a productivity forum for the uk, um, and so on. And you've actually managed to be getting people in the office, um, and the building that you are in. Uh, and some of that has been done through a variety of ways, which leads me back to culture. Now. I know there's been some puppy days. I know. I don't think there were ness farming puppies.

[00:40:42] No. But I think the landlord had some kind of puppy day. Yeah. And, and so the building has become a little bit more than just somewhere you go to work,

[00:40:52] **Nik:** and that's really the answer. Yeah. So, um, we, if I go back to sort of pre covid, [00:41:00] I, I, I, this was our way anyway, so we naturally manage with a very light touch, um, back to sort of culture and personality.

[00:41:07] Yeah. Um, um, okay. I say this, wouldn't I? But it's always been very much a sort of trust-based organization where, uh, and I think the big silver lining. And for many it was, they had no choice. There's a lot of organizations that have perhaps gone from a sort of hierarchical command and control parent child type relationship between leadership and management and, and, uh, colleagues, employees, yeah.

[00:41:40] So then Covid blows up and that's kind of blown out the water because everyone's scattered far and wide and he had no choice but to, you know, trust your colleagues were logging on and doing good work from home. And, uh, I suspect by and large, um, but trust has been, you [00:42:00] know, hard earned and, and, uh, richly deserved, uh, many organizations that in the professional services sector actually prayed well through Covid.

[00:42:11] Yeah. But my view is why Earth sort of, if we are now sort of post covid, um, why would you revert to the old way of working? So. I think there's a, that is a positive silver lining, and that then leads to, you know, flexibility and agile work and being here for good, which again, has to be a good thing in terms of accessibility and yeah, look, we, we love seeing colleagues in person, but back to the nature of our firm, it, it just, it would be a very unres thing to mandate people must be in return.

[00:42:46] Yeah. Uh, so we haven't, and we've broadly left teams to sort of, uh, decide for themselves. Different teams, different disciplines work in different ways, but it's not a sort of top down mandate. One size [00:43:00] fits all, and this is where offices come into it. So we are lucky in the sense that. Maybe slightly counterintuitively we through and since Covid have invested a lot in office space.

[00:43:13] Yeah. So we've opened a new office in leads last year. We moved our office that was previously in the center of Preston to a new site, uh, that we now badges LAN on motorway network. That was in November 21. We moved into these offices in Barbara Square and Manchester in July 22. We're about to embark on a complete refurb of our Liverpool office and I see it as our challenge to provide office space That's sufficiently compelling and attractive that colleagues would want to come in.

[00:43:44] Yes. And if you actually look at, um, what you've been around these offices. Yeah. The nature of the space is very much a sort of post covid design. Yeah. So there's far less space set aside for fixed workspaces for colleagues. There's a [00:44:00] lot more that's client facing. There's a lot more that's catering for.

[00:44:04] You know, regional, flexible working people just to turn up, plop themselves down, plug in and go. So there's, there's, um, so in that's we've been well lucky. Um, it was our choice to invest in property. Probably at the time everyone was thinking, damn, we've got too much office space. Office space. So for me, I think the office is in many ways just as important as it ever was, but it just serves a different purpose now.

[00:44:34] Yeah. And it needs to cater for colleagues, uh, wanting to come to the office, not just to sit at a desk and churn out work, but to facilitate interaction. And that's where I know it might be seen as a bit, but Poppy, Dave Yoga, the social side. Yes. Um, the vast majority people completely, understandably, want to continue to reap the benefit of.[00:45:00]

[00:45:00] You know, avoiding the commute. Yeah. However many days a week and working from home, that's absolutely fine. But I also think the vast majority of people still crave human contact. Absolutely. Absolutely. So it's providing an environment where they can come in and enjoy that in the right way. Yeah.

[00:45:15] **Sally:** No, I, I, I, I really, no, it's a

[00:45:17] **Nik:** challenge.

[00:45:18] Not, so, it was our challenge to rise through rather than a, um, mandate that everyone has to come in. Six days a week?

