

**INTRO:** This is part two of my interview with Chacon. If you have not yet listened to [part one](#), I highly recommend you go back and do that first because it provides some really important context for this episode. If you have already heard [part one](#), then please enjoy the conclusion of my interview with Alex Chacon.

**Matt Bowles:** I want to ask you now about some of your motorcycle rides, travel experiences on other continents, and I think the one I want to start with is asking you about Egypt. I lived in Cairo for about nine months and have spent time traveling around the country as well. You rode 3,000 kilometers across the country of Egypt in nine days when you did that, what for you were some of the top, most special highlights of that trip that still stick in your memory.

**Alex Chacon:** Nine months, that's crazy. So, what I did in Egypt was a little different. I did this thing called the Cross Egypt Challenge, and it still goes on. And basically, you race a scooter or a Vespa around the entire country and you try to do it as fast as you can. So as far as the highlights and the most special things that I saw were not of destinations, were not of temples. We're not that of a main tourist thing. The most special things for me were getting up before sunrise, starting my drive, freezing my ass off, and watching the most incredible sunrise you've ever seen. At 5:30 in the morning as you're driving and all you hear is the wind in your ears. You're smelling the air and you're just in this really ancient part of the world and you got the pyramids in the corner over there and you see the sunrise and you're driving, there's no one around you.

And I have a video of this on my YouTube. It was just so special to be like I am at the great pyramids of Giza and on a motorcycle driving into them and. And it's sunrise and there's no one here. This is nuts. Very surreal moments like that where you go wow. But yeah, you got obviously, the temple of Abu Simbel also was very cool Luxor. Just walking around the temple there. Anything in Egypt was pretty awesome. But it was more just about that visceral experience. And being in this ancient part of the world and just sunrise in Egypt is the thing I remember most.

**Matt Bowles:** I got to ask you about driving in Cairo, man, because I lived there and I would never even consider driving a car, let alone a motorcycle in Cairo. Simply walking around Cairo. There are no functional traffic lights. There is no stop in traffic. You have to walk through four lanes of full speed oncoming traffic if you want to get across the road. The motorcycles drive on the sidewalk. They got four people on the motorcycle, baby, hanging off the side. I mean, what was it like driving a motorcycle in Cairo?

**Alex Chacon:** Yeah, it's everything you said, isn't that exciting! You wonder why I drive around the world on a motorcycle. It's because I get to join those people doing the crazy things. Going on the sidewalk, going around traffic, trying to dodge obstacles. You know, it's all those things. So, driving in Egypt is actually super easy. It's not as challenging as you think. It's not so dangerous as you think. Again, I've driven across 70 countries on the motorcycle. I can give you more dangerous places. But it was chaotic and it was fun and. And because there's no standard rules, nobody follows the stoplights that are there are stoplights. It's a basically free for all, but everybody understands the rhythm of how it works.

So that's a difference between Egypt and other places is that they get it. They're not going to go through the intersection at full speed, but they're going to kind of push their way through. But the other person knows and you know, whoever is a little more, let's say brave putting a car out there and they figure it out, you know all those old VW buses that you see for the public transport, they don't want to hurt those things. They don't want to get hurt. They want to get home safely. But thing I'm going to tell you something that's

very controversial and I'm going to say it, and I'm going to say it because I absolutely believe it and I have the experience and I have proof of my experience in this situation.

One of the most dangerous places in the entire world that I've been to driving a two wheeled vehicle. Bali, Indonesia. Bali, to me is the place I have seen the most accidents, the most tourists get hurt, people not wearing helmets. If you go to Ubud and you're walking that main road every single day in the evening, you see people with bandages on their knees, with, with burnt exhaust, things on their legs, people who weren't wearing a helmet and they're all wrapped up like a mummy. It's insanity. And every time I tell people, there's like, really? I never felt more unsafe driving a motorcycle anywhere in the world than here. Even if you understand the flow of traffic, even if you respect all the signals, it's the tourists that have never driven a motorbike on the streets and it's free for all. And I've never seen more accidents and I never felt more unsafe than I have in Bali.

**Matt Bowles:** Well, I have heard you say that India is one of the most exciting places to drive a motorcycle in the entire world. Can you talk about why that is?

**Alex Chacon:** Yeah, it's definitely one of the most incredible places in the world. So, I have the experience of going to India probably nine times in my life, sometimes for three months, sometimes for a month. And half the time I've done a motorcycle road trip somewhere. So, I've actually driven from almost the very south of India through the coast, all the way to the very north with the border with Pakistan. So, I've seen the whole country via the roadways and I've been there quite enough.

If you know anything about the United States and the road trip possibilities, the United States is one of the most beautiful places to road trip on the basis that it's very diverse, on the basis that you'll find all types of geographic extremes and beauty. And it's so diverse. In the United States you have so many things and most people who travel a lot will tell you the same. India is the same way, except you can get all that diversity in a smaller package. You can go from Goa to Delhi to Rajasthan then you get to Manali, you get to the mountains, you get to Ladakh, you get the Himalayas, get the highest navigable road in the world. Everybody always wants to be the highest road in the world. The biggest thing here, that's this is a debatable one, you know, but it's a very high road. It's almost 18,000ft above sea level. It's pretty awesome. It's a really cool experience.

