

Jack Wong: 00:02 Welcome to another episode of the Cracking the Entrepreneur Code and today I'm so happy because I've invited Mr. Claude Brooks and he is going to share with us his business messages, experiences and we're going to have fun for the next 30 minutes. To cut the long story short, maybe I'll just quickly introduce who is Claude Brooks. He is the CEO of C To The B Productions. After producing and starring in "Claude's Crib" and "Hitz", both of which were Paramount projects, Paramount Network Television gave him a first look production deal, which thrived for eight years. He has executive produced over 300 episodes of television, such as: MTV's sketch show "The Lyricist Lounge Show" – "Second Time Around" – a half-hour sitcom starring Boris Kodjoe and Nicole Ari Parker for UPN; "Dance 360", starring Fredro Starr and Kel Mitchell for Paramount Syndication A lot of these shows actually a quite famous in North America and I would like him to explain some of these shows later on. So without further ado, let's welcome Claude here. And Claude how are you doing today?

Claude Brooks: 01:15 I'm good Jack. Thanks for having me on.

Jack Wong: 01:20 Your show is Hip Hop Harry Show. That's the first thing that I heard I read and I got your information as Hip Hop Harry, and it sounds very interesting and when I look at your profile picture, it is telling me a lot of things. I'm going to have fun in the next 30 minutes while maybe I would like you to do a very quick introduction of how you actually get started with your show business. Maybe let our audiences know your background.

Claude Brooks: 01:46 Sure. So, Jack, I started off as a child actor and you know, I did a lot of TV shows. I go all the way back to the Cosby show. I used to reoccur in the Cosby show and like two to seven and amen and a bunch of television shows as an actor. And then eventually that led me to a starring in my own shows, like true colors and hitz and when I was in my late twenties, I wanted to start producing and since I was having a lot of success as an actor already, it was easier to make the transition into producing and that's when we started C to the B productions and we do a lot of popular culture shows, you know, shows that deal with pop culture like second time around and "Dance 360

" and one of the shows that we're going to be talking about a lot more later in it with, this is what this conversation is Hip Hop Harry, which is a children's show, a kind of like .. Have you ever heard of Barney?

Jack Wong: 02:47 Yeah, of course.

Claude Brooks: 02:52 OK. So, Hip Hop Harry is similar to that except way more cooler and interesting. And we use rap, you know, to help with telling the story and everything. And as you know, Asian culture, they really love raps. So we have a lot of followers across the world, but specifically, you know, throughout Asia, we get a lot of views on YouTube.

Jack Wong: 03:23 Can I just share something, Claude? My son is now 17 years old and as he grows older, he likes a lot more the adult songs, but when he was then a teen and my two daughters aged 13 and twelve who are obviously teens right now, they love all these rap things. I mean to me it's like I'm 48 now, I have no clue how they can regurgitate and recite all these lyrics. It's like speaking a very different language. It is their language, but for me I don't really understand. So I believe that this is actually a very good attraction to the teens. I mean if I get your audiences correctly, because really to me this is the language and you do have a nice crowd to work with.

Claude Brooks: 04:04 You hit it on the head. Well, you know, a lot of the kids, they were listening to what their older brothers or even their parents listened to, right? Yeah. Because Jack, 48 isn't old at all.

Jack Wong: 04:04 Thank you.

Claude Brooks: 04:20 Here in the States, you know, a lot of parents who are around your age, they grew up also listening to rap music. Beastie Boys and you know, Jay-Z, like that's part of their age group. So they're really open to just finding rap that's really positive. And that's what Hip Hop Harry is because the age group for Hip Hop Harry is like 4 to 10 year olds. Right. You know, that's the main aspect of it. And what ends up happening on the Hip Hop Harry show here in the States, you know, you can find it on Roku and Amazon but YouTube is the biggest one because it's free. You can see that anywhere around the world. You just type in Hip Hop Harry. You'll get some great programming. You see, we use rap as a tool to teach the kids and rhyming is one of the best tools for teaching because you remember it, you know, you remember the words and rhyming.

