Fox Rothschild Podcast

The Presumption of Innocence Podcast Series: Episode 22

Reclaiming Purpose: A Transformative Journey Through Addiction, Rehab and Prison

Featuring Matt Adams of Fox Rothschild LLP and Jeff Grant, co-founder Progressive Prison Ministries Inc. and GrantLaw, PLLC

Adams: Hi everyone, and welcome to "The Presumption of Innocence," a podcast brought to you by the White-Collar Criminal Defense and Regulatory Compliance practice at Fox Rothschild. I'm your host for today, Matthew Adams. I'm also one of the co-chairs of the practice group. And I'm joined today by Jeff Grant, who is the co-founder of Progressive Prison Ministries Incorporated and is also a recently readmitted lawyer.

And I guess we'll start there, Jeff, because as I introduce you as a recently readmitted lawyer, I think we need to track back and get your story. And I think our audience needs to understand where you've gone and where you are today. So, let's start where you've been. Tell us your story and how you first encountered the criminal justice system. Not as a lawyer, but I dare say as a client.

Grant: Thanks Matt. It's really great to be here and I'm really glad you didn't bury the lede, because ultimately I hope that this is a story of hope and triumph. At least that's the power of example that I try to be to the white-collar community. Because that's what they need. When I, uh, first got indicted, and that was in 2004, it had been kind of a long road, maybe a decade of decline, mostly occasioned by prescription opioid abuse. I was one of the early victims of the opioid epidemic, although I would never characterize myself as a victim.

And certainly, the prescriptions I was getting from doctors, which were many a week, by the way ... not only was I complicit, but I was probably manipulative. I got caught in the throes of that and I would've done anything for the drugs. I manipulated them into doing what I wanted.

I was a lawyer at the time.

Adams: So, you're practicing law. Unfortunately, the statistics bear out, too many lawyers find themselves in the throes of substance abuse. It's a statistically proven phenomenon.

Grant: Yep.

Adams: Which is troubling to our profession. What's the nature of your practice?

You're working in the criminal justice system, correct?

Grant: At that time, I was mostly general counsel to successful, family-owned real estate organizations. And I was their fixer, in the best sense of the word. I was a Michael Clayton kind of fixer, not a Michael Cohen kind of fixer.

Adams: Thank you for qualifying.

Grant: It's a tough one these days.

And my clients were inordinately successful, but also got into a lot of trouble for all kinds of things. In particular, there was one who had a multi-hundred-million-dollar business with tens of thousands of real estate units and got indicted, and I became the paymaster general counsel to this very complex white-collar case that went on for about five years. We had hired almost 20 different New York City law firms. And some of the names that we hired back then in the early nineties are legends in the field, so I'm sure you know them: Stanley Arkin and that kind of people.

And I got a crash course and an indoctrination into what it was to be the general counsel for people who were going through those kinds of problems. And it was perfect for my disposition and for my intellect and everything, and I thought I would make a living from that. Little did I know at that point that I was heading downhill myself, because of the prescription opioids.

Adams: While dealing with your own personal demons, you got sucked into a life of living on the edge.

Grant: Yeah. I was making a lot of money and I did not have the life skills to deal with it. So, I was spending even more than I was making. And a lot of that was just bad decision-making. Probably because of underlying trauma and bipolar disorder with which I am diagnosed, but also self-medicating with the drugs.

Adams: The essence of white-collar crime, right, is that crossing over the rubicon from the legitimate to the illegitimate.

Grant: Yes.

Adams: It's using legitimate business for illegitimate means. And unlike a murder or a classic case of drug offenses or some sort of street crime, the white-collar crime is always where you've gone too far. There's a point at which you cross over and now you are on the other side of what was ostensibly legitimate conduct into illegitimate.

And your story that you're describing, I think from a white-collar practitioner's perspective is like just about every one of my clients. When they're charged and they're coming to me saying, I got in too deep. You got in too deep, right?

Grant: I'd love to tell you I'm happy to be the poster boy for the Matt Adams' world of practice, but I am. I recognize that. And there's a lot of responsibility in that given what my story arc is. But at the time, it's not just that I should have known better. Because anybody who's raised responsibly or who's raised with a good set of values should know better. But I really should have known better. I was in that business.

