Q1: [00:00] And -- Yeah, (inaudible) in Brazil. But Barneys has like a whole World Cup collection.

GARY DAKIN: Oh, I can see that. I was there the other day. Huge sale right now.

Q1: Hi!

Q2: OK, so we’re all good. Hold on. We’re rolling, and I’m going to give you a cue.

Q1: OK. Here we are in the New York City office of Ford Models. We’re here with Gary Dakin, who is the head of the plus division, and [FM2?], which is our men’s commercial division, and we’re going to ask him a couple questions. Okey-dokey. So, how’d you come to the modeling business, Gary?

DAKIN: When I was 19, I started working in the business as a model, basically, in St. Croix. I was bartending, and somebody asked me if I wanted to be on a commercial the next day, and I did. And then I went back to Massachusetts, did some print work, and found that it’s a great industry for me, but I prefer to be on the other side.

Q1: Oh. [01:00] Do we have pictures of you we can see?

DAKIN: We do not, but my mother does.
Q1: So, how long have you been at Ford, and in the industry, and --

DAKIN: I’ve been in the industry for about 20 years. I’ve been at Ford -- it’ll be 12 years July 14th, Bastille Day, in 2010. Briefly at other agencies, but Ford’s been my home for 12.

Q1: So, did you know Eileen? Did you know Jerry?

DAKIN: I do. Jerry and Eileen were huge parts of Ford when I came to Ford. Katie was at the helm already, but Jerry and Eileen were very present. Jerry taught me to tie a bowtie the day I got married, you know? It’s -- And just, Eileen -- very funny Eileen anecdotes always, all the time, you know? They were just a big presence here, and it was -- it was amazing to have them around and to learn from people like them.

Q1: What’s your best memory of Eileen?

DAKIN: My best memory of Eileen is of me rollerblading into the offices on Green Street, and [02:00] her looking at me, and she’s like, “Take those off. There’s going to be a lawsuit,” and I said, “Eileen, don’t worry. If I fall, I’m not going to sue you.” And she said, “No, I’m going to sue you for ruining my floors.”

(laughter)
Q1: Oh, she’s so...

DAKIN: Very Eileen.

Q1: Very Eileen. Very Eileen. So, what, if any, advice did they give you about being in the fashion profession?

DAKIN: I don’t know if they gave me as much. I think they were always very supportive, and kind of always pushed everyone to be their best, and do their best. I think I got my -- my best advice from anybody -- it would be Katie. You know, I always keep the book The Giving Tree on my desk, and that’s something that always just meant a lot to me. And it was funny. Katie reinforced that one day, and she’s like, “Why do you have that book on your desk?” And I said, “That’s just who I am,” and she’s like, “Every agent should have that book on their desk,” she’s like, “because you have to give and give and give and give, and alternate.” Alter-- It changes as the model [03:00] grows, as the division grows, as you as an agent grows. What you end up giving definitely changes, so it’s a very simple message, but I definitely think every agent needs to live by that book.

Q1: How would you describe your role as an agent?

DAKIN: As an agent, you are a father, you are a brother, you are a boyfriend, you are therapist, you are everything to these men and women. They need you in different capacities
at different times, and you have to be willing to be there for them twenty-four-seven, helping get their mortgage, helping walk down the aisle, helping them through a divorce, and welcoming a child, you know? But that’s just the personal stuff -- you know, on top of our day-to-day. So we have our nine to six, and then we have our six to nine, right back at it on the other side.

Q1: Right. Yeah, I know. It’s definitely not -- It is a twenty-four-seven --

DAKIN: It’s a lifestyle. It’s not a career. It’s a lifestyle.

Q1: And do you get particularly close to the models in --

DAKIN: You do. You get -- You develop special bonds with certain people. [04:00] Crystal Renn is my daughter. Over the years, you know, [Stacey Simpkins?] was a dear friend, you know? It’s -- So many of the girls and men have come through and meant so much to me. And others -- it’s work, you know? So it’s great. You don’t have to have that bond with everybody, but when you do it’s never forced, and it can be very special.