Claude Brooks: 04:20 That's right.

Claude Brooks: 05:19 And there's books called like Dr Seuss books. And that's all based on rhyming and that's what rapping and rhyming. So we develop this show years ago. So since we're talking about, I'll just give you the background on that. So Hip Hop Harry Show is one of the shows that we own, so we own all aspects to it, you know, all the content and music and everything as well as the

merchandising. And we were on a discovery kids for six years and discovery kids were off the air. We weren't doing much with the brand. When it was on the air, during the summers, we would also have a live show, so we would do 40 days during the summer and everything but once off the air we weren't doing anything for a couple years and then a friend of mine who worked for YouTube was like, "Hey, how come you're not putting up the Hip Hop Harry content on Youtube?" We started doing that, getting a pretty good following on that, but even we have even been a more, a huge following on Roku and Amazon. Like, you know, those platforms would get a lot more views than, than uh, than on Youtube. But through with all the platforms, including Spotify and iTunes because we have the songs as well. We do over 500,000 views or downloads a day.

- Claude Brooks: 06:44 How much? 5,00,000?. Wow. Awesome.
- Claude Brooks: 06:49 Yeah, that's pretty much it. Yeah. Thanks. So it's pretty good. And there's, you know, so it's just becoming, is building on itself more and more and more, you know, which is why I was interested and excited to talk to you because you are talking to people who will also outside of just the States, it's just really good to hear their take on what we're doing. As well as share, you know, share it with the folks across the world. Because now what's great about the Internet now as you in the whole world is your platform. It's no longer just where you are, you know.
- Jack Wong: 07:23 So one thing I like since the conversation started about 10 minutes ago is that I heard that because you were an actor before, it is logical to produce the show and it's kind of like what I always tell my clients that when they want to start a business, when they jump out of the plane and get into the entrepreneurship world, they often will ask this question "What business should I start?" You know, what is my passion? They are always struggling with this major issue. And from what I'm hearing is that for you to start your production, it is very logical because you have been doing what you're great at and it's a no brainer for you. Transitioned from an actor to a producer. Sounds like this is the logical path for you. Is there anything can share with these audiences of mine who are still struggling with looking for what business they start and why did they found the passion? Is there any tips or insights you could share with them?
- Claude Brooks: 08:19 Yeah. Well, you know it's a good question, Jack. You're doing a good job. So yeah, you know, why it's a good question is because part of figuring out what to jump into as an entrepreneur is first you have to always do something and you

hear this all the time, something that you're passionate about. Because if you're passionate about it, you'll fight for it all the time and it won't feel like a job, right? Because in the beginning, unless you're struck without a whole lot of luck, as you know, this is always going to be a lot of work, but especially in the beginning, you figure out different ways to approach things. So one, finding out the different things that you're passionate about, but two is also doing a lot of research so you know, there's no excuse anymore for people to say, I just don't know or understand when you can just go and Google whatever you want to find out that. Right. So there's no longer that excuse of "well I just don't know" and "there's nobody to talk to". There is. It's called your computer. Go ahead and Google what it is you want to find out. And from there you can learn a lot about the areas that may interest you. And the other thing is, before you kind of start in trying to invest your own money or your family's monthly into an area that you want to do, is to possibly see if you can get a mentor of some sort and you'd really be shocked if you put together a list of 10 people that you look up to and you say, these are the people that I would love to get mentorship from, that are doing what you like to be doing. You'd be shocked if you send an email or follow them on their social media platforms and just said, hey, you know, I look up to you as a role model and have your questions ready, do you mind if I ask you three questions that I can either email to you or maybe we can just get on a phone? Successful people want to help people. Generally, all successful people I've met, somebody helped them get to where they are. You know, I've never had anybody who was like, I did this all on my own. I figured it all out and nobody helped me or nothing. Somebody generally helped them at some point in their life and they would recognise it and a lot of people help me, you know, along the way. So I try to, you know, do the same thing back getting some type of mentorship. Very important as well as you know, even doing an internship, even if you think you're too old or whatever, having an internship at a place where you can learn for free is and you're giving them your time is really a great trade because guess what you're not putting up your own money to figure out and making a bunch of mistakes, which is what most people do and I'm putting up their own money or borrow money or get investors and they just haven't learned enough about their industry.