So, you have this beautiful giant across the entire world, but I'm still in my own country feeling and, and it's really a beautiful place. And also, because it's like a pilgrimage in India for the Indian people to go to Ladakh, to go to the Himalayas. Everybody funnels to this area of India, to the north to see the Himalayas and everybody comes from the bottom of India and they kind of all funnel and it becomes this bottleneck effect where you start seeing motorcycle travelers. You see everybody on the same Royal Enfield motorcycle that's built there. Everybody has the same bike; everybody has the same clothing.

Everybody's doing this pilgrimage, everybody stays at the same camps. It's like this beautiful little connect community that you end up having a family by the end of it because you meet the same people, you travel together, everybody stops and eats at the same places and there's so many people doing it. So that's why it's one of the best places. Not just because of the views, but because everyone else there is on tours, on road trips, on solo trips, on group trips. Everybody's funneling into this very kind of cool, majestic Himalayan Mountain range for the views and also just for the experience of seeing everyone else do the same adventure.

**Matt Bowles:** Can you explain more about what a Royal Enfield Bullet is, especially for non-motorcycle riders and how choosing that particular motorcycle to ride in India made your experience so different?

**Alex Chacon:** Yeah, so I think you know a little bit about the history of Royal Enfield, since you're asking the question in this way. So Royal Enfield motorcycle was originally designed in the UK by the British. However, it was produced, fabricated and assembled in India, obviously for cost, the whole thing. So, it's a very iconic looking motorcycle. It is not the most expensive motorcycle in the world, it's not the cheapest, but it's a very heavy, clunky, not super powerful motorcycle. It's not a crotch rocket looking thing, but it's like a cruiser with a flat sea. It's got a really, really iconic look. So, it's got an 80-year history in India and every Indian motorcyclist just it's a classic. It's like saying it's like a Mustang in the United States or it's like a whatever you connect with on the automotive world from each, but it's a cultural identity.

So, when you do this trip, everybody does it on this bike because it's super inexpensive to get. It's super inexpensive to fix and find parts for. You'll find people that know how to build it, rebuild it almost everywhere. So, it's one of those bikes that it's not the most powerful, but it definitely looks cool and it gets the job done. It's a very heavy, donkey, workhorse of a situation. So, you are on the same bike as everyone else. It's not about money. It's not about having a flashy \$20,000 BMW. It's not about having a \$40,000 Harley Davidson with a loud exhaust. It's not about any of that. It's about just getting and experiencing life on the road to the Himalayas, to having this spiritual Ladakh experience of the Himalayas.

And Ladakh is a state in India, but everybody knows where Ladakh is. It's like saying Alaska for the United States. Oh, you know, Alaska road trip to Alaska. It's like that destination. It's that point. But the Royal Enfield really adds to the experience because it's all over Bollywood. The Royal Enfield is so iconic for Bollywood movies, and all the famous people have driven them, and they got all these nice pictures with the famous. I don't know, they've done a really good marketing campaign. So, it's just part of the identity. So, you are not just experiencing India, you're living it, you're breathing it. And anyone who sees you on the world Enfield motorcycle in India immediately comes up to you, looks at the bike, shakes her hand, smiles, takes selfies with you, because you're on the Enfield.

**Matt Bowles:** Well, your video on Ladakh is absolutely incredible. The shots that you were able to capture. So, we're going to link that up in [the show notes](#) as well for you. As you think back about some of those most epic rides in India, were there particular moments that were just really emotionally powerful?

**Alex Chacon:** During my India trip, the things that were really touching, which are touching now, is it's no longer just a view. It's having this experience, like, I don't know, just meeting somebody and having noodles with them on the side of the road in this tent that's moving to me, but also when I'm recording on my drone, if I'm recording a shot or if I captured something that was so unique. Like, in India, I got caught in a protest, and I had my camera on my helmet, and I was trying to navigate through this protest and everything else, and it was a little dangerous. The military guys were like, what are you doing? You can't be going through the crowds like this. And I wasn't doing anything dangerous. It was just, they don't want anybody driving a vehicle through the crowds.

But we were there for two and a half hours and I'm like, I got to go, I got things to do. I pushed the bike. You know, I wasn't driving the bike, I was pushing the bike. So, nothing really wrong with it. But being able to record those moments of a military guy pointing a gun at you, going, like, you can't do this. Get off the bike. To moments of like, oh, wow, you're pushing the bike in the crowd and you're protesting with us. Cool. These very extreme moments of emotions that I'm able to capture. Those are the moments that make me

the most happy. Those are the moments I'm like, cool, I get to share this now to the world on social media and YouTube. And that's gone be a really cool, unique moment that you're not going to find elsewhere. Or like a really epic drone shot where it's just like this perspective of being so little in such a huge place.