Adams: Do as I say, but not as I do. I mean, you're dispensing legal advice, but at the same time ignoring your own advice.

Grant: I wasn't ignoring my own advice. My perceptions were so distorted that there was no way for me to actually understand that this could be me.

I was in denial. I had the distortions of perceptions, distortions of thinking. And the prescriptions were just making it worse exponentially. There was no way for me to climb out. There was no safe ground anywhere. And in this crazy thinking that I had -- and that a lot of white-collar guys have -- is

somehow I thought that the solution was going to be for me to build the business bigger so that my problems would be a smaller portion of the problem. Never did it cross my mind that maybe I could simplify: Move to a smaller house, stop spending money, become more right size, become more humble. It was just the opposite.

It was just grandiosity, just all over the place.

Adams: Give us an example of the out-of-control lifestyle that you started living.

Grant: My family and I, we went on probably five major vacations a year. And there were shopping trips. I mean, we didn't go hiking, we didn't go sailing. We basically hit a town. We went to the beach sometimes, but we would hit a town and we would go shopping. I had my ex-wife and my two daughters, and we would all go shopping. And what shopping was, was basically we would, say, roll into Beverly Hills, we'd stay at the Chateau Marmont and then go shopping. And I would go sit in the daddy chair and the young women who worked there were experts in plying people like me into spending a lot of money, and I would whip out the Black American Express card and they would give me drinks and they had no idea that I was already hopped up on Demerol.

And I would pass out on the daddy chair and walk outta the store, spending $20,000 on junk, or on kids and women's clothing and then go on to the next one. It was insane. And this was like five major trips a year doing that kind of thing.

Adams: And then how did it all catch up to you?

Grant: What happened was a couple of things. The first is that I dipped into the client escrow account. Because as things just fell apart, I wasn't able to keep it together anymore. And that was just a deal with the devil. That was just waiting for the end to come.

And there was an investigation not long after that. And I spent about two or three years trying to defend myself and save my law license. And in the midst of that came 9/11. And I took 9/11 very badly. Maybe it was because I was already on the brink. Maybe it was because of the drugs. But a couple of months and my business was in the process of failing. And I suspected that the end would come eventually, or probably sooner than eventually.

So, in a couple of months after 9/11, they were giving out these SBA loans.

Now, Matt, I have to tell you that for 18 years of my story, the sexy part of the story was not the fact that I lied on an SBA loan application. No one even knew what that meant until the pandemic came. So, I would tell my story, but was anyone interested in the fact that there was a disaster loan or that I lied on a loan application? No.

Adams: We've had numerous episodes on "The Presumption of Innocence" directed about the enormous prosecutorial effort around. the PPP program, the ERTC program.

Grant: I am the third person in the Southern District of New York who was prosecuted for an SBA disaster loan fraud post-9/11. And, you know what the trajectory is, like the early people wind up going to prison and then maybe later on there are civil matters, and then they don't necessarily result in criminal matters.

I was the third one sentenced.

Adams: You were, at that time, the poster child. You were the equivalent of the guy who went out and bought a yacht with his PPP money or a Ferrari, or a Rolex.

Grant: I was the equivalent of that, that's right. I wasn't even cognizant enough to do that. That's how out of it I was. I knew as a professional that you don't commingle the money. I would advise people every day as to what to do with their government funds and everything. But for me, I wasn't even capable of keeping those thoughts together.

Adams: The addiction took over.

Grant: The addiction was rampant.

Adams: Sometimes white-collar crime occurs and it's motivated by greed. Sometimes, white-collar crime occurs and it's motivated by circumstance and by being down and out and needing to try to pull yourself up.

But I would say a large portion of the time, white-collar crime is motivated by a disease of the mind, like substance abuse. Like some sort of mental illness. Some sort of trauma. From a historical event. Would you agree with me?

Grant: A hundred percent. And in my case, it was. Desperate people commit desperate acts.

And I was clinging to any semblance of survival whatsoever. I knew the ship was going down. I just wanted to be the guy in the Titanic who was at the top going down.