Jack Wong:

11:08

And this is very insightful because if I were just to summarise the two things that I have just taken away from what you have said. Number one is obviously the big word, "M". What is starting with "M"? Not "McDonalds" but "MENTOR" because really mentors help us a lot. For myself. I've tons of mentors in

my life and it's true enough that we may think that they will not be available to answer any other questions, but if you don't ask you'll never get. If you ask, there will be a possibility that they may answer. And this is really true from my experience. So the second thing is there's no excuse of not knowing what you don't know because of the availability of the Internet. Like Google is always there. So I do not know the nature of the Americans and you can confirm that later. But the Asian mindset is that, well, I'm afraid of asking people the question because if I ask, you know what, I look stupid and I don't know if there's anybody who can help me. So you can see the people in Asia have been conditioned to the blame mode, to the victim mode and hence, a lot of them thought that because of the school experiences, the traditional education system, which is something that I'm against, they have to find their own answer because if they really need other people's help, that is called "cheating" and cheating is not permissible in schools. So unfortunately most Asians still carry with this culture and hence they are stuck. This is my experience when I work with the Asian people. Is that true in the America?

- Claude Brooks: 12:48 Yeah, you know what? It's more of a cultural thing you'll see in Asia then you find here. But you do see it a lot here as well because a lot of people feel that they've already spent their money on going to college and all that type of stuff. Why they should probably start right at the top. Right. And they don't realize that they should do the steps that we just talked about, like get a mentor and everything. So sometimes pride does play into the scenario. Maybe not to the degree of what it does, you know, in Asia, but since you guys are aware of that part of the problem from a cultural standpoint, you now know what the problem is, fix it.
- Claude Brooks: 13:30 That's true. If you know the problem, then fix it. Don't just sit down and think of how to solve it, but not taking any actions. OK. So thank you for that. I want to transition to the next theme of the Hip Hop Harry Show. So if I were to ask you, what's the actual message that Hip Hop Harry Show carries to the audience's.
- Claude Brooks: 13:47 Yeah. So the message for the show is is because it's a show for 4 to 10 year olds, but also the show for parents to watch along with their kids. Right? So there is some co-viewing, so app towards parents can have a conversation with their kids about what they watched. Right. And since the fun show parents really like that aspect of it. But what the message overall is about human development and also moral development too. So we were teaching kids not to be bullies in the show and how to care

about other people's feelings and you know why washing your hands is good or listening to your parents. So there's a lot of social emotional messages that, you know, that come out of our shows and one of the big themes that's happening right now in the States is bullying. It is a big deal right now. You know, especially with the Internet and with social media platforms, kids are doing a lot of bullying. So that message is also, you know, part of the, part of this show inclusion as part of the show because forming clicks is one of the things that people do in school, right? Yeah. Cool. Kids hang out with the kids who are jocks hanging out the pretty girls hanging out, you know. And, so within our show we're constantly changing the cast. So we have a total of 12 kids but on each show we showcase for. So if you're watching a show and say you like one of the kids on the show, like David on the show and you start following him on one episode with three kids through frenzy as the next episode that you see him with three friends, they'll be totally three different friends and so it's teaching you, Oh look, David is always making new friends, which that's something that kids really need to learn. And it also makes them want to do that themselves when they're out at school or a playground or whatever, you know, to make friends in and include other people that may or may not look like you. So all of that messaging is involved in our show. It's one of the things that were, you know, really, really proud about. Right?