So, grabbing the footage now and getting those highlight reel moments or the golden shot, or having the perfect light or capturing a baby sheep jumping across the road in India, you know, just those little moments where like, oh, I'm so glad I had the camera rolling. Those are the moments that just make you feel like, wow, that is awesome.

**Matt Bowles:** Well, I also have to ask you about Nepal. Can you talk about the motorcycle that you rented in Nepal and how that led to more unique interactions with local people there?

**Alex Chacon:** So, the question I get asked a lot is, well, how do you drive a motorcycle around the world? Blah, blah, blah, isn't it expensive? Okay, so there's a few things. I buy and sell the motorcycles where I go. I sometimes rent the motorcycles, sometimes I ship the motorcycle abroad, sometimes I don't. It just depends on the financial situation at the time and how much it costs in each place and whether you can do it or not. Like, for instance, you cannot bring a foreign motorcycle into China. That's just not going to happen. So, you have to rent there, you have to buy there, et cetera, et cetera. So, in this particular situation, I rented a motorcycle in Nepal. They don't have a lot of great selections. They all they have is street bikes with street tires. And I said, but I want to go off road. And I said, ah, screw it, we're taking the street bike. Whatever, we'll figure it out.

So, yeah, I was quite literally off roading on a Bajaj Pulsar 200cc it's a very small bike, no power, but the best thing about it is you can beat the hell out of it and it'll survive. And it's pretty easy to repair and very cheap, which I found out later on. So, I basically had the wrong motorcycle for the trip. I did, because I got stuck in the mountains in the mud and everything, and I quite literally had to drag that bike with my bare hands across the mountains of the Himalayas of Nepal. It was an experience where one of my YouTube videos captures it. And it's basically mind over matter. It's not about what you have as far as tech, as far as an expensive tool and expense. It's doable, it's possible if you're strong enough to fight for it.

And that was the thing. I didn't have a lot of money back then, so I just wanted the experience of that. And I was willing to really just make myself super, super uncomfortable to get that experience. And that's what I learned on that trip, was it doesn't matter the challenges that you have logistically or with the tools you have, in this case, a motorcycle. It's about how determined you are or how stubborn you are, or how hard you're willing to fight for yourself and for your dreams.

**Matt Bowles:** Well, I have seen your video of you driving in Kathmandu. For people that have not seen this video and who have never been to Kathmandu, can you explain what it is like to drive a motorcycle there?

**Alex Chacon:** So, imagine having a jar of marbles and you throw it somewhere and all the marbles are just chaotically bumping into each other and bouncing all over the. Imagine dropping them down stairs. That's kind of how driving Kathmandu is. Everyone just kind of bumps into each other. Everybody's okay with it. People are just crossing. There's no lights, there's no directions. There are brake lights on some vehicles if you're lucky, but it's a chaotic, fun mess of anything. It's quite entertaining to do.

**Matt Bowles:** Well, I'm curious for you also, when you go to some of these places where the majority of people drive motorcycles. So, for example, Vietnam or you go to Cambodia, I mean, it's super different from like the United States, where it's like a small percentage of drivers drive motorcycles. And then you go

there and it's like the majority of people on the road are driving motorcycles. I have not driven a motorcycle in Asia, but I have ridden on the back of a motorcycle in Asia. I was in Ho Chi Minh City at rush hour, and I was riding on the back of a Local person's motorcycle. And we are at the stoplight, and I don't know how many lanes were supposed to be in the road, but I looked left and I look right, and I counted, and there were 17 motorcycles across. And then behind them, another row of 17. And behind them another row of 17. And behind Them, another row of 17 that goes all the way back. And then the light turns. I mean, I just was hanging on, close my eyes. I just kept telling myself, he drives in this every single day. He's been doing it every single day since he's 18. Everything is going to be good. Nothing to worry about at all. And sure enough, it turned out to be fine. But I'm curious for you, when you go to a let's just call it motorcycle centric city like that, what is your experience driving there?

**Alex Chacon:** Yeah, I mean, you pretty much describe it correctly on Vietnam. It's a fun little monster. But, yeah, you're right that's the thing. Whether you get in a taxi, whether you get on a motorcycle and they're driving crazy, you go like, no, this is probably how they do it every single day, right? The majority of the places is like that. You like. You know what? It seems chaotic and crazy because we don't really see this every single day where you're from, and it's not where you're used to, but these people do it every single day and far more chaotic and difficult conditions, raining or flooding. And they're doing this. They're going from A to B, and they've done it a lot, and they don't have the best equipment, but they make it happen.

It really changes you because you see the way people live and what they're willing to do to survive and how calm and how chaotic, but how organized it all is. Walking across the street in Vietnam is an experience in itself. Some people are too scared, but it's kind of like that thing in life where, like, oh, my God. I either have to immerse myself in the culture of what it is to walk across, because no one's stopping for you in Vietnam, and it's just a wave and a sea of vehicles, and you basically have to just weave your way through, and if you don't do that, you're not going to get anywhere. And what a perfect metaphor for life. Life is a giant sea of motorcyclists in Vietnam, and if you don't weave your way in and out of it, you will not get anywhere.

