

EPISODE 550

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:35.7]

FT: Welcome to So Money everyone. Happy March 22nd. Maybe you knew this about me, maybe not? But I was a total theater junkie in high school and college. I acted, I directed, I minored in theater. I think that if I was more risk taking I would have pursued acting as a career. Then I just saw *La La Land* and I saw how excruciating the audition process can be for some women in Hollywood and I'm positive I would not have lasted long, I would have been back on a plane to the east coast.

I mean, part of me always wonders, "What if?" but we can live vicariously through people like Ilana Lavine who is our guest today. A lovely actor who has appeared in multiple films, plays and TV shows and she's the host of a fantastic new podcast called Little Known Facts. On this show, she interviews fellow performers about their lives, their careers and of course all the juicy things that you can't just Google about them. You're not going to find these details on IMDB, you have to listen to her show.

Like for example I just finished listening to the episode with Laura Linney. Learned that she was raised by a single mom in New York, spent her days after school as a latch key kid like I did. Matthew Broderick, another example, was supposed to star in a breakout role when he was just starting out with Sally Field but then the director of the film passed away and the project never happened. Did he give up? No he did not. With Ilana we talked about the art of acting, podcasting, and of course money.

Here's Ilana Lavine.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:02:14.9]

FT: Ilana Lavine, welcome to So Money, fellow podcaster.

[0:02:19.1]

IL: Thank you, I am so excited to be here, I love your show.

[0:02:22.3]

FT: Likewise, I was listening to your interview with Laura Linney, who many people may or may not know listening to the show as I have talked a lot about my personal life on this show. She is a local mom here. Her son and my son are in the same school and she is just as delightful and charming in person as you hope someone that you love would be that you see on the big screen and you have her on the show as well as a number of wonderful performers.

You yourself are an actress and what I love about your show is that you really take the conversation to places we would never go in other places with these people. We get to learn the little things, right?

[0:03:10.0]

IL: Well, Laura, you know, the thing that's been great about this show is I know Laura because she and I did our — We were each in our first play in New York City together. That's how long the relationship has been going on for and so I've really been lucky to kind of have a front row seat to watching this actress who I thought was a magnificent talent straight out of college to someone who is a household name at this point.

To your point, I'm not just saying this and I'm sure you've seen it drop off and pickup at your nursery. She's the most down to earth, approachable, kind, warm person and she's such a chameleon because she probably just looks like a Brooklyn mom at drop off and then on screen she just transforms into whether she's playing John Adam's wife or a very modern sex pot. She can just do everything. She's a really extraordinary talent and one of the nicest humans on the planet and I'm so glad that you know her too.

[0:04:15.7]

FT: Your gift is that you brought all of that to life during that interview. I mean, you really make a cozy place for your guest on Little Known Facts, your new podcast. Tell us how you transitioned to becoming a podcast host? How did that materialize?

[0:04:31.2]

IL: You know, I would say that in some ways, it's such an unlikely thing because I had no personal contacts to the world of broadcasting but I have always loved radio so much so when I look at the narrative now, it makes perfect sense to me that I would become a host just because as a kid, we drove around a lot visiting our grandparents and my father would always have the radio on, mostly listening for traffic but then it would just stay on and you'd hear news stories and the idea of like a voice coming out of a box, not connected to a body or a face, just words was very comforting thing for me as a child.

So I'm excited that I'm a part of that same kind of story telling now, but I was a person who was on Broadway and doing television and film and around the time, I had my kids, I was mostly doing theater here in New York and it suddenly became clear to me that it wasn't the best work schedule for having young children because night time.

When I would be on stage is bedtime and bath time and dinner time and I was missing out on all of that really crucial family coming together. I did have it in my mind somehow that I wanted to transition for a little while into something that A, could happen during the day consistently and maybe that I could have more control of. As an actress, I've also done a lot of other things; I've directed and I've produced. But any time you're working in film, which is where I was acting and producing, the hours are just insane. It just wasn't conducive.