- Jack Wong: 16:12 So the reason why I asked this question is for my audiences to understand as long as you know exactly your message, it doesn't matter how you deliver your message because one way or the other, if you know your right audiences, if you have the clear message like what Claude has done is actually to deliver the message via this Hip Hop Harry Show and it is teaching the kids certain values, which obviously is important for the development. And I like the fact that you mentioned that the parents will also have the opportunity to stay with their kids to learn how to grow their kids and that is fantastic because the bonding time between the parents and the kids to me as a parent is very important.
- Claude Brooks: 16:56 Finding something to bond or overlay the kid enjoys and the parent enjoys. That's really hard generally. Right. Is, that's really, really good. Because I'm sure you know with your three kids, they have grown up pretty fast. Right?
- Jack Wong: 17:14 One is almost an adult and the others are teens already. Yeah. How do you explain to the parents? Because you did mention something like this, there's so many other shows on the digital platform. How do you convey your message properly to the

parents so that they don't misunderstand that Hip Hop Harry is a unique show, it is teaching the kids the core values. It is not another show on the Internet.

Claude Brooks:

17:37

You know how it works. It kind of works by sometimes doing things like this by having a platform and have an interview and they can hear this. The main way parents find out about us is by other parents. It's word of mouth. Where it's word of mouth, which makes total sense because when you especially now most kids are watching their content on their parents phone or tablet. if you're a parent, especially the younger between the 4 and 10 year old group and you want to be able to. It's time to cook dinner, but the kids are running all over the place where you can't get them settled down or you're out somewhere in there about to go into the doctor's office or something and you just want them to be able to focus on something you'll put up the content on your phone and play it for them?" And so a lot parents will ask "Hey, do you have anything that you're watching that you like, that you feel my kid could learn from as opposed to. Because there's a lot of garbage content on the, you know, what, if the kids aren't learning anything or just watching some kids, you know, unboxed a precedent and there's something you can learn from that too, but you know, there's not high learning values from those types of things. Right. And so, which you will find is parents just end up talking to each other like, Hey, well what is he watching right now? Or what does she watch? What's going on? Word of mouth is our really is one of our biggest tools and I think for most businesses, word of mouth is always the biggest thing. So it's really important that there is no such thing as like a, a client or somebody that you go, hey, we don't care about them because they're such a small piece of the action. You don't know how big of a platform they may or may not have with social media. Right. So folks will pick a link from our show and put it on their page and we'll notice, whoa, we got like an extra 50,000 views today. Where did that come from? And it will be from a parent who happens to have a big following and you never know who your person who's watching or the person who's coming to your business. Always treating someone like they're a star is really important.

Jack Wong:

19:42

That's right. Totally agreed. Client intimacy is the name of the game right now in business. It is what my mentor has taught me because, like you said, you never know if this is one parent who has a big crowd of followers. One message can spin off into thousands of messages in seconds.

Claude Brooks: 20:06 Yeah, it can turn somebody's business completely around. OK. Or it can turn out for the worst.

Jack Wong: 20:12 Right. That's true. And the next question I'm asking is what's actually your next game plan, like what's the revenue model for Hip Hop Harry because after all it is a business you can't do charity and get no money coming in? So what's the revenue model for Hip Hop Harry, if you don't mind sharing with us and how do you plan to scale it if you have the next level of your game plan?

Claude Brooks: 20:37 Scale it up? So, all these shows are onto digital platforms, right? It'll pretty much be all the digital platforms that we're on, we actually do receive a revenue for us. So like on YouTube you see how they played the little, you know, commercials before you watch the, for YouTube pays, right? Advertisers are there. On Amazon, same thing but not with advertisements. Right. So you can download them. Roku, same scenario. Almost all the platforms and there's one big platform that we're on which is called PlayKids, which is one of the top kids apps in the whole world, not just here in the States. So they're there in the whole world and we're one of their top shows, right as well. So we do really well, you know from that as well as we licensed the show to other TV stations, smaller stations and stuff like that to the revenue models is kind of about that. And then also if you go to the Hip Hop Harry website, which is www.hiphopharry.com, we have a store there and so there's some merchandise there where we sell the DVDs, the CDs and the plush bear. And, you know, tee shirts. We sell merchandise there, so as the more exposure we get on the platforms, the more the merchandise we will sell or the more people that will want us to do live shows, right? Everything feeds on itself because the more live shows you do, but you're just thinking about a live show is when you do a live show, people video or tape it on their phone and they'll post it. And that's almost like having marketing for free. That's right. And that's what my parents do and kids do when they go to concerts there, they're posting, I was just at this first concert and they'll post it and now the next parent who's looking at someone's platform, oh, I didn't even know they were in town or they have a show, let's look it up. I want to do something with my kids, you know? Yep. So there's different types of avenues.

