

Matt Bowles: My guest today is Erica Hackman, she is a purposeful traveler and connector who spent five years living in the Middle East, Asia, the Caribbean, and Africa. She runs [The Nomadic Network](#), a company founded by New York Times best-selling author [Nomadic Matt Kepnes](#), whose team she joined over a decade ago. [The Nomadic Network](#) take small groups of likeminded travelers to destinations all over the world, ranging from Costa Rica to Romania, to Jordan, to Tanzania. Itineraries are designed to take you beyond the typical tourist traps and immerse you in the true culture of each destination. So, you get to explore unique neighborhoods as well as meet and dine with locals. Erica has traveled to over 40 countries and she and her husband are currently raising their two-year-old son, primarily between New York and Ghana.

Erica, welcome to the show.

Erica Hackman: Thank you very much, Matt. Very excited to be here.

Matt Bowles: I am super excited to have you here. Let's just start off by setting the scene and talking about where we are recording today. I just recently got back to the US. I'm actually recording this today from Charlotte, North Carolina. And where are you?

Erica Hackman: I'm in New Rochelle, New York, just outside of the city, 10 minutes from a subway stop.

Matt Bowles: I know it well. I lived in Rye, New York in Westchester County for a few years growing up and then moved over to Buffalo and went to high school in Western New York and have a whole bunch of New York state connects. So much love, big up to New Rochelle. I think we need to start this off by talking about how you and I met.

We met last year in Ghana, but do you want to talk about and sort of tell the story about exactly where we met and how that came about?

Erica Hackman: Sure. So basically, my husband is Ghanaian. We spend a few months each winter in Ghana.

And for those of you who have traveled to Ghana, you may know that December is the month of all the things to do. So, I was sitting in my in laws house, looking up things to do on random Instagram pages and ran across this thing called the Royals Gala. And in the past, I loved to do really fancy things.

I'm not a very fancy person, but the Royals Gala just spoke to me. And I told my husband like, we should try to go to this. What is this? This looks cool. But with the limited information that I could find out, I really couldn't figure out what it was or what was happening.

And so, once I found the website, I realized that you needed to buy an NFT to get access to this gala. And I almost threw in the towel right there because I didn't want to figure this out. I don't want to figure this out. This seems too hard to do. And luckily my husband was sitting right there when I was saying that. And he's much more tech savvy than me and much more forward thinking than me in scenarios like this.

And he was like Erica, everyone has to figure this out at some point. This is the new way of being. So, let's just take the time and figure this out. So, we ended up buying NFTs, the two of us, to get access to not only this gala, but a whole week of events. Accidentally, we only showed up to the gala. But now that I know that there's a whole week of events dedicated to the Royals, which is a very incredible group that we'll share about after this.

We showed up at the gala and we had to wear dressy Ghanaian clothes. And it was an incredible night of cocktails, and there was a step and repeat, and there were performances, there were really famous Ghanaian singers and fashion designers and cultural dancers.

It was a night to remember. I almost compare it to a wedding in Qatar, which is one of the richest countries in the world. It was an insanely incredible cultural experience. You just felt fancy, and it was wonderful. So that is where I met you, Matt. We started talking and realized that, hey, I work with a guy that, you know, and so let's start talking a little bit more and you're a nomad and I'm a nomad. And we just had a little conversation and now here we are. So, it's very exciting.

Matt Bowles: It was an unbelievable night, and I actually learned about the Royals. On The Maverick Show, because I was interviewing a guest big up to [Ivy Shue](#) and she's very into crypto and NFT space. And she was talking about all of this stuff throughout the interview.

And at the end I asked her, what are some of your personal favorite and most amazing NFT projects that you have bought into? And she said, The Royals and she started explaining to me that you own this NFT, and you get access to this black-tie gala in Accra in December. I had already been to Ghana. I had been for a month in 2019, and it was not in December.

I went in June for the very first time to Accra, and it was completely amazing. It's the lower tourist season, which was great cause I got a much more local experience, blew me away, won my heart entirely. I'm like, I'm going to be coming back here a lot. And so, after that, I'm interviewing her and she's telling me, oh yeah, you buy this NFT, and you get access to a black-tie gala in Ghana.

And It's in Dettu December, which as you said, is when all the Afrobeat festivals and everything else are going on in Ghana, which I had heard about and wanted to go back and wanted to experience. So, I was like, this all lines up perfectly. So, I bought two NFTs, actually. I was like, I'm definitely going to go with the date.

So, I'm going to have at least two NFTs. So, I go, and I buy two. And then over the course of the time from then until December, I'm telling people about it. And I'm just like, oh yeah, I'm going to this black-tie gala in Ghana. It's NFT admission only and this and that. And then all of a sudden, these other nomad friends of mine were like, oh my God. Can we go too? And I was like, um, sure.

And so, you ended up meeting a number of other people that have been on The Maverick Show. So Maverick Show listeners know [Dani Dirks](#), Maverick Show listeners know [Sharon Rosenberg](#), and you met all of them. They're at the gala because I had told them about it over the course of the year.

They're like, I want to go. How do I go? And then they bought their own NFTs and then they went. And so there ended up being a whole bunch of people there, but totally agree with your assessment of the event was this small, intimate space. It was legit black tie across the board. It was a fashion show. And then the music performance part of it was just unbelievable. I mean, top A list Ghanaian musicians, Afrobeat artists, who were performing five feet from you. Like, you're literally just standing directly around them. They're standing there in front of you and performing five feet away from you. I mean, it was amazing.

Erica Hackman: You felt so close to everyone, and it was incredible. And I will say that one thing we didn't touch on was the meaningfulness behind this just rang through it, which Dr. Hans, who's this investing tutor that is Ghanaian, but lives in America, has a passion for making sure that everyone has access to these

new technologies, to these new worlds, and so, from what I understand, why he created this and why he made it an NFT access, because he wanted to push people into forcing themselves to learn what to do here because they wanted to go to something so cool.

So, when I was sitting at my table, there were so many people that had flown in for this event. It was unreal. So many people from the US from Canada, from Europe that had shown up. in Ghana, maybe for the first time, maybe not. But there were also the couple sitting next to me who had gone to elementary school with Dr. Hans in Ghana. And they were learning about this, and they got really excited about NFTs and they were more inspired to be learning and doing this stuff because of Dr. Hans and because of this event. And so, I thought that was really a special layered to such a cool event.

Matt Bowles: It was really, really amazing. My personal story with all that stuff is that I never bought any crypto or NFTs or any of that stuff until January of 2022.

And the thing for me that did it was that one of my very good friends, who's also been on the Maverick show, [Becky Gillespie](#), and I were both speaking at this conference in Buenos Aires. And it was Nomads BA is the name of the conference. And she gave the keynote. Address on cryptocurrency investing is for everyone.