Q1: What’s the -- What do you consider the biggest challenge in today’s world of being an agent?

DAKIN: I think the biggest challenge nowadays is getting there first. Having the best product obviously always helps, but
in a world that’s so technologically advanced, it’s always -- you’re always wondering, “Who’s going to respond via blackmail -- via Blackberry at 10 in the morning or, 10 at night?” I think the challenge is making sure you’re out there first, and you have strong relationships. Building the talent is amazing, and that’s something Ford knows how to do, and we’ve always [05:00] known how. It’s -- It’s getting a jump on your competitor.

Q1: So, let me see what else. When you were coming up through the ranks -- any fashion industry icons? Any --

DAKIN: Coming up and growing up wanting to be a part of this industry -- I mean, Linda Evangelista made me want to work at an agency, you know? It just -- I remember being young and being in Massachusetts, and seeing her in that issue of Vogue when it was all plaids, and she had the red bob, and -- and thinking to myself, “I have to do this.” Like, “I have to be a part of this somehow.” Brooke Shields, always, always, always. I think maybe that’s part of my love for Crystal, with those eyebrows. It’s fun working with the icons of tomorrow. I think that’s even more exciting than -- You know, meeting Elaine Irwin kind of blew me away, Stephanie Seymour blew me away a little bit, but working [06:00] with these girls who are going to become icons -- to me, that’s much more important than
meeting somebody that -- You know, I met Eileen. I worked with Eileen. So these girls are amazing, but none of them would be who they are if it weren’t for Eileen and Jerry. So those are my icons.

Q1: And Crystal talked somewhat about the distinctions in body type, and her hope that there’s -- that the labels kind of fall away. Are there any particular challenges while we still have those labels?

DAKIN: I definitely think there are challenges while we have the labels, because people don’t understand that beauty should just be beauty, you know? Everybody, like -- We’re -- “Labels are for soup cans,” as Warhol said. But unfortunately, everybody has to put a label onto something, and I think that, in one way, helped us break through the ceiling, and -- because it was like, “Wow, a plus model!” The word needs to go away, you know, because it -- [07:00] it makes people that are 8s and 10s and 12s feel like, “Oh, there’s no place for me.” And those are -- The supermodels of the ’80s and ’90s were 8s and 10s. So it’s interesting to see that now there are all these labels on it. It’s great we’ve got it there, but at the end of the day, Crystal will go up against any other girl in the straight-size division at any other agency, and probably beat them. So I think giving the girl a chance by just calling her a
model, and not immediately knocking her down a notch -- because I think that’s all it’s used for -- You know, I was talking to her the other night on the phone, and -- It’s definitely a reach, but, you know, there was a time when only certain people could drink out of certain water fountains. There was also a time when only certain models could be in certain magazines, and black women were not allowed to be in American Vogue. Now we’re having plus girls, and African American women, and Asian women, and women of all races and sizes now. So we need to get rid of the labels so they can do everything else. [08:00]

Q1: And your sense is that this moment is not a fad -- it’s not ephemeral -- that this moment is a trend?

DAKIN: I’ve been in this division for 12 years, and I’ve seen several starts and stops, you know? Emme was a start, albeit a brief one. Kate Dillon was a start -- little bit stronger of a start. This started with Crystal and Meisel four years ago, and it hasn’t stopped. I’ve seen covers come now -- You know, seven, eight issues of French Vogue have used her now. You know, cosmetics companies are calling her, just having her show up to Gaultier campaign. This is not -- This is not a moment, it’s a movement. And it’s a movement of acceptance and equality.
Q1: So you would -- This is the first Gautier booking for Ford? Is that true?

DAKIN: This was the first print Gaultier booking for Ford -- the first runway one we did with her back in 2006 -- no money. But this -- [09:00] I had the pleasure of having to have them put Mr. Gaultier in our system, which is fun.