Jack Wong: 22:36 What do you see about the next three to five years from now for Hip Hop Harry Show?

Claude Brooks: 22:41 Well, but we want to do is to continue making new content. Right? And start integrating new characters. So if you think

about it, I mean that's what Mickey Mouse does, right? So there's Mickey Mouse. There's Mini-Mouse, Donald Duck, Pluto and they've kept opening up more and more, more characters. But when you introduce more characters, those characters can go off and start having their own show as well. Right? Yeah. And so it just opens up another line of not only just revenue but it's just another way of also telling the story. Yeah. So next three to five years, so we want to do is continue to introduce more characters and is right now Hip Hop Harry is a male. So maybe we're, you know, do singing, seeing sally and bring in a female you know, and just kind of open it up, open it up.

- Jack Wong: 23:34 Right. That sounds interesting. I think when you mentioned the Walt Disney's character, do you have any plans, for example, to look for the angel investors to put Hip Hop Harry as a movie like you have different characters being featured in movie, so you have different parts of the movie or different movies of different characters? That might be another great thing because Walt Disney is very successful on that. It's like Finding Nemo for example, then suddenly you have Finding Dory, then Finding Nemo II. It's like one character after another other. So it sounds like woo. And the kids love that. It's like I just shared with you my experience because my wife loves my kids too much ... which is a good thing. I'm not discounting that. During the school holidays despite my kids' age, they will ask my wife whether there is any movie to catch They will then see the movie screen lists and there will be tons of all these movies - cartoon movies one after one and the kids are never sick and tired of going for these cartoon movies. And to me it's like ... imagine I am the movie maker. I can make a lot of money because the demand is always there. Whether times are good or bad. That's always a demand.
- Claude Brooks: 24:55 Exactly. Yeah. It always is. Especially for kids movies because kids will see the same movie over and over and over, you know, they'll watch it 20, 30 times
- Jack Wong: 25:06 Especially that's my younger daughter loves watching the same show 20, 30 times.
- Claude Brooks: 25:16 Right. it's a great market for that. And if you to have a successful children's character and you manage it the right way. It can be around for forever.
- Jack Wong: 25:28 Yeah. Because you talk about a lot of your Hip Hop Harry Show which is basically like intangibles to me. It's not like other products. I mean apart from the fact that you have products to sell basically the characters, the themes, the messages are all

intangibles. Do you have any plans to secure the brand name so that no one else will exploit your brands illegally? Because in Asia, one of the great things the Asians come up with is called piracy, which obviously the Americans don't like it, is that we do have a lot of all these faked characters, like they mimicked a Walt Disney as an example. They mimic the Mickey Mouse, the Minnie Mouse, and they just sell their own products. And do you have any plans to make sure that your brand name is secured legally and properly?