And that was her talk. She's a very good friend of mine. I was like, okay, you know, why don't we go on this wine trip? We'll go out to Mendoza. We'll do this wine tasting stuff. So, we had all these Argentina plans, and I was like, would you like sit down next to me, just like you said, your husband, right. And show me how to do this, how to create a wallet and buy cryptocurrency and buy an NFT.

So, she showed me how to do that in the beginning of 2022. Later in the year, I learned about the Royals. I bought the Royals NFT because she had already taught me how to do this. And so, then she joined me for my birthday, which we did in the Portuguese wine country in May. And I told her about an update on my progress, like, oh, I'm doing this and I'm buying these NFTs, I'm doing all this stuff.

And she was one of the people that said. That sounds amazing. Can I come to Ghana also and buy this thing? I was like, sure. So, [Becky Gillespie](#) also came to the Royals Gala. So, all of these podcasts, guests of mine and friends, it was this whole full circle thing about sharing how to do this. So, Becky taught me how to do it.

And then I reciprocated and told her about this event, and she came and then our other friends who were there at the time, [Dani Dirks](#), for example, she'd never bought an NFT. And so, we showed her how to buy one and she got one and she came. And so, it's kind of this paying forward, pass it on. But everybody that came to that event was just like, wow, because the huge demonstration, I think of what they were doing there was that NFTs are not simply a piece of art. Is not just a digital asset that you buy and hold and store like a piece of art, but rather can have this incredible utility feature where it actually gets you access to an incredible event. And also, it makes you part of a community. And so now your part of this community, which is going to start to have international meetups and like all this other kind of stuff.

So, all in all, it was just amazing. And it was a black tie. So, you have to wear black tie dress code. And so, what we did, cause [Dani](#) and [Sharon](#) and I, the month before Ghana, we were all together in Dakar in Senegal. And that is really the fashion capital of that entire region. And so, we all had custom outfits, tailor made for us in Dakar, but we went, and we like, listen, this gala is in Ghana, so we need the Ghanaian style

fashion. And so, they did all custom outfits for us for the black-tie gala. And it was just an incredible experience.

Erica Hackman: That's awesome. We bought our tickets at the last minute. Thank goodness. My mother-in-law had brought me to her tailor the year before and got me.

I don't know how many outfits, 20 outfits. I have so many Ghanaian outfits and dresses. So luckily one of those was good enough to wear to the gala, but yeah, it was just an incredible experience. I feel so lucky, and I really want to be involved in it moving forward. And so, I'm pretty excited and I'm going to try my hardest to go this next time.

Matt Bowles: Well, just to connect this back to New York State and the broader vicinity of where I grew up, as it turns out, Dr. Hans, who you were mentioning, who founded the project, he went to the University of Buffalo. Now, he was raised in Ghana and then went over to the US for college and went to the University of Buffalo.

There he met his co-founder of the project, who is from Buffalo born and raised. So, I'm talking to this guy and I'm like, where'd you go to high school? And he's telling me, and he went to high school down the street from me. We play their team in basketball, all of this stuff. So, I'm sitting there, and I cry and we're talking about the Buffalo bills and all of this Buffalo stuff.

And I'm like, this is completely wild. And then you come up to me and approach me and then we start talking and the number of connections that night that I had and all different types of conversations about all different things. I mean, it was totally incredible, the group of people there, but also to your point, one of the most amazing things about it was the new people that I met.

You're sitting at a table, you're just meeting. People you've never met before and I'm meeting all these local Ghanaian folks and they're inviting me to the party that they're doing at their house party next week and this stuff and this is going on and that's going on and we're exchanging numbers. I mean, it was just an incredible night.

Legendary, epic and absolutely memorable.

Erica Hackman: For sure.

Matt Bowles: So, let's now go back and do a little bit of your backstory, Erica. Can you talk about where you grew up and when you think back as you were coming up, how did your initial interest in travel start to develop?

Erica Hackman: So, I'm originally from Connecticut, born, raised my whole first 18 years, didn't live anywhere else. And then I went to school in Virginia and at Virginia Commonwealth University. And while I was there, I saw a benefit that was like a for Africa benefit. And it was in a moment in my college where I don't know if I'm doing the right thing. I don't know if interior design is for me. And so, I saw this benefit and at some point, my junior year, I decided, you know what? Never mind. I don't feel like finishing college. I'm just going to quit and join the Peace Corps.

And of course, all the responsible adults in my life, including my advisor for interior design was like, that's so kind of you. That's so great. That's so noble, but they really want people with college degrees in the Peace Corps.

Now, I don't know if that's true or not, but it had me rethink leaving college with three semesters to go. So, I said, fine, if I can't quit and travel right now and do what I want to do, I'm going to have an adventure finishing college. So, I was all set up to go to Rome. It was going to cost me an arm and a leg.

And then all of a sudden, I got a free two-week trip to Qatar where I went to a conference and absolutely fell in love with the people that I met there and I was like, screw Rome. I don't need to go there because the whole thing that got me, and I feel like you'd feel this, Matt, to your core. My Rome trip was very much like a bunch of Americans going to Rome, probably having American instructors.

It was very much like how a lot of the study abroad programs go. And when I went to visit the school in Qatar, there were no other Americans, unless they were the teachers. But even then, there were not that many American teachers. It was very much like a foreign experience, whether it was Qatar or some other part of the Middle East that most of the people were from.

And so, I ended up going for a semester, stayed the whole year, graduated from there. While I was there, I did a weeklong trip to Cambodia, just by myself. for spring break and realized I think I could do some good in Cambodia. Now that I don't really know what I want to do, maybe I should teach some English.

I feel like the people that I'm interacting with on this weeklong trip in Cambodia seem to have more opportunities if they know English and I know English, so why not teach them? So, I Googled how to teach English in Cambodia and actually found a program in rural, rural Thailand in Isan. Ended up teaching there for a few months at a high school and then ran out of money completely and so I ended up getting a job teaching English in Busan, South Korea in my 14 months there.

I was able to save \$21, 000 and then I used that money to travel for 21 months, including the first six months in this tiny little island in the Caribbean called St. Vincent and the Grenadines, learning basically how to live in a rural atmosphere and how to make a difference. And then we were sent in groups of two or three to different places in Sub Saharan Africa.

So, I ended up in Zambia working with farming cooperatives then back to St. Vincent. And then I was like, all right, I'm done. I miss my family. It's been five years since I've lived in the US and so I went back home and within two or three months, I was in Costa Rica on a sustainable living facility. I couldn't do that.

And so, when I was in Costa Rica, I was only there for a month and a half. And I was thinking, I really miss my family. I would love to be able to live in Connecticut or New York, but I don't think I can do it unless some part of my life was entrenched in travel. So, I said, let me find a job in travel within a few months, maybe two.