Adams: Leonardo DiCaprio.

Grant: Exactly. Who by the way, stayed at the Chateau Marmont with us. So, that's just the way my life was rolling back then.

Adams: So, here you are, getting financially out of control. Your substance abuse has a strangle hold on your life.

Grant: Yes.

Adams: Your spending is out of control. You're under investigation by ethics authorities.

Grant: Yes.

Adams: Because you've now commingled and dabbled into client funds that were held in your trust account. And you go and you take this SBA disaster loan. Was that act sort of your Hail Mary pass?

Grant: Yes. There's no question, that's exactly what it was. I've never used that term for it before, but that's perfect. It's exactly what it was.

Adams: The clock is at zero. You see some glimmer of hope in the end zone and you just chucked it up there.

Grant: Right. And what I didn't know was that the game was already over. I mean, a Hail Mary pass after the game is over doesn't work. But there was no way I could have saved anything.

Adams: So, what were you charged with?

Grant: I was charged with wire fraud, money laundering. The wire fraud is kind of obvious.

The money laundering was primarily based upon the fact that in order that to keep the firm afloat in its last days I put a lot of the expenses on my personal credit cards. And when the SBA money came in, it seemed logical to me. Why pay 24% interest on credit cards when I can pay 3% on an SBA loan, and I paid off my personal credit cards.

Adams: And let me guess, the SBA loan was earmarked for certain expenses and they weren't your personal credit cards?

Grant: It was for operating expenses only.

Adams: There couldn't be a more direct parallel to what we are seeing as perhaps the largest white-collar criminal investigation in the history of the United States that's going on right now after the pandemic.

Grant: Yes.

Adams: I mean, there could not be a more direct parallel. So, talk to us about the day you learned you're charged. I mean, as is the case in most white-collar criminal prosecutions, you get a sense for when it's coming. Did you know?

Grant: I did not know.

Adams: So, no self-surrender? You're ... Cold knock on the door?

Grant: Actually, let me just put a couple sentences in before. I had already resigned my law license because of the co-mingling. I had already tried to commit suicide with an overdose of the pills. I took 40 Demerol and tried to kill myself. It did not work, obviously.

Adams: Thank God.

Grant: Thank God. I spent seven weeks in a drug and alcohol rehab center. And then I came into AA and I was clean and sober and living an AA life. And we had moved into an apartment because I lost the house pretty shortly thereafter.

And at about 20 months of sobriety, I got a phone call from a federal agent. And he told me there was a warrant out for my arrest. He was a cool guy. Nothing alarmist about it. And it took me completely by surprise. I was 20 months sober and in such denial that there was no way that I was prepared for that phone call.

But as soon as the phone call got made, it just came rushing back to me. And I said to him, "Let me call a friend who's a lawyer. We'll make arrangements to come down and turn myself in and I'll plead guilty."

Adams: You said that on the phone.

Grant: I said that on the phone. Yep.

Adams: Probably to the chagrin of your lawyer friend.

Grant: In a way, but I already knew with just a rush of awareness at that point that as a disbarred lawyer, I wasn't gonna be putting on much of a defense. And I was done. Whatever life had for me, it wasn't looking backwards.

I was ready to accept responsibility. Remember, I was sober already. And I was already accepting responsibility and cleaning the wreckage of the past. And I was done. And as it turned out for me, everyone who touched my case from the prosecutor's side -- the marshals, the prosecutors -- everybody treated me with incredible respect and dignity.

It was like, but for the grace of God go I. And everyone there knew that if this hadn't been a 9/11-related loan and we weren't still within the kind of two-year bubble or three- year bubble after 9/11 that, you know, all right, so I lied on a mortgage application and that kind of could have happened maybe to anybody. I don't know the answer to that really, but everybody treated me with respect. And I was very happy I fell on my sword. And I just didn't have to have any of the trauma of maintaining the lie.

Adams: So, you're charged, you go in, you self-surrender. How quickly do you plead guilty?