**Matt Bowles:** I love that. Well, Alex, I also want to ask you about your experience in Pakistan. I have heard you say that you've never felt more welcome anywhere in the world than in Pakistan. Can you share some of the moments in Pakistan that made you feel that way? Where you were and what the encounters with local people were like?

**Alex Chacon:** The friendliness and the openness and the welcoming nature of the Pakistani people was just kind of like a nice hug. I would say that it was the taxi drivers that really did it for me. Didn't know where I needed to go. Look, this is where I got to go. I'm not sure where it is. And can you help me out? He goes, yeah. I didn't feel like anyone wanted to take advantage of me financially. I felt like people genuinely trying to help you. I wasn't charged extortionate prices. I wasn't asked to give tips for asking for help or directions or extra services. And it was just a very humbling experience to be, oh, people, even though economically aren't doing well compared to a lot of us that are able to travel a lot, this culture in this country is just generally very nice and doesn't try to take advantage of visitors and even their own people.

**Matt Bowles:** What have you noticed about motorcycle culture in different countries around the world? Maybe similarities, maybe differences. And how has motorcycle culture enabled you to make connections across cultures that you otherwise probably wouldn't have?

**Alex Chacon:** I'd like to say that my motorcycle community around the world is unique and it's different than every other community, but it's not. It has its groups of people. It has its things. You connect with them

for certain reasons. But the thing about my motorcycle community is that, for instance, when I was driving across Thailand for 45 days, I met the Harley Davidson chapter of Thailand. And it was fascinating because it was a rough and tough group of people. Harleys are very expensive to buy in Thailand. So, anybody who has a Harley has a lot of money. And they typically tend to be on that financial scale of lawyer, doctor or engineer or somebody who's just kind of really well established. Everything else.

But then you have the people who don't have the legitimate money and are on that gray area of is this a drug dealer or is this a lawyer? So, the community's kind of really vastly differ around the world. But every single motorcycle community that I come across, it's like any community is that you'll find the nice people, you'll find the people who want to try to explain things to you like it is in their point of view, and that what you're doing is the wrong way. You got the community that says hey, please come stay with us. We know we just met. We want to help you do this or whatever because you're also driving a motorcycle. And one nice, funny, interesting, beautiful story was that I was in the Patagonia in Argentina after my motorcycle broke down.

This whole story, I told you before, and I was so exhausted coming up from Ushuaia. And if you look at Argentina, Ushuaia is the very tip of it. That's where you take all the cruises, all the way to Antarctica, the whole thing. So, it's very down there. But it takes you three days driving 15 hours a day to get the Buenos Aires straight shot. Three days driving 15 hours a day. It's a really, really far. It's like saying driving from Florida all the way to Alaska, basically. So, it's a very, very large distance. So, I was so, so tired getting down there. And at some point, I was looking for a place to sleep and camp out, and I came across this little residential neighborhood that had a little bit of extra territory of a lot, let's say, where there was nothing. And I was like, I'm going to pitch a 10 here, but I need a way for it to get darker so nobody comes and bothers me or tells me I can't do it. But I saw a garage open in this area and I just stood there looking at my maps and stuff, trying to figure things out. And I saw there was a motorcycle in there. And, oh, that guy drives a motorcycle. That's a cool bike. That's an old Africa twin. They don't make it anymore.

Now they make it again, but back then they weren't making it. And I was like, that's really cool bike, you know. And I just kind of stood there looking helpless for a little bit. And the guy came out. So, he came up to me, said, hey, how are you? I'm good, I'm good. I'm just trying to find the things here and whatever and blah, blah, blah. And he goes, oh, really? Yeah. What are you doing? I'm doing this trip. Wow, you come a long way. And I said, yeah. And he says, oh, I see you drive a bike. And yeah. So, we connected that one. And within five minutes of meeting the guy, he literally says, you hungry? I'm like, yeah, and says, you want to come in and eat? Sure. Do you need a place to stay? I'm like, I mean, I don't want to be a bother. He's like, that's fine. I have an extra room. Do you need anything else? Do you need gas? I'm like no, it's like you've known me for five minutes. I could be a complete stranger. And this guy from Argentina just literally said, come on, come on in. So, I learned about his life, his story, his wife, and we've been friends ever since.

**Matt Bowles:** Wow. Well, you mentioned riding in Thailand and I have to ask you because I've seen your video. You did a 45-day 3000-mile motorcycle trip during one of the hottest months ever recorded in history. Temperatures were averaging 105 degrees Fahrenheit a day with 100% humidity. Can you take us back to that trip and describe the experience and what you learned from completing that trip?

**Alex Chacon:** Let me first say if you've been hearing my stories here for the last hour or so, I don't particularly choose these adventures in these ways for them to be so difficult and so ridiculous where you say why are you doing this? It just happens to work out this way. I was invited to Thailand for a project not to do with motorcycles, promote tourism, the whole thing, etc. So I did that and after I did that I said, cool. I

have an open-ended ticket from this thing that was free and I can leave whenever I want. I want to go and kind of travel and see the whole country. And at some point, I met some guy from Harley Davidson that worked at the local chapter. Within two, three days I was at the office, we're shaking hands and they said, what do you want? What do you need? Can we get you a Pan American motorcycle which is a gigantic Harley Davidson motorcycle that's not an off-road vehicle but it's a cool bike, it's a lot of fun.