I met [Nomadic Matt](#), and he hired me. On the spot at a meetup, I've been working with him for the last 10 years, working remotely, running a bunch of things now running [The Nomadic Network Tours](#). And so that is the very shortest version of my travel history since I was 20 years old and now, I'm almost 36.

Matt Bowles: Let's talk about Doha. I went to Doha for the first time in 2014. And I agree with you, one of the very unique things about Doha, which is also the case about Dubai if people have been there, is that the super majority of people there are from all over the world. They're not Qataris. When I was there anyways, it was like 80 percent of the residents of Doha were foreign nationals and they were from all over the world.

I was staying actually with a buddy of mine who was a Palestinian American and he was a history professor, and he was teaching at the Georgetown university campus in Doha.

Erica Hackman: Can I share about why those universities are there? Basically, the queen of Qatar, [Sheikha Moza](#), well, one of the queens, decided that she looked at the population in Qatar and said, okay, culturally and traditionally, it is really okay for our boys and men to go outside and study so they can go to Canada, America, Europe, anywhere they want to go and get an incredible education.

And not to say that the education in Qatar is bad, but it's limited. It's a small country. So, if you want to do something outside of what they offer, it's very hard. And so, she said, that's not the case for our women, just culturally, traditionally, it is not really. Okay, at this point, or lots of families don't feel comfortable sending their Qatari female children abroad.

And so, if we can't change that, what could we do? What is a solution? And so, they decided to start Education City, which is a city of a bunch of really great colleges. So, the reason that my campus was there is because Virginia Commonwealth University is the number one public art school in the US. And so, they brought over three programs, fashion design, graphic design, and interior design programs.

Specifically, because at the time, I don't think they offered those programs at any university in Qatar. So, they wanted to give women in Qatar a leg up in these industries. And so, then they brought over Georgetown, Cornell, Texas A& M, a few different things that were very specific to what the country needed so that they could have Qatari men and Qatari women, and other people learn about that in their own country so that they could do that.

And then what was created that was even cooler is a lot of people were sent from other Middle Eastern nations to study in Doha because it's a lot less risky for, say, a more traditional family in Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia, somewhere like that to send your kid to Qatar because you know what kind of life you can assume what kind of life that would be rather than sending them to New York City, where it's just a free for all.

So, it was a really incredible project, and I feel so lucky to have been a part of it. I feel like it was so cool how it was brought about and it's definitely not just for women, but my school at least. I was there the 10th year, and we only had four men in our school, so it was very much a women empowerment initiative, at least in the very beginning.

Matt Bowles: That's amazing. I was staying with a buddy of mine who is a professor at the Georgetown university campus. And when I was there, he was able to take me over to the campus and show me around.

And he said, from his perspective, as a professor who had taught in the United States, in universities, and had also been teaching there for a couple years or so at the time when I went to visit him in Doha. He said that the classes that he was teaching in Doha were the most unbelievable teaching experience he had ever had because of the extent of the international diversity in the classes of students who had just recently come from countries all over the world.

I mean, they had a huge number of countries represented there. And the fact that all of the students were in the class, bringing their own perspectives from their own countries just newly arrived. He said it was one of the most incredibly beautifully, richly diverse discussions that he's ever facilitated in his classes.

And so, they really did create an incredibly unique environment there.

Erica Hackman: And I still have a WhatsApp chat with a bunch of my friends from college. To this day, that's alive every day. So, I really loved that experience. My friends and family did not know what Qatar

was. Honestly, when I was applying for the two-week program, I thought Qatar was Dubai. I will be the first to admit that. I totally got it wrong. I had no clue. I'd never heard of it before. Everyone I talked to back in 2008 did not know what Qatar was. They thought it was maybe an Emirate because they had heard of the UAE, but the people that I was talking to did not know what Qatar was.

So, I told them I'm going to Qatar to study abroad. And they were like, Oh, cool. Where's that? I said the Middle East. And they would immediately say, do not go there. I'm like, wait, three seconds ago, you didn't even know what Qatar was. And now you're about to tell me it's unsafe because I'm a woman. I've been there.

I was there for two weeks. I felt completely fine. Otherwise, why would I ever choose to go back if I felt unsafe? And so luckily, I was paying my own bills, and I was doing my own thing. So, I didn't really have to. Answer to anyone. And so, I said, I am going to go and I'm going to have the best year of my life, despite what everyone is saying. And it was so lovely.

Matt Bowles: And you've gone back a number of times since then, right?

Erica Hackman: I've probably entered and left Qatar 20 times. I was there 2008 and 9, and then I was back that summer, 2010, 2011. Basically, all the way up until 2019, I made a promise to my friends that I would be back every single calendar year.

And so I was, but some of the times people were getting married. So instead of going to Qatar, I would go to Egypt. Or I would go to Tunisia or Lebanon or whatever. I would go for the wedding. So, I couldn't always stop by Qatar. I think the last time I've been there was the beginning of 2018. It kills me. It was the pandemic, man. I would have been there. I haven't been in so long.

Matt Bowles: Yeah, I lived in Egypt for almost a year and that was 2014 when I lived there and I went to a bunch of different spots around the region, but I have not yet been to Tunisia though. How was your experience in Tunisia?

Erica Hackman: Tunisia was incredible. Tunisia, I went to in 2019. It was my last big trip before we all got locked down in 2020. I was going to Egypt for a wedding and one of my best travel friends from Indianapolis was also coming with me and we said, if we're going to go all the way to Egypt, we should probably go somewhere else. Where can we go that's close to Egypt that we haven't been to?

And one of my best friends is married to this guy that goes by El Seed, he's a famous Tunisian French artist. He's a graffiti artist that actually paints these piece paintings around the world. He has a very famous project in Mansheya Nasir in the garbage city, not so nicely named, in Egypt, and we said maybe El Cid and my other friend will want to come to Tunisia with us.

And so, I floated the idea, and they were like, yes. And so instead of like having to do anything, basically we were toured around by El Seed and obviously my friend, his wife, and at the time, I think he was named the Tunisian man of the year. So, we couldn't have had a better tour guide. He brought us to meet all his friends and his coworkers.

He had an office there. It was a beautiful experience. And I love Tunisia because I feel like a lot of people don't know about it. I also feel like it's so beautiful and very comparable to maybe Greece, but there's also a lot of specifically Tunisian things that make it feel just really special. So, I had a lot of fun.

Matt Bowles: Well, I also want to talk to you for sure, Erica, about your love for Sub Saharan Africa as well. Can you talk about how that began and maybe talk a little bit about your experience that you mentioned in Zambia and what that was like?

Erica Hackman: So, I ended up in Zambia so randomly, I was honestly googling how to get to Africa for free, stumbled upon this really janky website, and it basically said that if I live on this tiny island in the Caribbean that I'd never heard of before, for six months, They would send me to some part of sub Saharan Africa as a part of a project for six months.