[00:45:27] **Sally:** Yes. Well, I think, uh, I, I, if I was employed somewhere, I would like to come in certainly through a puppies and there's yoga I can go to in my lunch hour. Uh, it's all, it's all really good. Um, Nick, I've been asking you a lot here about the firm and what you do at the firm, and because you are in a leadership position mm-hmm.

[00:45:46] Um, and really the sort of culture you'd like, but I, I wonder, you know, Um, when you are quite old and in a nursing home and you know nobody, thank you. Nobody knows [00:46:00] with my bad shoulder, your bad shoulder, me don't blame me. Um, but, you know, I'm just reflecting. You know, somebody says, who are you again? Nick White.

[00:46:14] You know, what did you do? And I just wonder, you know, you're 106, like the woman in front of Vogue this month or whatever. What do you want your legacy to be? You know, what do you want to sort of reflect long after your, not Mr. Brabner or Mr. White, you know? Um, uh, What, what sort of, what do you want to be your lasting legacy at Bradner?

[00:46:38] Is it the culture of the firm? Is it the way you lead? Um, you know, just reflecting on that for a moment, because we've all got ideas, haven't we? Um, and if it's more than just a balance sheet, and of course that's gotta be a priority. There's a lot of staff here and, you know, it's a business or it's a business, I often say it, but beyond that, [00:47:00] yeah.

[00:47:00] Um, what, what would you like your legacy to be? Um,

[00:47:07] **Nik:** that's a very deep question. I'm not really

[00:47:08] **Sally:** considering, I know it's deep for this podcast, but I think, you know, you are the head honcho of, um, a really interesting organization, an interesting business, and that I just wonder,

[00:47:20] **Nik:** probably two answers, one that writes the firm and one to me.

[00:47:23] Um, so the firm, this stent does come back to the nature of the firm. Um, uh,

[00:47:34] Thinking about, you know, Michael Bradner, his family, um, fundamentally the firm, when I stepped up it, it was already a great firm. Yes. You know, didn't need, it, wasn't in need of any reinvention. So it's sort of strike that balance between, dare I say, you know, instilling fresh energy, ambition, drive, because on the one hand we are proud of our [00:48:00] heritage, but for some it kind of weighs quite heavily around the neck because you want to also project the image of being sort of progressive and yes, forward facing, which we certainly do, but we're certainly at the same time, proud of our heritage.

[00:48:13] It's sort of striking that balance between, um, pushing the firm on instilling that sense of ambition and the, and. And, um, you know, raising profile, um, but at the same time preserving all the good stuff. Yeah. So I do very much see my role as, as I said before, as just being the custodian of a, of a great firm for what will be a relatively short period in its long history.

[00:48:40] Yeah. So it's, it's, it, it's being very careful to stay focused on the stuff that sets us apart and making sure we don't lose sight of that. I think the worst thing a firm like RAs could do is, uh, is uh, you know, grow to a [00:49:00] point where it's become a another and it's lost the stuff that it maybe does.

[00:49:06] Distinguishes from the competition. Yeah. So that's from a firm perspective. So I mean, I guess, you know, ultimately it's nothing particularly radical moving the firm on leaving it in a better place. Yeah. But, but making sure we don't lose all the good stuff that was here already. And then from a personal point of view, I don't know.

[00:49:26] It's, it's funny, you know, you talk about leadership leaders, you know, as colleagues will know, I, I'm, I'm deeply uncomfortable with any sense of hierarchy. Mm-hmm. You know, words like boss, you know, people don't work for me. They work with me, I work alongside them. Um, and it's not, it's genuinely, it's not selflessness for the sake of trying to portray a certain image.

[00:49:51] But I, I've always seen myself as. Okay. Except I'm, I'm, I'm just the one that was [00:50:00] thrust a little bit further into the lime line, but, um, my, my approach is very much just first amongst equals I don't, I don't see myself as anything different, anything better. Yeah. Um, and actually particularly for someone who came through the ranks, yes.

[00:50:16] I had some interesting experiences shortly after I became managing partner where, uh, sort of back to the Lonely Hearts Club. Yeah. Couple of, you know, occasions when I did suddenly feel, um, I've kind of lost my, my group, my pals. Cause there's a lot of who've come through the

[00:50:34] **Sally:** together. Yeah. And now you're, I this walk, I walk

[00:50:38] **Nik:** in conversations and it sort go mesh.