And I said, well, you want to lend me this thing for the next three, four weeks? Like I think we can make that happen. So, it just happened to be opportunistic. So, this is why I choose these trips. However, in June, NASA recorded it as the hottest month in recorded history. It was miserable. It was a trip that I don't want anyone to experience. I must have burned a few brain cells because of how hot I. I could have ridden on that motorcycle naked and I still would have been hot the entire time. That's just. It was miserable. You're wearing a helmet; you're wearing protective clothing. We hydrating every single 30 minutes so you don't pass out. Dehydration was a huge thing. Heat stroke was a huge concern. But here's the thing. It was an opportunity where I either get to travel and see the entirety of Thailand at no cost with an awesome motorcycle. But it needs to happen now. That's not going to happen later.

And that opportunity is not going to be available again because that was the circumstances from the motorcycle being available to this person, being in charge of the lending program to whatever it's like, this is not going to happen again. Do I take the opportunity and I suffer through the challenges of what it's going to take to experience a six to \$10,000 trip for close to nothing outside my personal costs, my gas, everything else, hotel, food, or am I not going to do it? Well, obviously I'm going to do it because it's a cool story. But I didn't know it's going to be the hot but it was very dangerous. I was waking up at 4 in the morning. I was driving from 4am until 8, 8 or 9am Then it got so hot from 10am all the way until 6pm So basically the only time I could drive was from 4am to 10am 11am Max before it got overwhelmingly hot. Because remember when you're on the motorcycle and the wind hits you, you're dehydrating yourself from the moment the wind starts hitting you and it's already hot in the morning.

So you're basically, you have a time limit every single day, if that's safe to drive. Because I was driving throughout the days for the first week or so I was like a little raisin. I was like a dried up prune and I couldn't drink enough and I couldn't hydrate enough and I couldn't put enough electrolytes in my system to keep up with the consistent loss of it throughout the day. So, the only time I was able to do it was by doing this early in the morning.

**Matt Bowles:** Well, I want to talk to you know about your video and filmmaking journey. I have mentioned along the conversation here that I have seen a number of your videos and so many of them just have exquisite cinematography. And I want to talk about the journey, getting to be where you are now as an Emmy winning filmmaker. And I want to start with your video titled [Around the World in 360 Degrees - 3 Year Epic Selfie](#), which I think ended up being one of the top 10 videos on all of YouTube for the year and now has something crazy like over 100 million views on that one video. Can you describe? We're going to link it up in [the show notes](#) because I want people to go watch it. But for folks that haven't seen it, can you describe the video and why it was so groundbreaking and ultimately trend setting as well?

**Alex Chacon:** So, this is the [video](#) that started my travel career because before then I was just traveling and people kept asking me the same questions after my trips and my travels. What was your favorite thing? What was your favorite country? What you see, what do you remember? What is it? At some point I answered the same 15 questions over and over again. I got so tired. So, I just said, I'm just going to make a

video and just have somebody say, you have any questions? Watch a 2 1/2-minute video. So, this video, it was so powerful because right place, right time, it's better to be lucky in life than to be good, as they say.

But basically, this video I had been filming for three years. That's why it's called a three-year epic selfie. Because my first three years of travel, I was filming this. And it basically is my GoPro HD version 2, by the way, which tells you how long ago this was. Selfie sticks weren't even a thing when I started filming this back in 2011. But for three years, I filmed my travels around the world using a technique that no one had ever done before, using a tool that I had to develop myself, a selfie stick. I had to break the legs of a tripod, zip tie them, duct tape them, and I had to find a way to put a GoPro at the end of it, which in today's world sounds like a very simple idea because there's so many products for it. But 2011, nothing existed. The monopod attachment for the GoPro camera didn't even exist.

So, I was a pioneer in the sense that people say, hey, you're like the father of the selfie stick. And people say, yeah, you were the first one that really used the selfie stick. Now, by the time my video came out, the selfie stick kind of had come out a year before that. So unfortunately, I didn't get the full claim to fame on that one. But whatever, who cares? So, I was filming this video and basically, it's me holding selfie stick, both arms extended, doing a clockwise motion in the most scenic, beautiful parts of the world. From the Burj Khalifa to the Egyptian pyramids, to Iguazu waterfalls in Brazil, to the Uyuni salt flat in Bolivia, to the Taj Mahal in India, to all over Europe, just you name it. By that time, I had traveled 40 countries. So, it was a two-minute video, very quick pace, happy song, happy music, and it was just me changing the scene every three to four seconds. And that caught fire. And right place, right time, because I started recording that in 2011, it released May 2014.