Grant: My plea was fast. That was 2004. And then I had to wait two years to get sentenced, because that happened to be during the year that the Booker case had been decided. And there were no sentencings really in the federal system, while they've tried to figure out how to move from the sentencing guidelines being mandatory to being advised.

Adams: To advisory. Yeah.

Grant: And nothing happened. There was nothing I could do other than wait.

Adams: So, what was your loss calculation, and where did you stand on the guidelines when you threw yourself at the mercy of the sentencing court?

Grant: My loan was for $247,000.

I think the guidelines that time were roughly 21 to 27, in there somewhere. I don't remember. But close to that. The concepts of forfeiture that are going on right now didn't exist back then, really. So, it was a straight restitution case.

They didn't come after my money. They didn't do anything like that. I wrote a check, basically, I wrote a check. My restitution was repaid. And that's the crazy part because I didn't even need this money, really. It was all insane. I wrote a check, and then I was sentenced in early 2006. And I reported to Allenwood Low.

The camp at Allenwood had closed a year before. And I thought I was gonna go to a camp, I was security level zero, but I was designated to a low, and I reported to Allenwood Low on Easter Sunday of 2006.

Adams: And what was your sentence? How many years?

Grant: 18 months. So, that was the late Judge Pauley, and he did give me a downward variance.

Adams: And was that on the strength of your recovery from substance abuse?

Grant: Oh, yeah, definitely. It was all about AA. I had taken to AA like a duck takes to water. I had sponsees, I had sponsors. Probably 50 people from my home group in Greenwich, Connecticut came and supported me in that courtroom. When I think back on it, to have found a loving, caring community to have accepted me when no one else would, was the greatest gift of my life at that point.

Adams: Talk about a testament to advocacy, right? In terms of the nature of the offense and the nature of the offender...a lot of times as white-collar lawyers, we are the only thing that comes between a draconian sentence and some level of mercy by our exercise of empathy and compassion, but at the same time, taking an intellectual gladiator approach at sentencing with whatever facts are presented to us. And so, your lawyer had the successful substance abuse recovery that you had been involved in up to that point and convinced the court to go downward.

Grant: That's right. And there was no construct here of what was good for my case or good for my sentencing. I was just presenting the reality of my situation. I was on death's door and I got a second chance at life, and that's it. I appreciate now that I gave them a lot to work with, but that wasn't the plan. I wasn't thinking about that.

Adams: I'm sure your lawyer was.

Grant: I'm positive my lawyer was.

Adams: So, you go in, you're designated to a low security facility, not a camp.

Grant: Yes.

Adams: What was that like?

Grant: Well, I certainly thought it was going to be terrible, and in many respects it was.

Adams: It wasn't the Beverly Hills Hotel.

Grant: I've never been to the Beverly Hills Hotel, but I assume it's not the Beverly Hills Hotel.

Adams: Those places you were staying with the black card.

Grant: That's right. It wasn't any of those.

Adams: It wasn't any of those.

Grant: But it was okay. It was what I needed at the time. I needed consequences. And in many ways, it was a year to work on myself. A little over 13 months I actually spent behind bars.

And in the low, you know, there's controlled movement and there's bars. I was in a barrack, but there are bars on the windows and there's a fence and razor wire and dogs, and, you know, it's a real prison.

But what I got to meet was people from other socioeconomic situations who I would never have gotten to meet before and understand them as real people, and as human tragedies, and as people

with these complex stories. And it was a year of just amazing discovery. And I got to work on my mind and my spirit and my body and come out, I think, a better person. Certainly, someone with more gravitas. The smirk had been completely wiped from my face at that point. And I came out, like most white-collar guys, I came out thinking on some level that, okay, the world is gonna reopen to me and I'm just gonna go about business as usual.

Adams: Did it?

Grant: No. My ex-wife had already kicked me out. All of that I had to navigate. And I had met a wonderful woman in AA and we were together. I'm married to her now, we just celebrated our 14th wedding anniversary. But, visiting me in prison was way more than she could handle. She's a very sensitive, beautiful woman, but seeing someone you love in a visiting room in a uniform and suffered count in front of her. And, I was okay with me having the consequences, but, you know, it affected my family and affected my friends, the few friends I had left.