Yeah.

Q1: That’s -- That is --

DAKIN: Yeah.

Q1: -- a treasure. So, do you sense any other differences today, other than a broadening, acceptance, any differences in the fashion industry?

DAKIN: I do. I think it’s interesting now that I see, you know, icons of our industry -- you know, iconic agents -- you know, Paul Rowland, and all these people -- are going toward pretty girls again. And it’s amazing, you know? They have the interesting girl out there, but beauty is definitely back, and I think that that’s great for all of the divisions, because they can all compete now. But in our division, I’m seeing that it’s more of an editorial look. You know, they still have to be beautiful, but they want them to move. It’s not the collar -- you know -- holding catalogue crap anymore. It’s nice editorial work. So we’re seeing kind of a blend of the two. The straight-
size girls are getting [10:00] prettier, and the plus girls are getting edgier. So hopefully that blend will help eliminate the word again altogether.

Q1: And on the men’s side, with your other division?

DAKIN: On the men’s side, there -- I feel like it’s -- It’s very separate. It’s either very manly men, or they’re skinny, waify young boys, you know, and the Jil Sander and Prada-looking boy. But the day-to-day stuff, they want men, you know? And it’s interesting. The Brooks Brothers -- the American advertisers -- the Nautica, the Tommy Hilfiger -- they’re definitely going for a manly man. It’s less about pretty, and more about, you know, rugged, sexy individual.

Q1: Is there longevity in the careers for the men in your division and the women in your division?

DAKIN: It’s amazing. I think the longevity of a model has changed so much. I think that men can do it much longer now. There’s a window in the middle that’s awkward for them, [11:00] that’s before they actually become -- they’re not young juniors anymore, and they’re not the guys that are wearing the suits. Mid-20s are really, really tough for the men. The plus-size girls, they are -- there’s no middle. They just -- They start at 17 and there’s no end to it. And I think, with women like Carmen having broken
that ground, and, you know, having everything at Ford from three months to 80-something years, we’ve shown that the longevity is there, and now it’s coming across in all divisions. Thank -- Thank you, Carmen.

Q1: Yes, thank you, Carmen.

DAKIN: (laughs)

Q1: Let’s see. What -- What differences have you seen on the runway?

DAKIN: The differences on the runway have -- God, that’s changed so many times. This past season, Crystal was blogging for Glamour, and one of the interesting things that she saw was that the girls weren’t as [12:00] small as she expected them to be. Even Prada -- they were using the old girls, the big girls. And it was amazing. And then for Mr. Lagerfeld to use Crystal in his resort show in Saint Tropez this year -- I mean, it speaks volumes, you know, that they want diversity, and they’re getting diversity. You’re still going to have those hangers with legs, but you -- there’s also some curves, and some boobs, and butts out there, and it’s nice to see more representation. Are we going to go further? I’m sure. I’m sure we’ll see several other 8s and 10s and 12s. Do I see a day when 16s and 18s are out there? I don’t know. I really don’t know. I think a nice representation is up to
10s and 12s right now. I think that speaks -- it’s a healthy size, and, I -- it sends a good message, and I’m very comfortable with that.

Q1: What about television?

DAKIN: Well, we -- Television is interesting. We just had one of our girls do a Lane Bryant commercial, and she ended up being on the Jay Leno show, which [13:00] was a surreal experience for all of us. And I definitely think that there is a shift there. It’s interesting -- these girls are, you know -- When you put them next to the men, they -- because the men on TV are so damn small that they look so much bigger. (laughs) So -- You know what? TV’s not my thing, and I hope that some of them break into acting, but the ones that model and want to focus on modeling, those are -- you know, those are the ones that I’m really excited about.

Q1: Did you go with Ashley to The Tonight Show?