[00:50:41] No, it's happened. Yes. Work hard, hard. Do my best to, uh, just try and be a, I'm just a normal. But, but the, hopefully pretty humble down to earth approach

[00:50:56] **Sally:** you are, but the reality is you are the boss. I know you [00:51:00] don't like that term. Yeah. But you are the big cheese. And so like, not term, not the boss. Are you often saying the cheese?

[00:51:07] Yeah. Yeah. The big, the big cheese. I'm trying to think of some, some big cheeses I've had on your head about lady hail. You know, I'd say the, she's a

[00:51:14] **Nik:** big cheese. She's, I'm just a ly triangle, a pretty tall one. I've not answered your question well, no,

[00:51:22] but

[00:51:22] **Sally:** I, about me, about you

[00:51:25] **Nik:** in a nursing home. So for me, it's not really groundbreaking.

[00:51:28] So I would like to think people thought, you know what? He was all right. He was, uh, down to earth. Uh, it didn't go to his head. He didn't turn into a cock. He, uh, cared. Yeah. And was genuinely interested in. Nurturing and supporting colleagues, which is absolutely true. And I see it as part of my role is, is, is is sort of trying to create an environment, set the tone for [00:52:00] every colleague here at every level to feel empowered and encouraged to bring their best selves to work and contribute.

[00:52:09] Yeah, and I say this to all the colleagues as they arrive. Every couple months we have a Meet the leader session and that's one of the points I really hammer at home, that you know, you're not a small car in a big wheel, uh, anyone and everyone should feel empowered to contribute. So I guess that's sort of, I don't know, team player.

[00:52:29] Yeah. Side of me, I would hope would be, um, acknowledged. Well, there's certainly no aspiration have probably been seen as the big cheese. No, well

[00:52:39] **Sally:** you say that, but I think, you know, it's good. Good point you made, but just very quickly. You know, what do you think I make, I'm writing a book on leadership. What, what do you think makes a good leader?

[00:52:50] Who are the leaders that you've admired? Particularly in law? Because, you know, in our job, yeah. There's no rule book. No, no one's giving. No, no. Nick go [00:53:00] on that training course about leadership or whatever. So what, what are the leadership skills that you've admired that you think makes a great leader? Uh,

[00:53:09] **Nik:** approachability, humility, and empathy.

[00:53:15] **Sally:** And that was without he hesitation in any

[00:53:18] **Nik:** shape. Yeah. Uh, a lot of which ultimately leads to trust. Yeah. Um,

[00:53:25] **Sally:** which is I think is the number one requirement on organizations of what employees want actually.

[00:53:31] **Nik:** Yeah. And I, and I do think there's, there has been a seismic change, and I think particularly for our profession.

[00:53:39] I, I, I re I remember back to the sort of mid nineties when I joined, Actually was a corporate lawyer for a couple years after I qualified, before I switched back then corporate and commercial was lumped in together, but we separated it out and I was our fledgling commercial department back in the day.

[00:53:58] And I can remember it was very much [00:54:00] still, dare I say, a sort of macho testosterone fueled world where it felt like ego was still important and there was a lot of brashness and arrogance that really didn't seem to serve any particularly useful purpose. And I think there's been a massive shift. Um, you know, clients, I, I think the days of, you know, arrogant, bullish, shouty lawyers have, have largely gone, I, I, I think clients want to want to feel like they're represented by decent, relatable people.

[00:54:36] Yeah. Um, so I think our profession has come on leaps and bounds and I think. The, the sort of old school dare dictatorial, as I said before, commander control style leadership probably looks, if it still exists anyway, looks a bit dated. Yeah.

[00:54:54] **Sally:** Um, interesting. Cause it hasn't entirely gone, haven't it? No. Um, [00:55:00] but I think perhaps here, either some of the.

[00:55:03] Ways in which, you know, your leadership style or the firm's culture I is quite different. Yeah. Um, by comparison to the, to others. Um, Nick, I, I want to ask you this about, you know, you are the big cheese, but if somebody in their career, maybe they're, uh, there's so many different layers now in solicitor's firms.