- Claude Brooks: 26:20 Yeah, we have the trademarks and all that type of stuff, but there's been so much you can do Jack, if someone writes is going to try to, you know, steal the brand and put it out on the black market. That happens all the time, but it's always going to be such a small percentage. It's not gonna affect you in a big way. We have seen some people, there was a company that was making Hip Hop Harry outfits for birthday parties so that they can show up in people's kids party that I went down and we had to, you know, find a way to get that cease and desist it, but you know, what do you, what it is. It's not even like what are you going to do, but you put it, you put everything you're supposed to put in place for this not to happen. And if it happens a little bit it's OK because if it's, if it's happening a little bit and it's not hurting yourself in a big way or or hurting, you know, what people should be expecting from you. You know what it is a little bit. So it's marketing is a little bit of marketing, right? Because to a certain degree, if the folks go off and they make the counterfeit Hop Hop Harry dolls and they started selling all over Asia, but we have the real ones. Hey, you chalk it up to. All right, thanks for the free publicity.
- Jack Wong: 27:42 That's true. I mean like the way you put it, because you all play what we call it, the abundance mindset. That is "I'm not worried about the scarcity. I'm not whereby people read me off. " Yes, I'm concerned, but I'm not too worry about that because my brand name is good for you. Essentially it is free publicity as you have correctly put it. Yeah. Thank you for helping me promoting my brand. So more and more people ar aware of that. I like that abundance mindset.
- Claude Brooks: 28:12 And I mean there's somethings that it won't work for it. All right. So you're creating, you know, uh, some medicine, eh, that prior to her and if that gets stolen, that's a different brand, right?
- Jack Wong: 28:23 Yes. So to my audiences Claude, for every show that I'll be asking my guest for one favourite quote. Claude gave me this one: "It's important to get to your destination and reach back to

help others get to their destination." It's a brilliant quote. Can you elaborate this?

- Claude Brooks: 28:49 Yeah. So this is kind of, you know, it's important to get to your destination and reached back to help others get to their destination is a little bit about what you were talking about earlier in terms of mentorship, right? So you getting everything that you want but yet not reaching back to help other people that, that are trying to get their path going. That's not what we were. We were put here for, we will put here to help each other help each other out and, and, and, and there's a lot more that will come to you by doing that, right? Because that's just how the universe works that way. If you, if you're good to people, guess what? People are going to be good to you. Right? And if you, and it will also be helping folks out around, around you. You're also building relationships that potentially will be able to help you down the road. Right? So a lot, a lot of folks that I have reached out to you to help, you know, I, uh, are now we're in business together, right? Right. You pay, they call it, they call it paying it forward and it really goes.
- Jack Wong: 29:53 You know what I would say. I would phrase it in another way. I mean that is my way obviously is "you deserve what you get because you serve others first". You deserve because you serve.
- Claude Brooks: 30:02 So I liked that. I liked that. Like that right there and that's. Yeah, that's a good one. That's a good one jack.
- Jack Wong: 30:09 Thank you. So how would my audience has be able to look out for you?
- Claude Brooks: 30:12 So the best way to have to follow what we're up to is two things. One is to go to www.hiphopharry.com, which is the website, but the other thing is we have you go to, you go on instagram or twitter or facebook and you type in Hip Hop Harry, you'll find all of our pages there and literally new content and things are going up on the platform is almost every day if not a few times, a few times a week, but those are the kind of the best ways to do the state, to know what the latest is, but the other thing is to go to YouTube and go and type in Hip Hop Harry and subscribe to our page. Right? And when you subscribe to the YouTube Channel, every, every time we put up a new video, you'll get an alert and you know, and, and the kids love that because when we do about three new videos a week and we repurpose some in three different ways for them. So there's a lot, a lot, a lot of content out there. So those are two ways to, you know, to really follow, follow along what we're up to,

Jack Wong:	31:24	You know what Claude? I will be the first one of this show. Go to YouTube and click the subscribe button. I'll be the first one jumping on your show and just to see what's happening. And that's what you said about the word of mouth marketing because you give good content and therefore people who are inspired will take action. That's precisely what word of mouth s about.
Claude Brooks:	31:45	And word of mouth is like when we were growing up and literally is people who talk to each other. It's still is that because now they even have another. They can use their phone as a device or word of mouth can spread even faster than it used to be able to describe in now with all the social media
Jack Wong:	32:05	Once again, while we have hit 30 minutes already, so I would like to end this interview very shortly. And once again, I really truly appreciate Claude for your presence and your sharing of this Hip Hop Harry idea and all of those business lessons that my audiences would love to learn from you. And once again, thank you for being on my show and to my audiences, thank you for listening to this episode of the Cracking the Entrepreneur Code Podcast show. I look forward to seeing you again when I will bring on another guest pretty soon.