DAKIN: I did go with Ashley to The Tonight Show, and met Mr. Leno, and he was very funny, very engaging, and the chin was surprisingly smaller in person. (laughs) So it was -- But it was nice. It was really good. It was -- He was very warm, and they were amazing to her.

Q1: He’s a very nice guy. When I --

DAKIN: He’s great.
Q1: -- worked at NBC, there was a claim -- a copyright claim -- and he called me. Jay called me, and he said, “What can I do? Can I call the guy? Can -- What can I do to help?” I mean, truly the hardest-working man in show business.

DAKIN: Yeah. Oh --

Q1: He wanted to do something about his own claim. It was --

DAKIN: The entire show, like -- before what was going on, he kept coming into the dressing room, and talking to her, and talking to her, and talking to her, and, you know, engaging in everybody in the room, and it was really -- he was just a very normal, down to earth guy, and I just -- it was a little shocking, and, you know, alarming, because I expected this celebrity who wouldn’t really care, and this is just a shtick for him to have her on, because it was a hot press moment. He actually was really interested in the story. It was -- It was a nice -- nice way to make everyone feel at ease.

Q1: Didn’t you have one of the models on Oprah?

DAKIN: We did. Crystal was on Oprah. That was a really special moment for both of us. She -- It was her biggest dreams come true. And hers was to shoot with Meisel for American Vogue, and to become a model, and then when she struggled, she didn’t know how she was going to do that,
and then we found each other, [15:00] and we made it happen. And that was -- That was incredible. Oprah was incredibly warm. I was the first agent allowed to sit in the audience, not be in the green room, because they thought they were going to go to me with questions, which scared the hell out of me. She was incredible. She was really, really, good. It’s -- She’s had some nice moments. More to come.

Q1: Yes.

DAKIN: (laughs)

Q1: Yes. And what do you think you, Mr. Dakin, have contributed to this industry?

DAKIN: I think, first and foremost, I’ve been blessed with some of the most amazing talent this industry has ever seen, never mind this agency. I don’t listen to “no.” I think that’s my biggest contribution, is -- you know, “I can’t do this? (laughs) Really? Watch.” (laughs) You know that personally.

(laughter) [16:00]

DAKIN: I -- I like to win. I will do it in an honorable manner, but I will win. And I will make sure that anyone on my team wins with me, or even in front of me. But they’re -- They’re going to be winners, these girls.
Q1: And how do you work with your team? Tell us a little bit about the team.

DAKIN: The team aspect, on my table -- because I run two different divisions -- I’ve actually made them into one family, and it’s very collaborative. And it is loud, it is boisterous, everybody has an opinion. They might not always be heard, but they have one. And we really do things as a group. It’s a collaborative effort. We pick every card together. We put every book together. We talk about every test together. Everything we do involves everybody. No one is left out -- unless they’re busy with something else, and they want to be -- but everyone has the opportunity to be involved with every decision we make. At the end of the day, [17:00] the buck has to stop with me, but it’s a team. It’s 100% team effort. I could not do it without each and every one of them.

Q1: Yeah, you have a great, great team. Let’s see. Do you think modeling -- modeling industry has influence in the world at large, outside the industry?

DAKIN: I do think it has influence. I think it has less influence than people think. I think there’s an interesting argument to be said about the anorexia, and about size issues. And, you know, what I say to that -- and people blame our industry -- I say, “Raise your own
daughters. Don’t expect the magazines to.” What I do think we can influence is happiness. Like, it’s smoke and mirrors. Like, if we look at this as entertainment, then it can be very entertaining. If we put too much pressure on it, that’s like putting too much pressure on The Simpsons, or, you know, on [18:00] The Cosby -- saying, “Every black family should have a doctor.” Like, come on. Like, it’s influential in how we’ve looked at fashion, with Jackie Onassis, and with Michelle Obama, even. It’s fashion at the end of the day, you know? We’re not -- We’re not out there having medical breakthroughs, but we’re changing these young women’s lives. So I think that if the indus-- if people looked at that, as opposed to just bashing constantly about, “Oh, we’re putting bad images out there...” We’re not doing that.