Recently, a friend of mine quite literally absorbed the podcast company into his studios, it's called ProMedia New York City and they are a film production facility and we were talking and he's like, "You know, I feel like you'd be really great at hosting a podcast, do you want to try it?" It was a moment in time where I decided I was going to say yes to everything that wasn't

dangerous or put anyone I loved at risk. So I said yes and sort of like the way they tell writers, beginning writers, “Start with what you know.”

I thought, “Okay, I’ve just been given this opportunity to have headphones and microphone and really fantastic recording quality, what do I know? Who do I know to come in?” So that’s how it started. I thought, “Well, what I know is acting, I’ve been doing it for over 20 years, who I know are actors and artists who loves me enough to come in and be a guinea pig as I try this,” and the first person who came in was John Flattery of Mad Men fame, among others, and we were off to the races.

At this point, I’ve done a tremendous amount of interviews and it turns out that my friend who said, “Hey, I think you’d be good at this,” as shy as I am about admitting that I’m good at something, the interviews have been turning out remarkably well and the feedback and response to the show has been amazing. That’s a long answer to your question but that’s kind of how it began.

[0:07:51.6]

FT: You were smart to start with something that you know and are familiar with and you have easier access to booking these phenomenal guests, but yet the show is called Little Known Facts and most of the conversation is about the hidden gems, the life back stories of your guests, how they became performers, the struggles.

So as their friend and as their colleagues in some cases and as an interview or what’s been some of the most incredible things that you have discovered about your guests? Is there a theme, an unknown, a lesser known or little known fact that’s actually turned into quite a bit of a theme that has strung together these guests of yours?

[0:08:32.3]

IL: I think so. You know, many thoughts are racing through my mind as you ask me that question and it’s such a good question. But I think the thing that translates universally, regardless of whether you’re pursuing a career in the arts or any kind of business that you

dream about and had a passion for, I think it's really easy for us to understand how people deal with exciting triumphs in whatever venture they are setting out on. But how you handle the no's and the rejections and that deep vulnerability especially when you're a performer. The no is not to your new vacuum that you're selling. In the moment, the "no" is you, "We actually don't want you."

I would say thematically, in every single episode, the way each of my guest and I think part of why they are so successful is they have all, in different ways, but they have all managed to negotiate the no with grace. For me, that has been one of the most inspiring things about being in a room with these people and the other thing that I've noticed and I'm not just saying this to sound Pollyanna or toot the horn of my guest. To a person, part of why I think they've been so successful is not are they born with the gift of talent and then they've worked really hard to hone their craft. I think it's Malcolm Gladwell, was he the one who said, it takes like 10,000 hours to become an expert at something.

[0:09:55.8]

FT: An expert.

[0:09:58.2]

IL: They are truly to a person the kindest people I know. I really believe and it's not nice people don't do really well too. We have plenty of stories of people who rise to the top and having treated everyone along the way with generosity.

But I would say that all of my guests, and in a way, the way I cherry pick them is not only do I think they're remarkably talented and inspiring, are they people that I actually want to spend time with because their hearts match their talent. To a person, they are.

The little known fact of that, each of them is I think all of them take none of this for granted and have continued to be as generous now as they were when they first started out. That's been a really kind of beautiful thing to string through the process of doing this interviews.

[0:10:46.7]

FT: I remember in your conversation with Laura Linney, she talked about a few times being an understudy on Broadway. I guess I didn't know this, but maybe for a lead character, there might be a few understudies and she was — while other understudies might have checked out or wouldn't really engage during every performance...

[0:11:09.9]

IL: The other understudies that she's referring to, and a play with *Six Degrees of Separation*.

[0:11:13.7]

FT: Yes, Stockard Channing.

[0:11:14.6]

IL: Which is actually coming back to Broadway with Allison Janney and John Benjamin Hickey who are Allison Janney of the show *Mom* and *West Wing* who is an old friend of mine and who is coming up on the podcast very soon and John Benjamin Hickey who won the Tony for I guess the 2014 Tony award for best actor. You know, the other understudies she's referring to were understudies for not the thing part as her. So everybody in the cast had an understudy.