And it affected Lynn -- my wife, then my girlfriend but now my wife -- in unimaginable ways. And I think that if we ever get to a conversation about, you know, alternative sentencing or anything like that, seeing the families as victims is just such a rich topic that really should be discussed.

Adams: So, you get out after serving your term. You are, I can imagine, trying to rebuild your life. You don't have your law license.

Grant: I don't have my law license. But as, long as I reduced my standard of living low enough, I had enough residuals from my law firm and my businesses back then to survive.

Adams: Which is something, because a lot of people don't.

Grant: No. And especially now. Certainly, this was, 16, 17 years ago. Things have changed a lot since then. But I started to volunteer, first at the rehab that I went to and then some criminal justice organizations. And I loved it. I love giving back. I love being of service.

It had direct relationship to my sobriety and to what I was doing in AA. And I decided that I wanted to reach deeper into this well, and I applied to Union Theological Seminary to become a minister. And it was the first time I had ever written my whole story out, including prison and the lessons I learned and everything that happened, and they accepted me. And for the next three years, I attended seminary full-time.

And in 2012, I was awarded a Master of Divinity, later became ordained. And I worked as a minister, first in churches, doing, you know, worship rotation and pastoral counseling and everything else and directing their prison ministries. I did that for a few years until we started a ministry to support white-collar criminals and their families, just so that people didn't have to go through the same thing that I went through. I went through it alone, really in isolation. There was nobody to talk to.

Adams: So, that's Progressive Prison Ministries.

Grant: It is.

Adams: And so, the Progressive Prison Ministries that has evolved out of your life experience and the rise and fall of Jeff Grant as a man. What is that doing today?

Grant: I would say primarily what we are is a support group, very much in the standard of AA, because that's what I know. I've been to over ten thousand AA meetings, so I'm pretty familiar with it. And it was just dumb luck, in a way, that technology had advanced to the point where we could reach people on a Zoom predecessor and ask people to join us wherever they were. All over the country, all over the world, each in our little boxes online, like in a Zoom meeting. Or like, at the time, we called it "Hollywood Squares" or "The Brady Bunch."

And adoption was a problem because no one really knew the technology at the time. But we knew that -- unlike an AA meeting, where pretty much you go to AA with people who are in your town, you meet in a church basement with people in your town -- white-collar was all over the country or all over the world. And we had to find a way to bring people together and out of isolation and into community.

We've been doing it over seven years, and we have all kinds of other programs: Peer mentoring and newsletters and retreats and... all free, all volunteer, given freely. There's no dues or fees. We do accept donations, but we don't have a lot of overhead.

And that's just been the greatest blessing of my life. And I can pretty much divide the support group into two timeframes. There was before the article came out in the New Yorker about us, and then August 30th of 2001, when Evan Osnos wrote a beautiful article about life after white-collar crime and featured our support group in it.

And once that happened, it like turbocharged the support group. It was just a flood of people. And now we've been able to help over 700 people get through the criminal justice process and join our support groups. So, every Monday night at 7:00 p.m. Eastern. That's what we do.

Adams: Am I properly summing up your message, as succinctly as I possibly can, that life can go on after a touch with the criminal justice system in a white-collar case?

Grant: Yeah. Life does go on. And the sooner you accept the reality of your situation, the more serenity that you can have and the less suffering. Everybody lives so long now that you get to live two or three different lives. It's just inevitable. And everyone's gonna suffer some kind of loss, whether it be a loss of a child, or cancer, or divorce. It's just inevitable. And here we have people who have lived one life, generally a life of privilege of some sort, but then are cast into an entirely new place in the world where maybe not so much privilege anymore, or at least the way we define privilege within our kind of society.

And they've gotta move from a material way of life to a more spiritual way of life. And that's a tough haul for a lot of people. But I think interestingly, anyway, to ask a hedge fund manager, to ask him, "All right, so look, in your second life, what you're gonna be is a janitor."

You can understand what a fall from grace or fall from glory that might seem to them. But there's the two separate lives. If you asked a janitor and you said, "In your second life you're gonna be a hedge fund manager," they probably wouldn't have a problem with it. So, it's really just the expectations and how you accept your circumstances as they are today.