Q1: Do you think the modeling business is reactive to the designers and the zeitgeist, or has a chance to -- to push its own agenda?

DAKIN: I think -- Historically -- We’re a service industry, so historically we have served the designers, and, as the casting directors have asked for smaller, and the designers have asked for smaller, we’ve given them smaller. [19:00] And I think that’s why it’s gotten younger, because a lot of these girls have had to be pre-pubescent at the time
when they were going into these castings. We’ve pushed it a lot, and the -- the masses have pushed it, and we’ve been more reactive, I think, to the masses, as opposed to the designers now. And I think that’s why we’re seeing Crystal Renn and Ashley Graham and Kate Dillon, and all of these young women, come out of my division, and doing things that were always 100% straight-size. I think the masses are demanding it so we’re listening to them. And the magazines are listening to them. So everybody is finally telling everybody else, “We want a little bit more. We demand and deserve more.” And the designers for, you know, Mr. Lagerfeld, and Mr. Gaultier, to be doing this -- they’re reacting as well, so it’s -- They realize, I think, they’re a service industry as well, for the first time.

Q1: Yeah, I think, probably -- They’re hearing a [20:00] louder, different message.

DAKIN: And it’s everywhere. I mean, it’s not just on the blogs for women anymore. It’s on the cover of Glamour, and it’s, you know, The London Times, and it’s The Independent, this weekend, talking about Crystal getting rid of the word “plus,” you know? It’s Ashley on Jay Leno. It’s everywhere. So it’s not just for people who are looking for it. It’s in your face, and it’s going to be more in your face everyday.
Q1: That’s true. Let’s see. So, some of the models that -- you have started their careers, developed their careers -- name a couple? Anybody --

DAKIN: Shockingly, Crystal Renn. (laughs) Started as a plus, not a straight-size -- that was another agency. Audrey Marie, Larra Johnson -- these girls that are, you know, not -- Ashley Graham -- not household names, but are industry standards, and [21:00] everybody loves them and knows them, and have incredible careers, and have had -- some of them -- for 10 years, 15 years. So it’s -- They’re -- That’s my family. Yeah.

Q1: Did you get any advice from your family about --

DAKIN: My family has no idea what I do.

(laughter)

DAKIN: You know, my mother and my grandmother were -- and are -- remain my biggest influences. And my mom comes from a huge family -- 1 of 19 -- and she taught my brother and I incredible independence, and we’re the only two out of a hundred grandchildren that have actually left the nest. She just -- “Go for everything. Go. Doesn’t matter. Go. Just go. Try it.” The first day I got my license, I was 17, and I drove in the car from Massachusetts to New York, just bec-- I skipped school. I got in trouble later, but
[22:00] she always pushed me to go for what I wanted, and don’t take no for an answer.

Q1: Has she come to visit the agency?

DAKIN: She has. She has come several times. She comes to New York a lot, and it’s -- it’s -- she’s very proud. She’s very happy.

Q1: She has every right to be.

DAKIN: Thanks.

Q1: Did any of your family or friends treat you differently when you settled into this career?

DAKIN: Yes. Everybody and their mother has come out and said, “I’ve got a nephew! I’ve got a niece! I’ve got a grandchild! I’ve got a...” You got a problem. A lot of people have reached out. They want to be models. They want their kids to be models. Treating me differently -- Back at home, I’m still loud Gary, so it’s -- we’re all still the same. But everybody knows somebody that wants something, and after 12 years, they’ve -- here at Ford -- they’ve finally figured out -- stop asking. (laughs) It’s not going to happen.

Q1: I think I’m getting the requests... [23:00]

DAKIN: I’m sure.

Q1: I saw when I was reading through some -- this outline, that you mentioned Bobby Orr as an icon.
DAKIN: Yeah.

Q1: Did you play hockey?