And then I would come back for two or three months and finish up my time in the Caribbean. And the whole thing cost 5k. I have that South Korea savings. So, I did it and I show up in St. Vincent on the Grenadines had the time of my life, loved St. Vincent, fell in love with nature, had the best time, lived on an orchard, lived on the five minutes from a very remote beach that no one ever went to, did a lot of farming.

We lived with horses, pigs, chickens, goats, lots of fresh fruit and looked onto the volcano and St. Lucia and all that stuff. But then after six months, my friend and I got sent to Sub Saharan Africa. We picked Zambia because we wanted to work with farmers.

And so, we got sent to the headquarters of our nonprofit to sit and do stuff on our computer. I don't even know why they had us there, but we convinced them that we were no good at that and that they should put us in the field with farmers. And so, the people that were leading the project begrudgingly were like, okay, you can go for two months out of the six and live in this village called Kalunga.

And it was outside of this town called Mkushi and you can work with the farmer's clubs there. And so, we rented a house. They helped us obviously our project, but they helped us rent a house from a family that had a few houses on a one plot of land. Our house specifically costs \$10 a month to rent. No running water, no electricity. It was just one room subdivided in the middle. And we were a part of that family.

And so, we had four different farmers' clubs. We visited one on Monday, one on Tuesday, one on Wednesday, one on Thursday, then Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. We did whatever we wanted to in the area, which was visiting women's clubs.

I mean, to us, it felt so crazy to have weekends because it was just a whole different way of life. There were no bathrooms, no showers. It was just very different from anything I had experienced before. And also, just so lovely to live with 45 family members that were always looking out for you. Kids everywhere. We were open to the elements.

We had obviously a house with a roof, but we did almost everything outside. So that was a thing. I was terrified to go to the bathroom at night because I had to run really fast because we had guard dogs. And I didn't want them to get me. But one other thing, I was actually on a podcast once talking about Zambia and got a random message from a woman that said, she heard the podcast, actually a location indie podcast, and that she loved my story.

And actually, she's from Zambia and she lives in New York. And so, we became friends. And she just wrote to me last week saying, hey, I would love to visit your family in Zambia. I'm going next week. And I know that your host mother passed away recently. And so, I'd love to pay my respects on behalf of you or your respects on behalf of however she said it.

And I was so touched. I haven't lived with them in 12 years, 11 years, and it's just so great to know that though we don't talk all the time, I still am in contact with them. I still do know what's happening in their life. And now hopefully my friend is going to visit them and make sure that they realize that We still love them so much.

They were a huge part of my story and a huge part of my life. And same with my one friend that lived with me there. And we think about them all the time. And it was an incredible experience that I wish everyone had the chance to do at some point in their life.

Matt Bowles: I know you have spent a lot of time in Sub Saharan Africa now, and you have a lot of connection to the continent, of course.

And so, at this point in your life, when you think back over all of those 12 years, what are your reflections on some of the dynamics that people should be conscious or aware of around international aid, volunteerism, the white savior complex, some of these types of things. Can you speak to that?

Erica Hackman: Of course I can. When I was going to Africa, I was 24 years old. I had a very young, innocent mindset. I thought I could save the world basically. And while I was there, I had a very rude awakening. Okay, maybe me being here is a big part of the problem. So, it definitely twisted up my mind for a while and I appreciate it so much because I could have gone my whole life with a certain mindset, and I feel like I really learned and grew a lot there.

But I will say that once traveling, especially in Zambia, it was very apparent how deeply ingrained the idea of race was not just within my own mind, but also the people that I was meeting, it was clear who was lifted up on a pedestal and who was not, which was a hard pill to swallow.

For instance, I was 24 years old and an interior design major that had barely farmed before. I mean, I'd farmed, but I'm not a farmer. And all of a sudden, I was getting paid, not much, but definitely more than the local people I was working with to be in Zambia and to work on this project called Farmer's Club. And once I got there, it was very clear that I was there to be seen at the headquarters of my nonprofit.

And our voices were heard louder than locals. Our ideas were definitely acted on faster than our local counterparts, and we were looked on as more of experts, in my opinion, while I was there. We knew we were going to be there for six months, so we basically said we will use our voices and our visibility to revamp something, because that's basically all you can do in six months.

So, he said, okay, we'll use our visibility. We'll use the fact that we're here in this place that hasn't had a non-Zambian in 10 or 20 years in this village to get the attention on the farmer's clubs. So, we got the attention. We barely taught any of the farmer club classes. We basically just empowered the other leaders in our community who are doing things well to teach other people that.

And so like, if somebody was great at crop rotation, we would invite them to be a teacher and we would sit there and we would listen. So that was definitely something that we insisted on doing was just being there to empower local leaders of the farming cooperatives to actually rejuvenate their farming cooperatives, because a big problem that our nonprofit was trying to solve was that they had these government appointed extension officers that were supposed to be covering 1500 farmers and answering all their questions.

And so, our nonprofit actually went in and started these cooperatives so the government employees could do their job more effectively. And so, we also spent a lot of time talking to that employee, making sure he was showing up monthly to the meetings, teaching all that stuff.

So, I feel like we walked away doing something pretty cool. I would love to go back and see that these farming cooperatives are thriving. That would be my dream. But I think a few other things that I've learned over the years, not just while in Zambia and that other people can maybe take away is that we focused a lot on hanging out with our host family.

That was a really important thing for us. This always brings me to tears, but the last day that we were with our host family, our father, who was like 60 years old spider. He basically said in Bemba, which was a language we don't understand, so somebody was translating to us, but he said he's worked for white people his whole entire life. He built the railroad. He worked on large scale farms. He had worked among white people his whole entire life, and he said until he met us, he never saw a white person interact with a black child ever. And he said, you guys played with our kids, with my family the whole time. And I love you for that. And I think that's one of the most incredible things because honestly, anyone can do that, and you can change the perspective of somebody.

And so, I love that. We definitely focused on hanging out with our host families. We also didn't bring any electronics with us. We didn't have phones. Our computers were in the city next door. So, we never had our computers or laptops or Kindles or anything with us. We were very much analog, which is really, honestly, a great thing to do because you're talking about working with people who live on one to two dollars a day.

The second you bring a phone in there, it's so visible what the difference is financially. And then back in the day, I definitely took lots of photos of the kids that I was playing with, and I posted them on Facebook and now I don't do that ever. I would also say that financial disparity among people who are living with us, especially in the Zambian setting, it was huge.

And so, the heaviness of that weighed on my heart a lot. My heart was pulled in every single direction. The lack of clean drinking water, basic healthcare medicine that actually worked. It was just heart wrenching. I remember being sick and I was sick for two full days taking actual medicine from a very expensive hospital in my town and I had to be whisked away to Ndola, which was the second capital of Zambia.