[0:11:41.5]

FT: Okay, that makes sense. Still, she said she just couldn't get enough of being back stage, she would watch the show every night and did she ever get the chance to fill in?

[0:11:52.2]

IL: I don't think she ever went on. I mean, I don't think she went on. I don't recall that she did but I think always seeing yourself as a student in life is another key to success. I think the minute

you think you know everything and stop being in awe of others, you're really shooting yourself in the foot. I mean, I imagine that would be true no matter what career path you're on.

[0:12:17.6]

FT: Well yeah, I mean I think staying curious — Tony Robbins said that on my podcast, he was our first guest and I think if I remember nothing, I do remember that he said one of the keys to life and one of the keys to success in life is always staying curious, asking the why, the how and no question is a silly question.

[0:12:38.9]

IL: I think it was one of your guests, I can't remember his name, forgive me but I believe his name might have been Mike and he runs the Upright Citizen Brigade in LA.

[0:12:49.1]

FT: Mike Still.

[0:12:49.9]

IL: Mike Still, your old college friend. You know, something he said that's really important for aspiring artists is you have to make your own work. It may not pay you, it may not be the thing that you know, changes your bank account but to not wait around for people to give you permission to do what you love to do but to make sure that you find ways.

I often teach a class at different universities. I'm often asked to come in and talk about, you know, they'll create a class now which they didn't have when I was going to college and studying acting, "The business of being an artist", which is kind of a new part of university curriculums and drama programs because it's so important to figure out not just how to hone your craft to be the best, most ready actor when the opportunity comes but how to be entrepreneurial in the way you pursue your art.

So much of how other businesses work, which is networking and being brave enough to network, it's really an important part of being an actor too and I often say to people, if you have younger people listening or older people who are career changing in this moment. The people in the room that you're sitting with in your class, look around, this is the beginning of your community. It's all about community and building a community.

You don't know who is in the room with you right now. Like you're taking this acting class but you might really have this dream — You're taking the acting class because you want to be a singer but you want to have stage presence and the person next to you, their dad might be like a huge record producer. Just talk to people. You never know where the connection is going to happen and it's really everywhere all the time and I think actors and performers are so shy about self-promoting, it feels so uncomfortable and not what an artist should do, there's no suffering in that.

I think the more — I'm skipping around a little bit, but I think the more we get comfortable with talking about what we love to do, the same way everyone else does in every other field on the planet, the more we will grow financially.

[0:15:00.6]

FT: Just how you explained how your podcast began, you were talking about this aspiration with a friend at a party. Similar to my situation, I was talking to a friend about my podcast and how I wanted to get sponsors and she's like, called me up one day and said, "You'll never believe it. I have a friend who is consulting with this company called Ad Large and they are looking for female financial podcasters to represent them to get them some Ad dollars." Okay.

Is this something that you, this philosophy that you have to kind of look at your career as an artist, as a business, is this something that you knew from the get go? Talk a little bit about your own personal journey in the world of performing arts and how you navigated it and how would you characterize it?

[0:15:48.3]

IL: Well, it's so funny that you say that. I think so much about how that was not the model for me when I was coming up. The model for me was the theater was the place that I wanted to work and I never expected to get paid a living wage by working in the theater. It was, "What can I do to support my theater hobby? Like, my theater habit?" The idea that it would be a high paying career just never occurred to me.

Actors, until very recently in history like you would see these signs, "Actors sleep in the barn". Like it was not a reputable career, the way now people strive for, it's changed remarkably and that's kind of happened in the last century where it's really changed. I would say that I started out, I did go to a BFA acting program, I very quickly was involved in a theater company called Naked Angels in New York City that from that company have come many well-known actors that your listeners will have heard of.

From Rob Marrow, to Gina Gershon, Marisa Tomei, to Sarah Jessica Parker, Matthew Broderick. Writers like Kenny Lonergan, whose film *Manchester By The Sea* has kind of made a big splash this year.

[0:17:13.0]

FT: A little bit.