DAKIN: I did, up until about three years ago and I blew my back out for the final time. I did. I -- Since -- My dad was my coach. My mom taught us all how to skate, including my dad, when I was four, so I’ve been skating as long as I can walk. And I still love to skate every year, I just can’t play hockey anymore.

Q1: Did you go -- The V Man -- Did they have a --

DAKIN: We had a soccer match. We had the World Cup.

Q1: You had soccer. Shouldn’t there be a hockey tournament now?

DAKIN: Luke Gulbranson will kick everyone’s ass, so...

(laughter)

Q1: So no?

DAKIN: So no. But actually, he’s Team Ford. So maybe yes. I think let’s keep it where there’s not fighting, and their faces can get hurt. Let’s keep the teeth.

(laughter)

Q1: That’s true.

DAKIN: A nice badminton tournament, perhaps, but not hockey.

Q1: Maybe water polo.

DAKIN: Yeah, exactly. Good for the abs.

Q1: Any favorite photographers? [24:00]
DAKIN: I was -- Crystal and I made a list when she started, and we’ve been lucky enough to work with every single person on that list except for two. My personal get for her was Steven Klein. I mean, I’m a huge fan. There’s so many different ones for so many different reasons. I love the young ones coming up that are testing with us that -- I love to find somebody new and bold. But -- I mean, Meisel. You know, I think the first day Patrick Demarchelier called... And a lot of them call personally -- it’s interesting -- when they really want something. That was amazing. (inaudible) was amazing. It’s -- I’ve been blessed enough to work with so many of them, or have the girls work with so many, that we’ve got -- Meisel. Yeah. Meisel and Klein.

Q1: You go on the shoots? Or check in?

DAKIN: God, no. I would never -- That -- It’s the thing -- [25:00] It’s -- When they’re working, they’re working, you know? And it’s -- When I’m here, I need to be here. The more I’m with them, the less I can be talking about them. So to me, when a job is booked, in my head it’s done until it comes out and we can celebrate it again. But it’s -- Once I dealt it out and give them the information, I’m onto the next thing. And I would never impose on an artist, or -- and both of them, to me, are artists -- the photographer
and the model. So, let them do their job. If it’s catalogue I’ll pop by, but the real exciting things, let them create magic, and I like to see it later.

Q1: Let’s see. So you’re from Massachusetts?


Q1: When did you first move to New York?

DAKIN: I moved to New York for the first time in 1989 and lived here briefly, and, as a young man in his late teens, early 20s, [26:00] New York kind of spit me up and chewed me out. And then I went to Chicago for a couple years, and then decided to come back to New York, and I’ve been back here now around 15, 16 years, and it’s the best place on earth.

Q1: It is. I’m a native New Yorker.

DAKIN: I mean -- Could never leave here.

Q1: Your favorite part? Your favorite moment? Your...

DAKIN: One of them was the day Ford called me. I think that had to be a very defining moment for me. I came back to New York because I needed to go to school and wait tables, and then I got a job at a small agency, and then Joey Hunter, who worked here for 30-something years, called me -- he had left and gone to open another agency -- and called me up after I’d only been doing this four months, and asked me to open the plus division at his newly founded agency.
And I was there for about 11 months, and I had managed to sign two of Ford’s top models at the time. So I got [27:00] a phone call from --

Q1: It’s a different S-word.

DAKIN: Yeah.

(laughter)

DAKIN: This is for posterity’s sake. So I got to sign two -- the two top Ford models at the time, and then the Fords called me, and then said, “You can continue to sign our girls, or we can sign you.” And I met with Katie, and -- a very brief meeting -- and she just looked at me, and didn’t ask me any work questions. It was very personal, and after five minutes, she just looked at our COO at the time, and said, “Figure this out.” So that was a real amazing moment, you know, being from Massachusetts, seeing Linda, wanting to be involved in fashion, and then to have Ford call you. Like, I never would dream of sending a résumé -- who does a résumé in this industry? -- to Ford, but for them to call me, I think that was quite possibly one of my proudest moments.