And within an hour I was fine once I got medicine from the big city. So that will always stick with me. And I think it's hard not to see that and think like I should be doing something, but it's also hard to think that as a white person, the more I do, the more I am perpetuating the system of poverty in a land that I'm probably going to leave pretty soon and may never come back to.

So, one side of it you definitely know that as a white person, you are part of the problem. You are allowing this whole idea that we need to help people is just a hamster wheel that gets everyone sort of tripped up. So that's one side of it. The other side of it is there is this sense of responsibility of making sure you do find things that are worth putting your money in and supporting it and making sure that the people that are there really trying are supported.

One of my host brothers is incredible and he was definitely had a lot that he wanted to do in life, and we were able to help him get a scholarship to go to be a teacher. But one of the stipulations was he had to be a teacher in very rural communities in Zambia for five years if he got this degree.

That was a contractual agreement and so he did that, and we felt great doing that because who doesn't want to make sure that somebody is a teacher in these areas that definitely need teachers. Like something like that is very worth it but there are so many things out there that are not worth putting your money into and not worth supporting because there's a lot of development aid leakage. Do you really want 80 percent of your dollar to not go to somebody on the continent that you're trying to donate your dollar to? Not really.

So, there's that. And then there's a whole different conditioning of your mind as somebody that grew up here in the US, we have a very clear picture of what Africans are that's sold to us. That is definitely not what's happening in a lot of different parts of Africa. So, it's a whole reconditioning, relearning and reeducation for myself, as well as the people around me. It's a conversation I'm constantly trying to engage myself in, because there's a lot that I do and there's a lot that I do wrong and there's a lot that I try to learn from.

And luckily, my husband is Ghanaian, and he has a lot of patience for me, and he has explained a lot to me. We've spent six months in Ghana and there's just a lot that I'm still learning, and I don't know if I'll ever finish learning about what I need to know about Ghana Being in Ghana, living in Ghana, having a half Ghanaian child, having a Ghanaian husband. There's a lot. It's a lifelong learning process.

Matt Bowles: Can you talk a little bit about how you are raising your two-year-old son and talk a little bit about how you're designing your lifestyle with travel and specifically with African and Ghanaian immersion?

Erica Hackman: For sure. My son is two years and two months, and he has spent almost six months in Ghana. So, it's like a fourth of his life so far, basically, which I'm super proud of. One of the things that my husband has taught me is that growing up in America as a black man or child is very different than growing up in Africa as a black man or child. So, there is a very different feeling. You have a very different experience.

And so, when we were talking about having a child, that was definitely part of it. I want to make sure that my child is in a place. It doesn't necessarily have to be Ghana, obviously. It's amazing because his grandparents are there, his nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, but to me, it matters that he is fully immersed in a place where the majority of people are Black.

Because if you talk to anybody that grew up with two different parents of two different races, I feel there's a lot of inward struggles. And I would like my son to grow up at least in some spaces, knowing that that is normal in some spaces, because honestly, where we're living right now, it's not that way. Okay. There are people from all over, which is wonderful, but I just love being able to have him be completely surrounded and feel that is a totally normal thing. And so, you really have to go to certain countries and certain areas of the country to be able to do that. And so, I'm really excited about that.

I'll say, on a different note, when he was eight months old and we touched down, he pretty much was just eating bananas and breast milk. And the next day he was eating kontomire and a ton of other Ghanaian dishes, fish and meats, and oh my gosh, Fufu, like he was eating everything at eight months and two days, which I thought was just really great.

I feel like that's a story I'll tell forever because it just felt so different to what I would have done had he not been in Ghana. I will also say that Ghana is super-duper hot. My son loves it. He's sweaty, and he has the biggest smile on his face. When I'm sweaty, I do not have a big smile on my face.

So, I really feel he loves Ghana. He obviously loves being with his family. I love seeing my husband in Ghana because we didn't meet there. We met here in New York. And so, it's really great to see him in his element. And it is just really special. I always thought I would love to live in one or two other countries, have home bases there.

So, it really just worked out well that I fell in love with this guy, and we ended up having a child and there's a place for us to go for a few months every year. So, it has been really fun. I'm loving raising Leo there, and I'm also loving getting to explore it myself.

Matt Bowles: Based on your experience thus far, what tips do you have for parents who want to travel with kids who are two or younger and want to do those international trips? Any lessons, reflections, or advice that you have?

Erica Hackman: Yeah, tons. One is definitely do it. Another is trying to go places where you know friends and family. Or know friends of friends or family of friends. Because it does stink. Especially if you're talking about under two nap schedules and sleep schedules are just really annoying.

They sleep a lot. Which is great! If you didn't have to be there watching them, but that is a thing. So definitely trying to do that. I will say even we went to Portland, Oregon, for a conference and brought my son when he was one. And we had friends of friends come and hotel babysit while he was sleeping. So, we could go out at night.

So, they just sat there in the bathroom on their phone while we had already put them to sleep. It was just made sure that this kid is okay, safe. If anything happens, call us. But that's something to consider because I've known people that have gone three, four months to Thailand and had no help.

So, it just stinks to not be able to go out one night. So that's another thing. And then I would say that keeping your kid's routine as closely as possible is very helpful to their mood, which then is very helpful to your mood. So as annoying as it may be to stop everything and go home and nap, it makes a big difference.

And so that's a thing. And then it's sort of fun. Here I am, 35 years old, bringing my kid around. I have a whole new lens to view countries in. I was never looking for kids' stuff before I had a kid. And so now there's this really cool spot in Ghana called Gazebo. I don't know if you went there, but it's a really cool Lebanese spot, but it's like an outdoor restaurant split up into like three sections. The first part of it is under a rooftop and it's sort of like a lounge bar. And then the second part of it is mini golf and outdoor tables. And then the third part of it, which is behind like a gate is a little kid's fair.

And so, you could just pay like a dollar or two and you get access into this area that has little kid rides for up to 10 years old. They could go on a little tiny Ferris wheel. They could go do bumper cars. I would have never cared about that before if anyone told me, but now I'm like, that's pretty fun.

So, it is really fun to travel with kids because you have a different purpose. And so that has been fun. And then of course, to keep your kids as quiet on a flight as possible. I always tell parents, even if you never let your kid watch TV, let them watch it on a flight. Just do it. It won't ruin them. It'll be so much easier for you.

Matt Bowles: Good tips. All right. I want to talk now about your career trajectory and, leading up to what you now do in terms of running [The Nomadic Network](#). You mentioned a while ago that you just happened to run into the famous travel blogger, nomadic, Matt Kepnes. Tell that story a little bit, how you came into

that ecosystem, and then what has the last decade been like for you in terms of what you've been up to there?