[0:17:13.5]

IL: A little bit. So we all were committed to doing theater in New York and we all would go off and do other projects that we saw as money making projects. I would go to LA and do what's called a pilot season where you would audition for the new TV shows. If I was lucky enough to get one, I would take that money, which would be windfall for me and it makes me think of other people I listen to on your show, when that was the beginning of this unbelievable mind-blowing reality that I could sign a contract that had a huge dollar amount on it.

Because when you do a TV show, even though at the moment, they're just promising you the one episode, the pilot episode, you sign a contract that shows you what you will make for seven years. It's a pretty mind-blowing experience to see that on paper and you also have to calm your

body down. I would almost sign it with one hand over my eye so it didn't add to my nerves knowing that when I walk in this room, it's not just walking into a room to buy a lottery ticket, it's walking into a room knowing that if you hit it out of the park, you absolutely are guaranteed a winning lottery number. It's a very strange thing, psychologically.

But that was what I would do. I would go and kind of get the dirty money that the TV was, right? That's bad, that's not art and then run home to do my plays and it took me a long time to admit out loud that actually, I loved doing television. I loved the way in which you had to work super quickly and be very spontaneous and there was a whole art to that.

Now that's changed significantly, the lines are completely blurred now between television, film and theater. There's not one like high art; there's not highbrow and low brow anymore. When I was starting out, there was a real — I don't know, there was a real attitude. Like television was not true art.

[0:19:20.3]

FT: Beneath me.

[0:19:21.3]

IL: Yes, now I'm like please, who do I...

[0:19:25.3]

FT: Now, TV has brought in — I was reading a headline this morning that Apple wants to also get into the Netflix game and start making original programming and so many successful shows through those streaming channels. In some ways, TV is where the opportunities are.

[0:19:43.8]

IL: The writing in TV now is coming, started in my time that it's started to part of what made it so amazing is it was playwrights being — it's like old Hollywood, they would take playwrights and

they would sort of take them out to Hollywood to write these Samuel Goldwin and you know, all of those kind of Hollywood studio heads in the 50's and 60's were taking playwrights from the New York theater and they began writing screen plays.

You know, Aron Sorkin was a playwright before he started writing the West Wing. I mean, there was real part of what's made the writing for television so magnificent, it's based on playwrights at the center of the writing of it. That's helped it too.

[0:20:26.5]

FT: There's a parallel too I think in my industry with journalism, there's a lot of respect for print reporters and people who work for the Marquee newspapers like the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal who write for the Atlantic and I think when I was in school, those of us who wanted to pursue broadcasts were kind of looked upon.

I think it wasn't blatant but there was this undercurrent, we weren't as ambitious or we had the wrong kind of ambition that we wanted to just be on TV or after the fame.

[0:21:01.2]

IL: Right, ego driven.

[0:21:01.7]

FT: Ego driven, right.

[0:21:03.4]

IL: Versus a true scrappy reporter, you know?

[0:21:06.6]

FT: Truthfully, these days whether you're a performer, a journalist, you have to have a lot of different talents, you have to be able to tell your story in as many mediums as possible if you want to continue to thrive in this ever evolving media landscape.

It would behoove the newspaper writers to learn how to maybe put on some foundation and get on TV and tell their story and also at the same time, for TV journalists to be able to write a great 3,000 word article.

[0:21:36.9]

IL: Right.

[0:21:38.7]

FT: Well, let's talk a little bit about money? How often does money come up on your show, by the way? I'm sure it does all the time.

[0:21:46.0]

IL: Well, I think it comes up in terms of most of the actors, unless I don't think I've had that many trust fund babies on my show. Most of them live very differently now than they did when they started out. Money comes up even if we don't talk about it specifically, how much did you make to do, *The Americans*, when I had Noah Emmerich on.

I think the difference between living in the fifth floor walkup in Greenwich village and then no longer living in a five floor walkup in Greenwich village is very much a part of the story of all of these people who started out — You know John Slattery talks a lot about when he first started, he was living in graves in Brooklyn, in an apartment where the train, the subway, it was like a Woody Allen movie.

He could see the train going right by his window and the whole apartment would shake every time the subway went by. You know, he's not living in that apartment anymore. Now it's a memory that was really a huge part of what an artist story in the beginning is struggle right? All

of those things. Dan Bucatinsky who is on the new *24* show on Fox, talked about his first apartment was like that Laverne and Shirley style apartment.