Q1: That’s amazing.

DAKIN: The other one was walking Crystal down the aisle.

[28:00] Yeah. So those are -- Those are two good New York moments for me.
Q1: And -- Let’s see. What do you do when you don’t work?

DAKIN: (laughs) I’ll let you know if I ever don’t work.
(laughter)

DAKIN: Play with my Blackberry. I have an amazing group of friends, and I have a fantastic little dog, and an incredible apartment that I love to entertain in, and the — any time I can get on a plane and get on a beach, that’s where I am. So it’s — But it’s — You’re always working. It’s — There’s always something that will trigger something, and — you know, it’s great, because these girls and my team are all so collaborative. If I get an idea at like ten o’clock at night, I’ll fire off a, you know, an email, and they’ll all be doing their own thing, and be in a bar or being on vacation, and within an hour, everyone has already responded. So it’s — You know, when I say, “It’s not [29:00] a career, it’s a lifestyle,” it really is. It kind of permeates everything you do. Are there times when I completely shut down? Absolutely. Or just turn the Blackberry off. Absolutely. But it’s — It’s such an amazing job, and the Fords have created such an incredible industry. You don’t always want to shut off, you know? It’s fun, especially being in my division. Like, I can always do something bigger, you know? Everything for the straight-size girls has been done. I
haven’t had the cover of American Vogue yet. I haven’t gotten the covers of, you know, Italian Vogue and British Marie Claire. I mean, there’s so many things that we haven’t done, that the world is our oyster. And we want it all, and I’m not going to stop until we have that Lancôme contract, and it’s on the cover of American Vogue, and “the word” is gone, and women of all sizes and shapes get [30:00] the attention and the recognition that Linda and Naomi and Christie got.

Q1: I think that’s -- says it all. Any final words after that?

DAKIN: No, I think that was a --

Q1: I think that was...

DAKIN: -- a good way to sum it up, yeah. (laughs)

Q1: Anything you want to add?

Q2: I have a couple.

Q1: OK.

DAKIN: Yeah, go for it.

Q2: I mean, just sitting out here as an outsider, hearing from an agent, and... The way you talk is very precise. You know, like, you’re breaking down business very, very well. You know, talking about the guys and the men, or, like, the boys, or -- you know, stuff like that. But -- It’s all very interesting, but what do you like most about your job? Like, what does it for you?
DAKIN: What does it for me about my job is seeing people succeed, you know? When I was a model, it was one thing, and you have one career, and you do that. I’m responsible for 90 mortgages. I’m responsible for 90 families. I’m responsible for 90 success stories, or failures. So -- The majority of them are successes. [31:00] So when you get the satisfaction of seeing someone you genuinely care about win, and get something that they want, be able to buy their first home -- watching other people’s success and being a part of that is by far the best part of this job.

Q2: And that drives you?

DAKIN: Yeah. Because it’s not just my rent. I’m responsible for everybody else’s. And I’m responsible for the women being heard, the men paying for their wives, and -- Nathan Kamp just had a new baby, so we have that responsibility. So when I can help them make a career out of something they love doing, I mean, that’s the most rewarding thing. Like, I gave birth to a couple of careers. Like, that’s incredible, and these people have taken it to new levels, and -- and this 24 year-old young woman, whose birthday is tomorrow -- I sat there and filled out her mortgage papers with her. And that was something she and I did together. So that -- That’s the best part of this [32:00] job, hands down. Their success.
Q2: You mentioned a book, before, that was on your desk. What is that -- You know -- What is that?

DAKIN: What do you mean?

Q1: The book you have on your desk that Katie --

DAKIN: Oh, The Giving Tree.

Q2: Yeah, what is that?