Erica Hackman: Sure, it is that random. My friend, when I was living in the Caribbean, sent me this guy's newsletter with a note that said, this guy does what you're doing, but you pay for it, and he gets paid for it. And I was like, oh cool. Let me subscribe. So, he was the only travel blogger I knew about. I actually made a travel blog because of him Erica from America blog calm, but it's lost in the ether now it's nowhere, but I was very inspired by him. And so, when I got back to New York I went to his first book launch for how to travel the world on 50 a day So I knew what this guy looked like.

I actually brought a bunch of friends. I feel very much like a Matt moment. I was like, come this guy that I know from my newsletter is doing something and it's around travel. So, I'm sure you'll love it. So, we showed up, and we went to this event. And so now I knew what this guy looked like. And fast forward a few weeks and I run into him at my first travel industry networking event ever.

My friend was a luxury travel agent. And I told him I wanted a job in travel after I came back from Costa Rica. And he said, just come to this networking event. And I recognized Matt. And at the time, nobody recognized Matt. This was 2012. It was like a few years into his blog, and nobody knew what blogs were and all this stuff.

But somehow, I knew it. And somehow, he was living in New York city, had just moved, I think. And so, I started talking to a bunch of pretty girls. And eventually he turned around and I was like, hey, you guys, do you guys know Nomadic Matt? He's an incredible travel blogger. He's half inspirational, half informational.

Are you guys aware of him? And he's like, excuse me, who are you? I'm like, I'm Erica. I'm a really big fan of yours. And he was like, oh. What do you do? And I told him, I've been traveling for five years. I've been living abroad in a bunch of different places, but now I just moved home and now I'm looking for a job in travel.

And he's like, well, do you want to work for me? And I was like, are you serious? He was like, send me the email. I was like, what's your email? He's like, you'll figure it out. And then that Friday, I showed up at his apartment, and I was there to fulfill, he had a Kickstarter that he did to create a travel budgeting app. And so, I was fulfilling his Kickstarter prizes for two weeks, and then I started deleting all the blog comments.

I've done a little bit of everything that you could ever imagine in a blog that turned into a very big travel company. And so, three and a half years ago, I was tasked to create [The Nomadic Network](#), which was specifically a community for travel events all around the country, all around the world. And we started with a bunch of chapters, then the pandemic hit.

And so, we pivoted to virtual events. In our three and a half year run as a community, we did about 800 events, whether they were in person or virtual, which is a bit insane. When you think about how many days there are in three and a half years to have seven or 800 events was pretty crazy. And we also have run a ton of different tours, and we made the decision very recently to fully focus on tours and bringing people around the world.

And so that is my new job. My new career is just creating, designing and implementing all these incredible international tours. So, I'm very excited. I get to talk to the best people all over and I get to make sure that people are seeing really great sides of countries and going to places that I would love to go to.

And so, I'm really excited and it is founded by nomadic map, but it is very much the community effort. And so, I really love that part of it.

Matt Bowles: Well, one of the things that I love about the way that you're setting up your itineraries is that you are prioritizing female owned, and minority owned businesses in the places that you're going, you're navigating around a lot of the typical tourist traps and trying to get people a more immersive and local experience in connection with the place and the people that live there.

I'm wondering if you can just share a little bit more about that. Maybe give us some examples of some of the types of experiences that people can expect on these trips.

Erica Hackman: Sure. Obviously, there are some things you just can't avoid, but we do try to create special moments and special experiences that do highlight the local people and the cultures that you're in. And of course, patronizing minority owned, or women owned businesses is really important, especially for me.

And so, that has been really fun to just get to add in to these beautiful itineraries that we're creating. One of the really cool things that we get to do on our Jordan tour is we have Bedouin friends that live within Petra's boundaries. And we are actually able to sleep over. In their village within Petra, which honestly, I think we're one of the only tour groups that's been allowed to do that.

But because we have a Bedouin friend connection there, then the guests on our tours get to have that really incredible adventure, which I think is so fun. Then in Romania, we do a whole cooking experience in a home deep in the mountains. It's a really cool experience with local farmers. We have a lot of really cool, like, let's meet these people sort of things in Cuba, which is a brand-new itinerary that we just launched.

We have a backyard pig roast in the Vinales Valley. We roast the pig with a bunch of neighbors and then on the schedule is to go out after and just have a great night in that area and just enjoy each other's company. We have friends that we go play dominoes with.

We're trying to really create these sweet moments. That people can walk away and say like, okay, yeah, I saw the big things, but I also feel like I met people and I have a deeper understanding, which I think is super important because what's the way to peace on earth is by people knowing each other, by people not being scared of each other, by people embracing each other and what they call differences. Seeing that, okay, maybe it's not so different, or if it is still so different than your life, maybe you could have a different appreciation for it.

So those are a few examples. We have a lot of different itineraries that I can't talk about because they haven't been launched yet for 2024, but I am really excited about the places we're going and the people we are meeting.

Just hint, hint, wink, wink. We also have India and Columbia coming up. We've done some really cool tours to different parts of Mexico and different parts of Europe and obviously; I said Jordan and Morocco. We have a lot up for 2024, though. I'm very excited. And the last thing I'll say is, it feels really good to be able to figure out what to do and know that by choosing this experience. The dollars are going directly into these people's pockets and so that feels very full circle to me for someone that has traveled and honestly traveled on a super tight budget around the world for years and years to be able to like to give back in that way and to bring people and to make sure that they know that these are the things that we want to support. That has been an incredible process for me.

Matt Bowles: Well, I am, of course, plugged into your ecosystem on your email newsletter list, and the newsletter that I just got today from you was not only announcing the Cuba trip, which is open and available for people to jump on, it was also announcing a Tanzania trip, which I was super excited to hear about. But I've been to Tanzania a couple times. I spent about a month there last year, and I think people have been listening to this conversation. Maybe they haven't yet been to sub-Saharan Africa or they haven't been to Tanzania anyways, what will the Tanzania trip be like?

Erica Hackman: Well. Safari is just magical, anywhere you go, I feel like, but Tanzania's definitely known for their incredible safaris.

There is a short hike up Kilimanjaro, nothing too crazy. Definitely going to have a picnic by the crater, the Back end of the trip is fully in Zanzibar. So, there's cooking experience. There's experiencing the beaches. There's going to Stone Town and seeing a lot of history, but it's going to be really special, and I cannot wait. There is a very expensive add on to do a hot air balloon ride in the Serengeti, which sounds phenomenal.

Matt Bowles: Okay. Let me just put in a plug for this. I spent a month last year in Tanzania. The first time I went to Tanzania was about 2018, and I just spent a couple days in Dar es Salaam, and then I went out to Zanzibar for about a week.

This time I was based in Arusha, and I did summit Mount Kilimanjaro, which was a completely incredible experience, and then went to the Serengeti and Ngorongoro crater, and I wasn't sure if I was going to do this safari this time, because in 2018 I had lived in Kenya for a month and I had done a safari in Masai Mara and it's kind of like right over the border and I was like, is it similar enough?