Like the basement apartment where you would just see people's feet walking by and he talks about pacing around that studio apartment below the ground. Like a caged animal, like plotting and planning, "How am I going to go from someone in an acting class to someone acting in front of people and getting paid for it?" You know, Cynthia Nixon who grew up an only child with a single mom in New York City remains an incredibly frugal, very generous but with herself, a frugal by nature person because she grew up in a frugal by nature household or frugal out of necessity household.

What's been really interesting as you watch celebrities explode in their careers is how do those people handle this sudden excitement and burden of wealth and we see people go off the rails and we find out, we'll see people on some reality show like *The Apprentice* and they're there because you're like, "Oh my god they have no more money," that's what they're doing.

[0:24:15.3]

FT: Right or they're on *Dancing with the Stars* because they have no more money.

[0:24:18.4]

IL: Right.

[0:24:19.1]

FT: I haven't acted since TGIF on ABC like Urkel.

[0:24:23.9]

IL: That's who I love so much or maybe they are going, "You know what? I'm 50 and this is remarkable opportunity," and this is what you talked about women the industry to show that I still

can look and be amazing even though Hollywood has decided to put me out to pasture. So that's part of it too.

[0:24:40.8]

FT: Hey listen, I would love to be on *Dancing with the Stars*. I don't think I'm cool enough. I'm not even there yet so what does that say about me?

[0:24:48.5]

IL: Well it's about a goal, this is now your goal.

[0:24:52.1]

FT: It is a goal, I think it would be a great way — I need to lose this baby weight.

[0:24:57.3]

IL: Right, well that's a great way to do it. A nice workout.

[0:25:01.8]

FT: There you go. How about in your own personal life? I ask my guest often about their own financial backgrounds, which as you just explained it sounds like a lot of these artists take the good and the bad and it creates their financial roadmap as adults and so as you were growing up — Where did you grow up by the way?

[0:25:20.6]

IL: I grew up in new Jersey and just over the George Washington bridge. So New York City was always — Coming to New York was not like, "Ooh what's New York like?" I mean, I came to New York all the time. My father's office was within New York. But I feel like my story and who I am

today and what I hear myself saying to my kids is such a reenactment of how I grew up, which is I had two parents who grew up in Brooklyn who were real products of the depression.

And my parents really worked hard to get out of an Urban environment to get us to New Jersey, that was the American dream for them and I feel like over the years, my father and my mom together really built something and considering how they grew up, it was never not remarkable to them that not only did they have enough money to get by, they had savings and I remember we moved from one house to another house around the corner.

And the difference between the neighborhoods, the size of the house were quite noticeable and so I can pin point the moment in time where I knew things had changed for my family but my parents, because of how they grew up, no matter how well they did, their personal lifestyle never changed. What did change is how much they continue to give away. So rather than living larger or living more extravagantly, what they changed is how much more they were able to give to those in need, whether it was people they knew or charities that they believed in.

So I remember my dad would always comment on how much that cup of coffee cost. We'd be in a nice restaurant celebrating someone's birthday and he couldn't help himself, he'd say out loud like, "\$4.50 for a cup of coffee? Like that's crazy!" and I would be like, "Dad!" all embarrassed. What if somebody heard him? He's like, "No my love, it's not that I can't afford. I'm very proud, I could pay a \$100 for this cup of coffee."

For him it was about value. Is this cup of coffee worth \$4.50 as opposed to the guy with a cart outside on Broadway and 40th street who's selling a cup of coffee for a dollar? What makes this cup of coffee three or four times more worth it in value? And that has really stayed with me in how I talk to my kids about things.

There will be times where if we all get to go out to lunch and that night we're home and my kids we're like, "Can we order in Sushi?" and I'll say, "You know what you guys? We got to go out for Thai this afternoon. It seems a little over indulgent to me that we order in Sushi tonight," and they're like, "Are we poor? Is everything okay?" and I'm just explaining to them, "No, we're not. Nothing's changed since 2 o'clock this afternoon, significantly."