[00:55:23] When I came to the bar, there was a solicitor, a partner. Mm-hmm. I'm nothing in between. Nothing in between. Yeah. Now people send me messages constantly saying, so please, I've become a junior associate, so please, I've become a senior associate. Yeah. So please, I've now become a part, I don't understand all the titles, but if they are in any of those roles and they aspire to be the big cheese, what, what advice have you got about career progression to on, on the lead up?

[00:55:51] Whether it's to partnership, to equity, partnership or even managing partner. If you got any careers advice for, you know, Um, [00:56:00] men and women who might be thinking, oh, where, where are we? Where am I going? Well,

[00:56:04] **Nik:** specifically with the, um, using your term big cheese leadership roles, I, I, I'd say it came to me. I didn't go to it.

[00:56:13] Yes. And I think it's for others to identify that you may have potential for those roles. Um, I, I don't think it works to sort of overtly aspire to and target a sort of managing partner role. Um, I certainly didn't, it was, it was more through the way around and it was someone else sewing the seed with me and giving me some food for thought.

[00:56:38] Yeah. That I took some time to reflect on. Um, I think, I think just generally in terms of progression, um, a couple of points I'd make, which are linked, if I think about perhaps where I've. Done a good job of making the most out of me. [00:57:00] Mm-hmm. And my attributes is, um, being open about and comfortable with your weaknesses.

[00:57:08] A lot of people focus on strengths and try and paper over weaknesses, what might be perceived as weaknesses. And I, I'll always say, you know, relatively speaking, I'm probably not far more weaknesses than strengths, but one of my strengths is I'm, I think I'm quite in tune with and comfortable and open about my weaknesses.

[00:57:27] Mm-hmm. And how to address them. So in my case, and if you look at how the firm has evolved in recent years with some of the senior hires and the management structure that we have in place, it's about surrounding yourself with, um, great people who can perhaps do things that you can't or do it better.

[00:57:49] Yeah. But being comfortable, acknowledging that I don't have all the answers. I'm not, I'm not the. Single source of, of leadership, actually it's all about the team. Yes. So I [00:58:00] think being honest with yourself about weaknesses and how to address them and working on 'em as one. And then I often talk about, which a lot of people do now laterally, which is great Imposter syndrome.

[00:58:12] Yes. So I, I always say, uh, I'm, I'm deeply skeptical of anyone who claims they don't have an imposter syndrome. Me too. I think that's a once more step away from a, a, a width of, so I, I'll always say particularly to young, uh, aspiring lawyers and dare said particularly cause I think it is still gender skewed to female lawyers that, um, just learn to learn to love it.

[00:58:40] If you can at least embrace it, but don't let it hold you back. Yeah. See, for what it is, which is, it's a sign that you are still humble, you haven't become arrogant. But just don't let it hold you back. And, you know, I'm, I'm more than comfortable confessing, you know, I say this [00:59:00] as I'm per close to turning 50.

[00:59:02] And now, um, I'm male obviously, if that's relevant. I'm a managing partner. I'm 20, gosh, whatever, I 25 years qualified. Mm-hmm. And I I It's still there. Yeah, it's still there. It always will be. And I actually kinda like it when I, you know, Michael Bradner, who I hold in the highest of regard, I was his last ever trainee.

[00:59:27] Um, I think I finished him off, well, he did that or he decided to go out and hide. I was the last ever allowed to share his office. And even now when I see Michael, I'm very close to my as I can't speak hard enough. A proper man of real integrity, absolute gentleman. But if I see Michael, which I don't too often, but we would occasionally, there's always a little part of me that's that trainee.

[00:59:52] Yes. As a 23 year old, uh, in the presence of the great Mr. Ner. But I, I kind of like that [01:00:00] cuz that reminds me that, you know, I've, I've retained some humility and I've not become too arrogant. So, and I think, I think there's a lot of lawyers who let either perceived weaknesses or imposter syndrome hold them back and, and sort of dull their aspirations and ambitions for themselves when they're really needing.