And one of the top words searched on Google for the year was selfie. So, when I released the three-year epic selfie, I was surfing the SEO wave on YouTube, which is the world's second largest search engine. So, I caught the wave. Right place, right time. It got a few thousand views within a few days. I was super happy with that. I was like, cool. 500 people saw [my video](#). Totally worth it. Now I can just show people this video and tell them what I experienced throughout my travels the last three years. But then on day five, got quarter million views, day six million views, day seven, I got a call from CBS this morning say, hey, can you be in New York tomorrow? I said, absolutely. They flew me out, did an interview live with Gayle and Norah and Charlie Rose.

And yeah, it was really surreal experience because by that point it had gone up. When I got on air, they said, well, as of today, you have now 10 million views on your video, which for 10 million views is like a 50 million viewed video right now. Because back then it wasn't a huge thing. So right place, right time. And that changed my life forever. And it was just an art project that I did. A creative idea that I just said, what is something that no one's ever done before and how can I integrate this with what I'm doing now with my travels? And it was the best decision of my life.

**Matt Bowles:** Well, that video, along with some of your other epic videos, like the one you did in Ladakh and the Himalayas, were just your video footage put to music with no narrative voiceover. And I'm wondering, for those types of videos, can you talk about how you're able to take people on such an emotional journey just with the cinematography and the musical score and your approach to creating that type of video?

**Alex Chacon:** It took me six months to edit that selfie video. Six months. Because I had to find the right song, I had to buy the rights of the right song, I had to find the right scenes, I had to basically tell a story

without speaking a single word. And it wasn't just randomly putting things together. It took me six months of deciding which of the thousands of pieces of footage I had that I would use. Quick side note is when I started filming this video, I did about 10 different things at each location. And back then 2011, people weren't using selfie sticks. The looks that I got from people, it's like, what's this guy doing with a stick? This is stupid. He looks like an idiot. Because people weren't doing selfies back then. So, I did like 10 different techniques. I did a jumping technique. I threw the camera away from me. I'm like, one of these has got to work out. So, I did 10 different things and eventually I decided on the "360 technique that I developed".

So, taking people on a journey was about understanding how storytelling works without speaking a word, which was hard visually speaking, but it was a roller coaster. It was like you build it, you drop a little bit, you build it up, drop a little bit, and then you build it to the climax and you drop it down, you know. So, it was a whole visual story of figuring out how to do that with all my scenes and pasting it together in the right order. Because if anybody knows anything about zodiac signs, I'm very much a Virgo when it comes to detail orientated mindset. So, if it's not perfect, I don't like it. So that's why it took such a long time. So that's where I kind of learned about that visual storytelling. And then today, now I incorporate that with the ability to remix music, with the ability of narrating a human story and emotion at the moment.

So, my more recent short films and videos and everything, it's a base of the cinematography that I learned at a young age to know how do I connect with the audience? What are people going through? Let's talk about losing someone. Let's talk about what I'm feeling looking at the Tokyo Tower here in Japan. Let's talk about, oh, my God, I feel so lost in my life and I'm reaching a point where I can find myself creatively and I'm going in circles and how do I convey the story with what's going on with some visual storytelling and the personal storytelling. So now I actually have nine videos that I haven't released yet. But they are short films with very deep, emotionally rooted storytelling that I'm really excited to start releasing on my YouTube channel next year. So, if you like what you've seen so far, be sure to subscribe because I got some really, really cool things happening coming up for some videos that will connect with the audience in such a deep way, but be very relatable but also inspiring.

**Matt Bowles:** Well, you won an Emmy award for your motorcycle travel short film called [Limits](#). And that one, I think is exactly what you're talking about, where you are doing narrative storytelling. You are doing vulnerable, personal introspection. Can you share what that film was about? For people that haven't seen it, we'll link it up of course, in [the show notes](#) and why you think that stood out so profoundly and won the Emmy.

**Alex Chacon:** That concept that I did was the very first video that I tried doing it this way and ended up winning an Emmy award. Lucky me. I didn't even think about doing that for that reason, but it just kind of happened that way. It actually won for Best Solo Storyteller. Funny enough, because it's cinematography, the writing, the whole thing. Yeah, I mean, the film's more about a personal journey that I had and challenges that I faced and what I was feeling and the challenges we all go through, but how to persevere from them. And what I was doing on this motorcycle road trip across Wyoming to really kind of deal with it and mend it. And why do I travel on the motorcycle? Why am I out here? What's the reason for this? It doesn't make sense. Am I just confused? Why is this confused?

So, it just, you know, that deep human story of just being lost, not knowing if it's the right path, but also figuring things out and then having this beautiful moment on this trip to kind of get you out of that funk and find the meaning and find the reasons for what you're doing or what you have questions for. So, it was a really relatable story of these are the challenges, these are the problems. This just happened to me now

and oh my God, now I'm seeing things differently. And oh, this is the resolution and the conclusion. This is what I learned. So that film really was a project of love because I need to evolve my creativity as it does every two years on my YouTube, as you'll see, because I started with visual cinematography to then vlogging, then to narrative stuff. And it's just kind of always evolved.