But it's about the value and how I want to spend my money and how I want them to think about, "Do I have what I need? Every once in a while there is something special I want but what do I need?" And that's been a really big lesson in terms of my dad, I remember a typical Bob and Helen story, that's my parent's name, my father always when they travelled and went to a Casino he'd start with a \$100 and once the \$100 was gone, the night was over.

But he would only start with a \$100 and one night they came back to the room so excited and they had a big win and I was like, "Oh my god, what did you do?" They're like, "We went to the bar in the old San Juan hotel and we told our friend Rick behind the bar that we just won a win-fall and so we ordered one Pina Colada with two straws," that's their...

[0:29:15.6]

FT: That's your parents.

[0:29:16.4]

IL: Yeah, they're adorable. But they really, really kept their feet very close to the ground and that's what they taught us.

[0:29:24.7]

FT: Well as I am listening to you, I think the other really fantastic take away, something to maybe bring into your own life as a parent is to not just say no or yes to your kid's financial request but to offer explanation like, "Can we have this?" "No." "Well why?" and actually explain why and I think when you told your kids "We can't have Sushi tonight because it's over indulgent," I mean that's a great way to give meaning to your reasoning.

[0:29:58.3]

IL: Yeah and context too. Listen, my kids live with two actors. We're gypsies and there have been, you know, our life is sort of a rollercoaster. My husband was on a TV show for a long time and so he would get picked up for work when he was going to work on his TV show. There

would always be someone outside waiting to drive him. When we as a family go to the airport, we take the train to the plane to the bus.

There's all of these different lifestyles they're witnessing and so I think for children of people in the entertainment industry it can be then more confusing because the landscape changes so rapidly from time to time or from day to day. They see our friends who have skyrocketed, they are taking us to islands for vacations and then when we go away, we're, depending on where we are it's not a private island. There are just all these things that they are seeing.

And my biggest hope for them and I really had to think so much about my relationship to money when I had the great invitation to come on your show and to really start thinking about it is I want them to just be comfortable with every scenario and I think that comes from knowing who you are and just feeling confident in who you are. We live in New York and there are just so many different ways people are living.

We have friends who have four kids in one bedroom and we have friends who have one child in a four story townhouse. They're seeing a lot of different kinds of stories. We're on the subway all the time and my son is constantly, he want me to give money to every single person who comes through the subway and they always ask me, "Why are you giving to that person and not to that person?" and negotiating urban living I imagine is different than suburban living.

My kids are seeing homeless people daily and we're seeing people in town cars pulling up to the restaurant across the street from us. So it's just a lot to negotiate and navigate emotionally and we talk about it. We really do. We talk about everything and I think giving is, you know, there are days where I just give until I have no more money left in my wallet to give and there are days where certain stories don't ring true to me when someone's pan handling.

But then I think, "Oh my god it doesn't matter. They're pan handling. Things are not good. Maybe it's not as good as the story but guess what? There's a reason for it."

[0:32:38.7]

FT: Those speakers look too white, how could they possibly need my money? Yeah.

[0:32:42.0]

IL: Exactly, but to a kid it is interesting. Like how do you know? And also just making sure, I just want them to see the humanity in every story. Everyone has a story. What happened? Why are they asking? And sometimes people ask really aggressively even can be a little scary and sometimes it's incredibly sad, but whatever the style of asking is really just remembering that the baseline is that we're all humans and we all have to help each other.

[0:33:16.9]

FT: You're making me want to stay in New York a lot longer because I hear you talking about, your children are a little bit older, but I think that's a gift to be able to live your life exposed like that, you have to see how others live. You're not living in your tinted windowed SUV on your way to school and you don't get dropped off everywhere. You have to face everybody and through that comes a lot of, I think, maturity and empathy.

[0:33:44.0]

IL: Yeah, absolutely.

[0:33:45.1]

FT: So then you talked earlier about how as two actors, basically, there's a lot of uncertainty sometimes in your lives. So how have you created financial certainty in your household?