[01:00:24] **Sally:** Mm-hmm. Well, managing it, isn't it? Yeah. We had a whole conference on using as a superpower. Well, uh, it's. You've, you suffer from imposter syndrome as a high achieving man. Uh, as you've described yourself just before we finish, and we could talk all, all day, but I know you've got a meeting, um, you haven't got to where you are alone.

[01:00:46] You've been very kind in naming your professional, um, and, you know, wonderful, uh, trainers if you like, the equivalent of people, masters and so on. But you've got a family, you've got a wife, and you know you've [01:01:00] got other people in your life. Mm-hmm. What role have they played in keeping you grounded, especially as, as the big cheese here really?

[01:01:09] Um, I'm

[01:01:11] **Nik:** a huge amount. Um, absolutely. And

[01:01:19] I think, uh, family has been a critical source of remaining grounded, and dare I say it, You know, without them perhaps there, there could have been occasions of slipping into taking yourself or it just a bit too seriously. Yeah. So, you know, particularly with teenage daughter and son, um, who are, are more than happy to bring me down to Peleton.

[01:01:54] That's, that's, yeah. That's not that I don't think I'm, I would've [01:02:00] thought that we would particularly take myself too seriously, but yeah, I'm, I'm surrounded by, uh, loving supporting critics. So yeah, family's

[01:02:11] **Sally:** been important. Absolutely. I mean, I, I, I ask that because, you know, I don't give many interviews, but the few interviews I give, I'm always asked, how do you do it all?

[01:02:22] Mm-hmm. You know, and men never get asked that. And you knows, Lindsay is the brilliant actress, says, she's always asked that cuz she's got twins. Yeah. And she has a very famous brother, very able, uh, um, drummer, I think he is in the band. Right? He's, he'd never been asked it. Yeah. Um, the question, so I wanted to highlight really the role of our support, irrespective of our gender.

[01:02:44] Yeah. Particularly for our male colleagues, um, actually and managing the big careers. Yeah. Um, in, in the main, um, really

[01:02:54] **Nik:** tons of support, family, friends, colleagues. Good. Uh, and [01:03:00] undoubtedly to have been sacrifices along the way. Yeah. And it hasn't just been made there, the sacrifices at all. No. And. Yeah, I'm, I'm, I'm often conscious of the importance of trying to practice what you preach and bluntly, many times I fall unsure.

[01:03:17] Yeah. Um, so there will have been times when if I think of balance, I've not got it right and I don't get it right. Um, and yeah, I'm sure that there might be plenty that would say work means too much. Again, back to being a sort of one firm person, the firm does mean a huge amount. Yeah. I've, I've, I've invested my entire career to it, and they'll probably carry me out an award in Fox.

[01:03:50] Um, so it does mean a lot, and I do recognize that in terms of its importance to my very being, [01:04:00] my, yeah. It, it's just so integral to what I'm about. And. I'm, I'm, I confess, I I do love it. It's more than just a job. Yeah. And that does mean there'll be times when I probably do slip into, dare I say, working too hard.

[01:04:16] I could always work far smarter. Yeah. I'm not sure I could work harder or that would be particularly wise or healthy, but Yeah. Uh, and I'm, I'm very aware that others will have carried that burden and made the sacrifices. Yes. So, you know, I've always tried when I have been, you know, at home on holidays to be as present as possible.

[01:04:38] Yeah. Um, um, but un undoubtedly in terms of climb away from home directly or directly cause of work, there have been times when it's, it's been more than, uh, someone would say is

[01:04:52] **Sally:** ideal. Yeah. Well, um, Nick is being wonderful talking to you. I've seen that, [01:05:00] um, the firm and you have won endless awards. Uh, and I love the firm.

[01:05:05] Has, I haven't. You haven't? No. Actually, I dunno why you haven't. I've got swimming,

[01:05:12] **Nik:** I'm not sure won any award.

[01:05:13] **Sally:** I'll put, I'll put a tweet out. Well, I think it's important, you know, you've been present at quite a lot of awards. You've, you know, law Society Awards and so on. I'm, I'm happy to be a Yeah, well, you know, it's, but uh, I just wondered what, what's next? You are the pinnacle of your career here.