So, I said, what is my evolution as an artist now? Because it's been three years, I haven't changed. And how do I make it deeper and more vulnerable and more interesting? I need higher stakes, basically, is what I needed. So, I've kind of put everything together and it became that and won an award. And that's the next nine videos coming out on my YouTube next year.

**Matt Bowles:** So today, when making short films and vlogs, how do you currently think about whether to center your personal journey of self-discovery and introspection through travel versus centering the local people and places where you're traveling? And has that evolved or changed over the years?

**Alex Chacon:** Here's the thing. We're getting so much content, so many videos and so much social media stuff that to get people's attention is almost impossible now. It's so much. And they're all echo chambers. If you are all about this political subject, that's all you get on your feed. If you're all about pretty girl, they know I get these pretty girls on your feet. If you're all about guys chopping wood with abs, then you're getting nothing but guys chopping woods with abs. Right? You're getting all these things that are just echoed and that's all you're getting. So, whatever you're looking and searching, it becomes an echo thing. So, I said, how do I make travel videos that don't suck? That's my tagline for this next year. Travel videos that don't suck. And what's something that you don't see anymore? I'm tired of seeing garbage on social media. I don't know about you, it's addictive in such a way, but you become mindless.

So, this is kind of like an evolution from that and being like, how do I be different? How do I do something with actual meaning? And that incorporates bringing my personal perspective and eyes into a culture, into a particular situation, into a struggle that someone else is having. And that how I'm helping them or how I'm dealing with that, or how that's affecting me and how that's affecting them and how does that relate to the audience? And you might be having something in your life, the same capacity I am, but this is my situation and in a little more different exotic circumstance. But this happens at home all the time. So, it's a mix with the human story and struggles of what it is to be human. But at the same time with the flair and excitement of travel in different exotic locations, destinations or adventurous situations or things where these types of common struggles and challenges we all face are very heightened because of the circumstances.

**Matt Bowles:** Well, I want to ask you also about your entrepreneurial journey. You mentioned you dropped out of med school to go on this trip and then that led you in an entirely different direction. And I'm wondering if you can take us a little bit just professionally, business wise, on that journey from being a traveler who's filming some of your experiences and putting them up on YouTube to now being a full-time creative entrepreneur, the owner of a creative agency and how you got there.

**Alex Chacon:** Yeah, so imagine 22 years old, 21 years old, saying I'm quitting everything, selling everything I have and I don't know if I'm going to come back, telling my mom that I'm breaking up with a girlfriend that I'm currently seeing and selling everything and traveling the world on the motorcycle. And I don't know if I'll be back. So that's kind of the genesis of it is that's where my life really actually began, which is when I was willing to sacrifice everything for an idea and a dream of experiencing life in this way. So, when I did that epic selfie video and I got my 10 minutes of fame and I was on every TV network and I had all these views

and, and this whole thing, I didn't realize back then that I could make money doing something that I was passionate about. I thought it was either a lawyer, coming from the Mexican background, it's very kind of conservative in a way of lawyer, engineer, doctor, date, get married, have kids, have grandkids, retire, travel and die. To be very basic. It's kind of that.

I entered some photography contests when I was 15 in high school, won third place, second place, never really won, but I understood what composition was and what visuals was. And it was just a combination of, oh my God, this is what I'm looking at. I wish I could capture it. And capturing it, whether it be in a photography or video capacity, and the evolution of that, then integrating the human element and storytelling and then cool two-minute videos, having life experiences and sharing that with people. Yeah, it was just natural evolution is how do I share my life with people. And it just, that's what it's become now, which is, oh, just do it this way. And all different platforms with different messages on each one. And that's where the business came from. That's where my daily life comes from. It wasn't really a conscious choice that I'm going to do this at the end of the day and when I get everything done, I should be here.

No, it was kind of like these opportunities presented themselves. I felt this way at this point, so I needed to leave everything behind and reinvent myself and take this risk and challenge. And it just naturally just kind of developed in such a way. It wasn't the plan. I didn't know you could do this. It just that philosophy of living every single day like it's my last day on earth, which I do to this day, is how I live my life. If I see an opportunity, if I see something interesting or fun, if some really awesome guy calls you, hey, do you want to be on a podcast? I'm like, you got it. Absolutely. You take every opportunity for what it is. And that's how it just naturally developed into the organic thing of a business, into the Creativity into evolving that into traveling. Being a digital nomad full time. I go where the wind takes me.

**Matt Bowles:** Can you talk about your creative agency around the world, unlimited productions, what types of services you offer, and who your ideal client is?

**Alex Chacon:** I'm like the one-man film crew, the one-man production, because I do everything, the marketing, the filming, the whole thing. So, my company, when I have big projects, I definitely hire people, I definitely get freelancers. I definitely say, oh my God, I have a tourism board giving me six figures to go do something. I'm like, I'm going to need a little bit of help, depending on the country, depending on the situation. So, the creative agency just kind of formed out of the necessity of the bigger projects and the bigger things that were happening. Yeah, it just, it was a natural evolution to doing everything myself, which I still do the majority of. But when I have the big, big projects, getting a business and a big entity involved that you manage and control, so you can distribute funds, you can distribute different types of work and stuff like that.