And most people are clinging, like Third Noble Truth of Buddhism, attachment is suffering. They're attached to their old way of life. And it's hard for them to let go, even after everything they've been through, it's hard for them to let go. But those who can let go can embrace an entirely new life that is beautiful and it's one of, generally, service and of giving onto others instead of being so self-absorbed, whether that be pathological or environmental or whatever.

Adams: One of the things I experience in my practice is this phenomenon of overcharging. And there's a lot of good people that make mistakes and find themselves in the untenable position of having to defend themselves, both for what they did and for what they didn't do.

Grant: Yes.

Adams: Sounds like your group would be really helpful for those types. Because that rollercoaster is one of the hardest things to navigate as a zealous advocate for somebody who stands accused. Because the end of the day, there's nobody else between you and the power of the government than your lawyer.

Grant: That's right.

Adams: And, where you might be willing to acknowledge you did one thing, but you are charged with two and three and four and five other things that you might not have done because of this phenomenon of overcharging.

Grant: Yeah.

Adams: I do understand it because I've experienced it with clients. But I can't quite fathom what that would do and how that would tear somebody apart inside. Where you're faced with this choice of, do I dig in and fight knowing I may have done something wrong? But they're asking me to admit to something well beyond what I know I did.

Grant: I think that's largely true. I think there's a large element of that, but I do think that, in some ways, that's a lawyer's perspective. And it's hard for me to divorce myself from that perspective, obviously, because of what I do for a living.

But I think the acceptance is that, what we've done, people who've been prosecuted for white-collar crimes, is that we have to accept that we've exposed weakness to people in power. And they are going to exploit it for their own benefit. And that doesn't have to be a prosecutor. If you were a Betamax person, then you know Betamax didn't work and VCRs did. Somebody's gonna win and somebody's gonna lose. If you're a hedge fund guy and you showed weakness, there's another hedge fund guy who's more than willing to take away your book of business and take whatever you've got.

It's a dog-eat-dog world. And once you come into the system -- by the way, it doesn't have to be the legal system, it could be the medical system, there's a lot of systems that kind of do something similar -- but you come into the legal system, there is an ambitious prosecutor there who is going to do whatever he or she wants to do to benefit themselves. And they most likely do not care how it affects you. And that's not all. I am ever optimistic and have faith that there are merciful people in the criminal justice world and in the legal world who wanna do the right thing. But my experience is that most of them are gonna do whatever they're gonna do for their best interest. And that means overcharge. That means do whatever they're gonna do. And we, meaning people prosecuted for white-collar crimes, are fundamentally roadkill.

So, what I tell people generally -- and I hope this is still on topic -- is that maybe the best you can do is just take a lesson from Muhammad Ali, okay? It's the rope-a-dope: Lay on the ropes for seven or eight rounds and let them punch themselves out. Because they are gonna come at you with everything they possibly can. And whatever you've got left at the end, then you can come out and reconnect with your life.

And the very best lawyers I've met -- you're in that category, Matt -- appreciate the fact that this is a real-life human tragedy unfolding. And that what we get to do at our very highest, best use as lawyers is try to shepherd people through the system so that the operation is successful. So, it's the opposite of the operation successful, but the patient dying. If the patient dies, the operation doesn't make a difference. But I do think that's the acceptance part.

Adams: Yeah. I mean, this is some powerful stuff that we're talking about today, Jeff.

And I'm reminded of some really phenomenal cases I've read authored by a recently retired New Jersey Supreme Court Justice, who I happened to be in the presence of recently. There's a common theme in those writings which really reflect on the human nature of the criminal justice system and the human toll the criminal justice system takes. And that our laws and the presumption of innocence at its core is designed around preserving that common humanity.

It really is. There's no other legal system like it in the world. But too often, the easy or the expedient, because it's either politically useful or populous kind of thinking to be tough on crime ... at the same time, everything about our legal system, every basic tenant, like the presumption of innocence, like due process, is predicated around the humanity of the person who stands accused.