[0:34:01.3]

IL: Oh wait, did we? That's presuming. Do we have financial certainty?

[0:34:08.6]

FT: Maybe I'm presuming. With any person who is working in an industry that changes so often, you know you have to...

[0:34:16.4]

IL: I will tell you, all kidding aside, well my husband and I grew up differently and I think if you have couples on your show at some point, I think there is no mystery to why money can often be the biggest stress point between two people and so I think for us, there's been a lot of learning about how we want to deal with money, how we talk about money but one thing that we both share in common is that we really don't spend more money than we have.

So, we're just realists about it. When we are in a situation where we are making what is a lot of money for us, we save as much as we can. Because I used the word "gypsy" before. That might be a slight exaggeration.

[0:35:05.5]

FT: Maybe that's where I got the idea.

[0:35:07.6]

IL: Yes but we don't know when the next job is going to be. We do not have financial security. Dominic was on a show for seven years, that's a remarkable thing to be on a television series for seven years. But until we have five television shows that are on the air for seven years, we're never going to believe that we're those people. So we definitely save and something my father taught me and I don't know if it's right or not but I've sort of mimicked it is we invest.

We own our apartment and we invest in the stock market but we never look at investments as things we are going to use right away. It is always money that we are putting away and expect to leave it there for a long time and part of that came out of one of the first — I've had some exciting money wins but one of the biggest losses I had is when Sirius Radio first came on the stock market, Howard Stern — it was so news worthy because Howard Stern was going to be a part of it and I had just been on a television series myself and I was meeting with a business

manager who had laid out a portfolio of stock ideas for me, and I was like, “Well I had one,” because I had been hearing all about speaking of radio and how I ended up coming back to radio but I always liked Howard Stern was a real original in terms of how he did radio and that he was going to be on Sirius.

Anyway, I bought it and the stock tanked pretty quickly and it stayed low for a really long time and I sold and lost almost everything from my initial investment and had I just let it linger for many more years and not worried about it because I didn’t even need that money at the time. I just got nervous, it would have been fine.

So I think we really looked at certain investments as being a part of our future lives and our children’s future lives. When we make money we always make sure to put it into our children’s college and education accounts so that no matter what happens, that’s growing for them but really we live within our means and that has kept things stable for us.

[0:37:30.9]

FT: That’s great. Yes looking at investments as just long term investments whether it’s real estate, art, stocks, I think that’s the best approach too.

[0:37:41.2]

IL: Yeah.

[0:37:42.6]

FT: So we have a little bit of time left and maybe not anytime left because I haven’t looked at my clock in a while but I want to wrap here with doing some fill in the blanks.

[0:37:53.1]

IL: Okay.

[0:37:53.5]

FT: Just some really fun zingers starting with: If I won the lottery tomorrow, let's say you won a \$100 million bucks, the first thing I would do is _____.

[0:38:04.8]

IL: You know, I would support organizations that are devoted to helping end world hunger. This is just a passion of mine and this is a separate conversation, I think they are close to 800 million people in the world suffering from hunger. So any organization or person who is devoted to solving that, I would give as much as I could to work on that problem.

[0:38:29.8]

FT: I love that, starting with kids. It breaks my heart to know that kids go to school hungry and kids go days without really getting a nutritious meal and especially when you are growing.

[0:38:42.6]

IL: It's heartbreaking, yeah. In New York City there is an organization that we're really devoted to called the Food Bank of New York, that's one place and then Feed the Hungry, nationally but internationally, the numbers are staggering. So that's not to say that I wouldn't also like to have a slightly larger apartment. We're living in close quarters, which is charming but there are moments where it's less than charming. But in terms of big picture, it would just bring me such joy to be able to impact that epidemic.

[0:39:16.9]

FT: One thing I spend on that makes my life easier or better is _____.

[0:39:21.2]

IL: I order in. I order in, I am not a great cook and even if I were by the time I went to the store and bought in all the ingredients and got home and put them together, I would have it already if I ordered in. It's New York City and I could get food either Vietnamese, Thai, Burmese, Sushi, Chinese, Middle Eastern in six minutes and it's delicious.