**Matt Bowles:** And at this point in your journey, how do you think about the concept of home? What does that mean to you today?

**Alex Chacon:** Home, at this point in my life, is not a physical location. It's an idea and it's a feeling. My home goes everywhere with me. It's not about tangible objects. It's not about the suitcase I live out of. It's not about the five pieces of tech that I own. Home is the idea of comfort, of vulnerability, of authenticity, of happiness. And I think that's something you can take everywhere and I think you should, rather than have it in one physical location.

**Matt Bowles:** Alex, let me ask you one more question and then we'll wrap this up and move into *The Lightning Round*. After so many years of traveling, miles ridden, borders crossed, what keeps you pushing forward? What is motivating you today that may be different from what drove you at age 23? What does travel mean to you at this point in your life?

**Alex Chacon:** So, every two, three years, I evolve creatively as an artist. And I think it's the same thing as I go through life as a person. And what it means to travel is different every single time. Each journey has a purpose, each location, each project has a meaning behind it in a certain stage of my life that I'm experiencing it in. And what travel means to me today is an opportunity to grow, learn, and evolve into the next version of yourself. And I think that happens on every single trip that I do.

**Matt Bowles:** All right. I think that is the perfect place. And the main portion of this interview. And at this point, Alex, are you ready to move in to *The Lightning Round*?

**Alex Chacon:** I like the way it sounds. Let's do it.

**Matt Bowles:** Let's do it. All right, if you could teleport anywhere in the world right now for a motorcycle ride, where are you going?

**Alex Chacon:** Well, I still would like to do the entire length of the continent of Africa. So, drop me off in the north or south and drive north or south from there. Yep, I'll take that.

**Matt Bowles:** All right. What is the single most underrated country in the world for motorcycle travel?

**Alex Chacon:** China, I think is one of the most underrated places to drive a motorcycle because it's huge. It's so diverse, it's so crazy. The problem is, logistically it's very challenging. Japan as well, I thought would be perfect for a road trip. So, Japan and China are the two places where it's, I would argue, not very well known for road trips. But I think it's. It would be epic and amazing.

**Matt Bowles:** All right, 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 Alex?

**Alex Chacon:** I would tell him, hey, buddy, four years from now, five years from now, you're going to do something so special and so unique that's going to give you the three-year epic selfie video. Something's going to happen to you that won't happen to a lot of people in life. And unfortunately, it's going to be too soon. It's going to be something that is going to be the best thing in your life, but also a very challenging thing because you won't be able to experience it and benefit from it in the ways that other people later on after you will. And that's going to be hard. And just know that you should try to take advantage of what's coming up in a different way than you think you should.

**Matt Bowles:** All right, after traveling to a hundred countries and many different places within those countries, what are three of your favorite destinations in the world that you would most recommend other people should definitely check out?

**Alex Chacon:** One of the things definitely should experience is the Bolivian Salt Flat during the wet season called Uyuni as we just talked about. The northern lights either in Alaska, in Iceland or Finland or Sweden. I don't know. It's hard which one to recommend more. But if you want a cool road trip, definitely Alaska is the way to do it for the northern lights on that one. And as far as the third destination, somewhere culturally relevant, somewhere culturally extreme to what you know and what you're used to. India's a good one,

Pakistan's a good one. The Middle east is a good one. Anything that's completely opposite to what you know. For those people who live in the U.S. and don't really travel outside the U.S. Stop going to Hawaii, stop going to Canada, get out there, get uncomfortable, do epic things. Why just keep going to the resorts, stop going to Club Med, you know, just go somewhere.

**Matt Bowles:** All right, Alex, last question. What are your top three bucket list destinations, places you have not yet been you would most like to see?

**Alex Chacon:** I couldn't give you an answer because I don't live my life wishing for the next possible what I want because I know I'm going to get there where the opportunity takes me, where the wind takes me. I get excited about each and every single time.

**Matt Bowles:** All right, Alex, at this point, I want you to let folks know how they can find you, follow you on social media, check out your amazing YouTube videos. How would you like people to come into your world?

**Alex Chacon:** Yeah. So, I hope people will visit me on the socials, [YouTube](#), [Instagram](#), [TikTok](#), [Facebook](#) as *Alex Chacon*. Just search that anywhere and you'll see me on Alex Chacon official on [Instagram](#), Alex Chacon on [YouTube](#) and all the other socials.

**Matt Bowles:** All right, we're going to link all of that up in [the show notes](#). So, everything we have mentioned in this episode, including the videos we have talked about, all that is going to be available in one place as well as the social media handles. For how to find and follow Alex, you can just go to [themaverickshow.com](#) and go to [the show notes](#) for this episode.

Alex, this was amazing, brother. Thank you for coming on the show.

**Alex Chacon:** My pleasure. Thanks for the invitation and happy travels.

**Matt Bowles:** All right, good night, everybody.