Should I spend the money again to do another one or will it be kind of similar? And then my friends who were going were like, listen, first of all, we're going to go to the Ngorongoro crater. And that's really distinct. Second of all, we are going to do a hot air balloon ride over the top of it and then land and have a champagne brunch and all that kind of stuff.

And that's going to be really different. And I was like, you know what? You're right. That is going to be different. I'm in. And so, I went, and I did it and it was just absolutely mind-blowingly spectacular. So, we did the game drives on the ground in the Serengeti. We did the Ngorongoro crater, which was an unbelievable experience.

And then the hot air balloon ride. However, you guys are pricing it and whatever it costs, I am just going to put in my personal experience and recommendation, just do it. It's so different. I've done a number of these game drives on the ground and they're cool and they're interesting when you're in a hot air balloon, first of all, when they're not blowing the fire, it's completely silent.

So, you are just floating in silence over the top of the Serengeti. And then you're just looking down. And we saw hippos jumping out of the water and all this stuff from the air. I mean, all these active animals, I mean, it was entirely different. And completely amazing. And then you land and then get a glass of champagne when you get out of the balloon, and you just have this brunch. It was wild and highly recommended. And it's super exciting. You guys are including that.

Erica Hackman: I'm so excited about this trip. I wish I could go on every single one of them, but I have a baby, so I can't really go for two weeks to Tanzania. And then I am going on the Cuba trip, which I'm super excited about. For lots of reasons, but I'm really excited about that itinerary being super local and we're

going to this person's friend's house and then this person's neighbor. And then this person, it just feels like the way I love to travel.

Matt Bowles: That's so awesome. Erica, at this point in your life, when you think back about all of these different travel experiences that you've had, what impact do you think it has had on you as a person and why are you still so passionate about continuing to travel? What does travel mean to you today?

Erica Hackman: The reason I love to travel and specifically travel on a budget, honestly, is it puts you in situations that are pretty normal. The way I'm traveling isn't like taking a taxi to my five-star hotel, then stay in my private pool and then. Okay. I may have done that once or twice for like a day, but that's not my travel life.

My travel life is I arrive in a country. One of my friends picks me up, we go to their house, we hang out in their kitchen with their parents, with their mom, I hear about their dating life, go to their family Friday brunch or something like that. Do I go to many museums? Not really, but I'm like, let's go, your friend's having a house party, let's go see this restaurant, or let's go to this beach that nobody knows about.

That's what it is for me, and I feel like that has a lot of Created an incredible impact on my way of being. I have always looked at the people that have hosted me like that with such love and graciousness. I feel like it's not an easy task to bring some foreigner around. And especially not when you're talking about around your family, around your friends or people at your wedding or whatever.

I've been to so many weddings in the world. It takes a lot. And so, I really appreciate the people that have done that for me, and I really see it as my duty to add to those experiences for them not to detract. So, I am not going to be complaining if I am at somebody's house. I'm there, I'm gracious, I'm like, thank you so much.

I am adding to this experience, I am making sure they want to invite me back because this is the highlight of my life right now. So that has definitely taught me or reinforced a way of being just super gracious and great with people that has transferred to lots of different aspects of my life.

But also, back in 2008 when I started traveling, there was no Instagram. There was Facebook. Facebook came out when I was 18 and I got it when I was 18. So, there was Facebook, and I was posting all these pictures and people Writing to me inspired people that I hadn't talked to in years. So, I think also me traveling has created a ripple effect in other people.

I know one of my greatest accomplishments is getting my best friend from college to travel by herself to Europe. And then my second greatest accomplishment was getting her to get out of Europe and go somewhere else. So now that person is traveling all over. I just saw she was in Egypt. She didn't even tell me.

She used to write to me obsessively like, oh my God, what do I do? Blah, blah, blah, all this stuff. And now she's just casually in Egypt doing a photo shoot for her business. It's crazy to me. So, I love that aspect of it too, because my travels seem to inspire other people to travel, just like other people's travels inspires me to travel. So, it's just a really great way to open up the world to people.

Matt Bowles: Erica, let me ask you one more question and then we can wrap this up and move into the lightning round.

I heard a rumor, and I need you to tell me if this is true, I heard that you personally are responsible for the priority pass limit of two guests only that are allowed in with you to the airport lounge. And for people that are not familiar with this whole ecosystem, airport lounges pay places that you can pay to have a membership and then go and hang out there before your flight or in between on your layover. And there's usually free food and drinks and all that kind of stuff and Wi-Fi, and you can do your work.

And then it's a much more comfortable way to travel. And then what a lot of credit cards have started to do is say, hey, if you get our credit card, this credit card gives you a free, priority pass, which is one of the largest lounge networks. You get 1300 or something lounges all over the world. And whatever airport you're in, there's usually a priority pass lounge and you click your pass and then you can go in.

And usually I'm allowed to bring, I think one guest or maybe it's two guests or something like that. But I heard that you personally, Erica, are responsible for the imposition of that guest limit. Is this true?

Erica Hackman: Okay, I'm not 100 percent sure it was me. I'm not 100 percent sure it was me. That's

Matt Bowles: That's the rumor. That's the rumor out in these nomad streets, just so you know the reputation that you have. So, what is the story behind this?

Erica Hackman: Back in the day, Nomadic Matt used to, up until last year, have a nonprofit called FLYTE. Foundation for Leadership and Youth Travel Education. Yes, that's correct FLYTE. And what it did was it basically sent high school classes overseas.

Their teachers applied and then they got to pick the students that went, and we basically fully funded their trip. And so, a few times we had our own staff go with them. And so, I was fortunate enough to go with a group from Newburgh, New York to Ecuador.

And these kids, they were not from the greatest neighborhood. This was a very unique opportunity. This was almost all of their first times out of the country. So, it was definitely their first time and airports. And so, when we were leaving Ecuador, I went to see if there was a priority pass lounge because I had my Chase Sapphire Reserve at the time. And there was a lounge. I went to the desk. I said, how many people am I allowed to bring? And they said, we don't know, you'll have to call Chase. And so, I called Chase, and they said, we don't know. You'll have to ask the people at the lounge. So, in the end, I said, they are all traveling with me. We are a group of 19. The rule is that if they're traveling with you, you can bring them.

So, we all got into the airport lounge for two hours. It was such a highlight. It was so cool to see all these high school students be like, oh my gosh, this is the coolest experience ever. They were very well behaved, but the staff at this lounge was very hesitant to let us in, taking all of our passport copies. Made lots of notes. And next thing I hear there's a two person limit a few weeks later. So, I can't imagine it wasn't me, but nobody ever told me it was me.