[0:39:52.2]

FT: It is. You know, I am you but I am trying to change things up a little bit. I don't know if it's just because I am nesting right now with being eight months pregnant, but I started to subscribe to these companies that send you a box of ingredients within the menus.

[0:40:09.2]

IL: Yes, I did that. I won't mention the name because there's a bunch of them and they're all delicious but by day four I was like, "Okay, I have seven turnips left in my thing and it's fantastic. They can be labor intensive and maybe because they give you so many beautiful ingredients. It's like opening up a box of art supplies, it's beautiful.

[0:40:34.4]

FT: And then it's painted by numbers.

[0:40:36.7]

IL: Right and for me, and it is amazing and I do have to say cooking for me as a familial thing, when we all do it together, it's heaven just the idea. But the truth is when I let my kids cook, the amount of time that I am cleaning my kitchen because of the fun they get to have, it's a disaster. So basically, I am in awe of people who are great cooks. I am in awe of people who do it every night but really, that's my guilty pleasure and it really does give me more time.

We have limited time at night between homework and how much everybody has going on, when I am by myself in the kitchen making dinner happen, I'm not with them so ordering in allows me more time that is just really focused on my family and that's a really lucky thing.

[0:41:32.6]

FT: Yes, time is, I think of equal value in some ways to money maybe even more.

[0:41:41.5]

IL: Yep.

[0:41:42.5]

FT: All right, your biggest splurge. What do you treat yourself?

[0:41:47.1]

IL: Massage, every once in a while. I don't splurge very often. I really don't. I'm not saying this, I mean, it's such a ridiculous American thing to say but I should probably do it more because when I am a more balanced person — I've started to meditate such baby steps when I can in the morning just to settle myself a little bit. That doesn't take any money. That's an app and a closed door, but on a rare occasion that I get a massage, it's heaven and I feel really different and it stays with me for a while.

[0:42:32.1]

FT: You're reminding me to sign up for a couple of massages before my due date.

[0:42:35.6]

IL: You have a lot to do.

[0:42:37.4]

FT: I have a lot on my to-do list.

[0:42:38.9]

IL: I'm going to email you when we're done because first of all you're getting ready for Dancing with the Stars and you need a massage. I mean this is a lot.

[0:42:46.3]

FT: Not to mention running my business. Yeah, it's a little busy.

[0:42:49.0]

IL: Yes, but that's the easy part.

[0:42:51.0]

FT: Oh yeah and then I'll have a baby, another one to boot.

[0:42:53.8]

IL: Yeah, I am so happy for you.

[0:42:56.3]

FT: Thank you. Thank you so much for being on show. I could talk to you — I lost track of time and so I think that's a good thing.

[0:43:04.9]

IL: You know I wanted to say one thing because I hear on your show this I am So Money and I think that you can use it or not use it, but I really thought about it and I think for me, what I really came to is the reason I'm So Money is I have had times where I have made a lot of money and

times where I have not made a lot of money and what I realized is I can be happy either way when I am surrounded by people that I love.

And that took me a very long time to really own but it's true and once you know you can be okay without, everything is easier. It's fantastic when you're with but it's also really important to know that you can survive when you have less than and in these vulnerable times, economically and politically and what's going on with the world, just knowing that is a comforting thing.

[0:44:02.4]

FT: Thank you for sharing that with us. I didn't want to take up more of your time by asking why you are So Money, but that was such an honest and real answer. We so appreciate that and also just all the time you spent with us so far, Ilana. Everybody should check out Little Known Facts, it's a fantastic podcast and I'm just jealous you get all these amazing celebrity guests that I don't know if I was in a room with these people, I think I might just explode.

[0:44:33.6]

IL: I know, I know. When Mathew Broderick left, I was like, "Sarah Jessica Parker is very lucky." I mean, I have an amazing husband, but I do each time someone comes in I was like, "That guy is amazing too. Bryan Greenberg, John Hick," — yeah it's endless. The list has been pretty fantastic and I hope people will listen and enjoy it and I look forward to your fans being my fans and vice versa. That would be really amazing.

[END]