And I'm of the firm belief that being a criminal defense lawyer of any kind is one of the most noble professions that there can be because of the fact that you put your biases aside. We represent people who are unpopular by their very nature. And we stand between them, and often the only people, standing between them and just that awesome power of government.

So, to hear your perspective today on your own experience, this really reinforces the zeal that I take with my own practice. Because, at the end of the day, we are all somebody like you during your ordeal has. Your lawyer is left to their skills and the facts that you present about your sobriety and your journey to use those talents to articulate a basis for there to be some mercy.

Because this is a human. This is not some cog on an assembly line that is just waiting to have justice dispensed. And I think the perspective you bring in sharing your experiences so candidly, and I can't thank you enough for that, really hammer that point home.

I wanna end on a happy note because I introduced you as a newly readmitted attorney at the outset of our discussion today. So, talk to us about that.

Grant: In 2018, I did put my application in to get it readmitted to the New York Bar, and that took about three years. Probably a little delayed because of the pandemic. But on May 5th of 2021, I got the notice that I had been readmitted, and I knew exactly what I wanted to do. I mean, I put my application in because I understood much of what you just articulated. But people who are being prosecuted and their families go through a lot more issues than just the straight-line defense of the criminal charges. And because I had been general counsel to people who had been charged with crimes, I knew that there are bankruptcy issues and real estate issues and partnership issues and divorce issues and all kinds of issues. And for many of these people and these families, they go to the criminal lawyers who they have. And the criminal lawyers don't necessarily have rich experience in C-suite kind of law. They're specialists for the most part.

And I said, what if I do everything but the criminal law for someone who's being prosecuted, everything, but. I'll become their go-to person to be able to help them navigate all of that. And to be a lawyer, to be their advocate, but also to be their resource generator.

Adams: What types of things are you doing for those folks?

Grant: Sometimes I'm helping them wind their businesses down. Sometimes I am negotiating with the regulators, for example. Some of these are highly regulated industries and it's not necessarily, for example, that there's a white-collar criminal case, but there's a companion SEC case, for example. There's a lot of different regulators and a lot of different issues that are going on at the state, local level, and at the federal level. And they need someone who understands their business and where they're going.

I also help them with a plan that looks, kind of, 10 years out. What are we gonna do here? Because at a criminal lawyer's best, in my experience, what they've done is they've gotten them to sentencing. But there's not much for the criminal lawyer to do after that unless, maybe there's a compassionate release motion or something. But then it's Robert Redford at the end of the movie "The Candidate." He's elected, then he stares at the camera and says, "What do I do now?"

These people are let off and they have complicated issues that last them maybe a lifetime, or certainly a long time.

Adams: And issues you know all too well yourself.

Grant: Exactly. And tax issues. There's almost nobody who's going to help them weigh how to utilize their resources in a way that is going to be best for them in the long term. At it's very best, what I'd like is my clients to be able to look back 10 years later and not have to say, "You know, if I only had known then what I know now, I would've done things differently." And since I know what they're gonna go through and I have resources to help, we can help them make better decisions at the front end so that they get a better result at the back end.

Adams: Fascinating stuff, Jeff. I can't thank you enough for being here with us today. We could probably go on talking for days about your experiences. But I think if anything, one of the biggest takeaways from our discussion today is the hope that you provide to folks who might be going through a process right now that feels like it's the end of their lives.

Grant: That's right.

Adams: To people that feel like they are that Sisyphus pushing the ball up the mountain with only seconds before it rolls back on them. I speak with those people all the time, and it's very difficult to often engage them, because the anxiety almost consumes their ability to reason. One of the most significant challenges that I see as a defense lawyer is getting your client to not focus on the cascade of horribles blowing up around them but instead to get them specifically focused on aiding and assisting in their defense.

Grant: That's right.

Adams: I think the perspectives that you bring to that process are invaluable, and I can't thank you enough. I can't congratulate you enough for your journey, both with your sobriety and your reinstatement as a lawyer in New York. I really value our friendship and can't thank you enough for being here on "The Presumption of Innocence."

That's all the time that we have, and we'll see you next time.

Grant: Thank you so much, Matt.

Adams: Take care.