Matt Bowles: Well, I think it sounds like you gave an incredible experience to an incredible group of people. All right, Erica, at this point, are you ready to move in to the lightning round?

Erica Hackman: Oh gosh. Okay.

Matt Bowles: Let's do it. Alright, what is one book that has significantly impacted you over the years you would most recommend people check out?

Erica Hackman: One that I read recently was called [The Happiness Project](#). I really liked it. It was just about how to bring more happiness into your daily life based on scientific findings.

Matt Bowles: Alright Erika, what is one travel hack that you use that you can recommend?

Erica Hackman: Definitely getting credit cards. I also usually sit towards the back of the plane because I get more seats and all I want is more seats. I don't care about more leg room. I'm pretty short. So, I just want to be able to put my stuff next to me, put my feet up, do all that stuff. And usually, people want to be really close to the front of the plane. And so, I just like to pick seats towards the back, and I am usually unlucky.

Matt Bowles: All right. If you could have dinner with any one person who's currently alive today that you've never met, just you and that person for an evening of dinner and conversation, who would you pick?

Erica Hackman: There's this woman that I follow on Instagram, and I have for 10 years. Her name is [Fully Raw Kristina](#). She is somebody that healed her sick ailing body by just eating raw fruits and vegetables. Now she lives on an island in Hawaii. I love everything she does. And I just think she's got to be such an interesting person to talk to.

Matt Bowles: We will link up her handle in [the show notes](#) so people can check her out.

Alright, Erika, knowing everything that you know now, if you could go back in time and give one piece of advice to your 18-year-old self, what would you say to 18-year-old Erica?

Erica Hackman: I would say this to 35-year-old Erica, but it would be to journal. I'm not a journaler. I have such reverence for everyone that journals because you must know so much about your life. And I feel like I've experienced so much, and I've forgotten so much of that. So, I wish I was a journaler at 18. I definitely should have been at 35. I should be, but yes, that would be it.

Matt Bowles: All right. Of all the places that you have now traveled, what are three of your favorite destinations you would most recommend other people should definitely check out?

Erica Hackman: My answer always is I have loved every single place I've lived in. So, Qatar, rural Thailand, St. Vincent on the Grenadines, South Korea, Zambia, and now Ghana. These places are incredible. And I think those should be on the top of people's bucket lists because they're places that also you don't really hear a lot of people going to.

Matt Bowles: Alright, we'll give you six. But I agree with you. I mean, this is one of the reasons why I'm a nomad.

Erica Hackman: Yeah.

Matt Bowles: And I explain that to people. I'm like, these places are so fundamentally different and so fundamentally amazing in their own specific way that, yeah, I love living in Asia.

Erica Hackman: Mm hmm.

Matt Bowles: And then after I'm in Asia for a while, I miss Africa. And then I will go to Africa. And then I love my time there. And then after a while, I'll miss, you know, South America.

Erica Hackman: Mm hmm.

Matt Bowles: And then I go to Europe. So, this is why I'm a nomad, because there's so many amazing places that are fundamentally incredible and distinctly unique in their own right.

All right, Erica, last question. What are your top three bucket list destinations, places you have not yet been that are the highest on your list right now you'd most love to see?

Erica Hackman: So, this I also have like an automatic answer for. It's always the places that I hear about that I've never heard people going to like Guyana. I have rarely heard of anyone going to Guyana. What's there? I want to go see it. Papua New Guinea, I don't hear about a lot of people going to a lot of these tiny little islands. I would go to one of my friends is from Maldives, and I would love to go see Maldives with her. That's definitely high on my list.

Not necessarily to go to the overwater bungalows. I'm sure I would venture onto one of those at some point. But I would just love to see this island country. I mean, she was born on an island of 700 people. Like, I would love to go to that part.

Matt Bowles: Awesome. Erica, at this point, I want you to let folks know how they can connect with you. And let's start off by mentioning that you are going to be one of the speakers at the upcoming camp, Indie event. Maverick show listeners know [Travis Sherry](#), who has been on the show, who hosts the camp Indie event. But if folks have not heard that episode yet, can you share a little bit about camp Indie, what it is, when it's going to be, and if folks want to meet you in person, as well as a whole bunch of other very cool people, because Maverick Show guests like [Nora Dunn](#) and [Ray Blakney](#) are also going to be there speaking with you.

So, if folks wanted to learn more about that and connect with some amazing folks in person, where, and when is that going to be?

Erica Hackman: Sure. Oh my gosh. I'm so excited for [Camp Indie](#). It is the weekend of June 19th, 2023, and it's run by the Community Location Indie, and the ethos is basically surround yourself with people that you want to be like, or that you are like.

And so, there's a lot of people that are location independent or partially location independent or looking to be location independent that are going to be there. And it's just really going to be a fun weekend that is very summer camp style with a few different talks by different people that are living this remote lifestyle that doesn't have a specific place that you need to be.

And so, I'm very excited about it. It's [campindie.com](#). And you can definitely hang out with me, I'll be there without my husband and my son. So, we'll have undivided attention time that we can sit by the campfire and talk about where you want to travel to or how to organize your day when you're traveling.

So, you get your work done and you get to do all the things that you want to do. I love talking about that. And then where you can find me is, I am on [Instagram](#), [erica.hackman](#). My company is [the.nomadic.network](#) on [Instagram](#). And also, definitely check out the [nomadicnetwork.com](#). That's where all of our tours are.

And if you want to come with me to Cuba, we're going October 10th, so that would be really fun. And if you're really curious, my husband and I have a website called [ourwholelifelove.com](#), and that's our side project. Just sharing about our love with people that care to read about it.

And of course, you can always email me, erica@thenomadicnetwork.com. Happy to answer any questions. Happy to hear from you. I would love to hear from you. Actually, I love that part of podcasts. So definitely write to me ping me whatever and help me figure out how to educate my son moving forward around the world. That would be really nice

Matt Bowles: Awesome. We are going to link all of that up in [the show notes](#). So, folks can just go to one place at themaverickshow.com. Go to [the show notes](#) for this episode. There you will find the links to Camp Indie. If you want to go and check out that event, we're going to put up the links for [The Nomadic Network](#). If you want to join Erica on the Cuba trip and check out all of the rest of the trips that are available, you can find it there and we'll link up all the social media handles, websites, and everything else we've mentioned in this episode, just go to themaverickshow.com there. You'll find [the show notes](#) for this episode with direct links to everything we've discussed.

Erica, this was absolutely amazing. Thank you for coming on the show.

Erica Hackman: Thank you so much for having me. Really great. Thank you so much for putting this together. And I had a blast. Can't wait to see you in another country.

Matt Bowles: Yes. And definitely in Ghana again, at some point over the next year, for sure. We will coordinate our itinerary. So awesome. And we will see you soon somewhere around the world and good night, everybody.