[01:05:33] Yeah. Um, it, it, it's a big question and sometimes I say, look, if there's something in the pipeline, um, don't disclose it. Yeah. Um, and, um, You know, I asked this question of a guest on this podcast, um, and, uh, he said, oh, yes, there is a movie being made about me. And I said, I'm not sure we should have said that.

[01:05:54] Mm-hmm. Um, so I just wondered what's next and what would, I could definitely

[01:05:57] **Nik:** say there were,

[01:05:58] **Sally:** well, if there was [01:06:00] going to be what, who would play you? But you know, what, what, what's next for Nick White, a managing partner on Bradner?

[01:06:08] **Nik:** Very unexciting answer A lot more are the same I have. Yeah. Um, uh, they say never say never, but I will, I, I'll never work at another law firm.

[01:06:19] I, I remain as committed and as happy here as I ever have. So I would like to continue for some time to come in the leadership role here. I do occasionally think, you know, on my death bed, if I look back and think,

[01:06:37] **Sally:** gosh, should I even 50, you're talking about death.

[01:06:40] **Nik:** Not only, um, Did I only have one career, but it was only at one firm.

[01:06:46] And there are times when I think, yeah, I'm comfortable. I'm sort of comfortable with that. Not a hundred percent. Maybe at some point, uh, dare I say it, towards the end of my career and once I've served my [01:07:00] useful purpose here, maybe there's something else. It wouldn't be in a law firm there. Um, a lot of maybe former law firm leaders for resting in non-exec roles.

[01:07:11] I, I, I dunno. Yeah. To be honest, I try and not try and live in the present as much as possible. Not great. You're gonna ask me now, who's gonna play, who's who.

[01:07:21] **Sally:** Is anyone tall enough to go to America? No.

[01:07:24] **Nik:** There are. What? You, you, you finally told me you were gonna ask me this question just before you press record.

[01:07:30] So actually spent the last half trying to think of,

[01:07:33] **Sally:** and not listening to any of my questions. No.

[01:07:40] **Nik:** So I am tall as you kind of,

[01:07:42] **Sally:** well, te tell everybody how tall you are. Yeah.

[01:07:46] **Nik:** I love the one and half feet high difference

[01:07:48] **Sally:** between us. Thank you, Nick. That's my heels, uh, today and

[01:07:57] **Nik:** shrinking. Uh, so who [01:08:00] played it? Well, I'll, I'll go with tall actors then. Um, it would either be.

[01:08:09] **Sally:** And, and I said I can't, I can't

[01:08:11] **Nik:** choose at all.

[01:08:13] Cause you'll

[01:08:13] **Sally:** thinking No, no. Well, um, I've kinda, here I'll say Steven

[01:08:17] **Nik:** Marchin, Stephen Rick, Ricky Sonick. He's six seven. If Peter Cro went into acting, I'm Peter Peter Crouch, but without a good touch for a big man. I've actually, I've done back to back with Peter Crouch. He's quite a bit to long about me try Keith.

[01:08:36] Oh, the alternative. If I was gonna take 20 years off myself, the actor, I actually don't know his name, who plays cousin Greg in succession. He's six seven too.

[01:08:48] **Sally:** Oh, right. I'm gonna have to that

[01:08:50] **Nik:** up. Steven Marching cousin, Greg. They're all six seven. Okay. I'm merely six, five and a half. So any of those three?

[01:08:57] Well,

[01:08:57] **Sally:** Ian Simkin, uh, now [01:09:00] KC, who's a friend of mine, um, when I asked him this question, he said, well, it doesn't matter because, um, in a lot of legal dramas, the actors don't know anything. Like the real, the real people. Yeah. And it's about my height. So I think he said call him fur. Oh, really? Yes. If you listen that episode.

[01:09:18] So it's good, it's good that to have, uh, Peter Cro. Well, um, I, I wait for the film to be mentioned. Uh, you know, fairness. I'll do a good all the time. Yeah. Well, Nick White, uh, thank you for talking law with me. It's been an absolute pleasure and uh, I really appreciate you giving up the time to reflect on your career, um, here.

[01:09:42] Um,

[01:09:44] **Nik:** the pleasure.

[01:09:46] **Sally:** Just Ally's. No, my pleasure. Thank you, Dan. Thank you for listening.