DAKIN: The Giving Tree is Shel Silverstein’s -- quite possibly -- most famous -- one of his most famous books. And it talks about this tree that -- it’s -- When a child is growing up, he needed certain things, and he needed to climb on the trees branches because he was a little boy. So then later in life, he needs to build a house, so the tree is like, “Take my -- Take my branches.” And then it evolves and evolves, and finally, as an old man, he cuts the tree down, and he needs a place to sit. So it’s -- The agent is always that tree, and the model’s career is the young boy growing up. So you’re constantly giving different things. I give Crystal different things today than I did six years ago, you know? I give Nathan Kamp different things than I did three years ago. You’re constantly evolving with them, and your relationship evolves [33:00] with it. And they no longer need your support of, “Oh, a boyfriend broke up with me,” thing. Now it’s, “Help me with my mortgage,” and the next thing is
going to be, “Be the godfather of my child.” So everything evolves, and that book is about the evolution of two people’s relationship, which is model and agent.

Q2: What was also interesting was -- I got the sense that -- Something you said was, “It’s not a job, it’s a lifestyle,” --

DAKIN: A hundred percent.

Q2: -- which, you know, from the people that will be seeing these interviews, it’s -- People are going to realize that an agent’s -- it’s guys who work really hard, but -- and as much as you do love it, what’s the flip-side of -- what don’t you like? What do you -- What...

DAKIN: That it’s a lifestyle.

(laughter)

DAKIN: You do -- Yes, I definitely had things suffer for it. You -- You’re in a relationship, and your partner wants to do something, and you’ve got an emergency, and a girl’s stuck in Tanzania and can’t get on a flight, and you’re at a romantic dinner, and you’re like, “Yeah, I got to go. You got to hold that [34:00] for a second.” So that part is tough, but you can get past that if you’re in a strong and healthy relationship, and if you’re strong and healthy, and know your own limits and boundaries. Like, there are certain times where I will shut down, and I will not look
at the Blackberry, and really try and not do that. So, if
anything, I think, you know, you lose a little sense of
complete self. But I don’t think you can succeed fully at
anything without losing a little bit of that anyway. So
it’s -- It’s maybe not a negative, but it’s hard to
navigate.

Q2: Just one more question. From watching the interviews and
not knowing anything about it, the theme I’d probably have
in this is, “I don’t take ‘no.’” Now, how does that work?
When somebody says no, what are, like, three things you
immediately do that -- you know, is there a process? Or
you just go [35:00] with the flow? I mean, what is it --

DAKIN: I don’t think I’ve ever gone with the flow. I -- You --
- There’s always a different angle to go at it, you know?
Why isn’t she doing this? Why isn’t she doing that? So,
guess what? I’ll go back and retest a girl, or I’ll -- you
know, I’ll cut hair, or I’ll do something else. I’ll
reshape a look, reshape a book, go backdoor, go through a
hair and makeup person that’s worked with them before that
I know is involved in the shoot. Keep hammering the client
-- “No, you have to see it.” Like, when we were breaking
ground with the plus industry, people were like, “I don’t
need to see them,” and I’m like, “Yeah, you do, actually.”
And finally, they’re -- they relent. They have no choice.
I mean, you have this little gnat in your ear the whole time, and you want to swat it, or -- you know? So they kind of give in a little bit. But I just -- I don’t know, it’s just kind of inherently who I am. I just -- I didn’t go to school, I didn’t, you know, come from a very humble family. I had no options [36:00] but to figure my shit out, and the only way to do it was just to, “Huh? What do you mean ‘no?’ I didn’t hear that.” It’s -- I don’t know. It’s just -- you don’t... I think that’s the hardest thing to answer. I -- I just -- I don’t know how to --

Q1: I think also, maybe some of the preconceived rules -- I’m not talking about laws or restrictions -- but some of the preconceived rules are not necessarily --

DAKIN: Who made them? Yeah, yeah. To me, no one made them, so it’s -- you know, it’s just -- “Oh, because it’s always been that way.” Oh, really? You know, that doesn’t work for -- We’ve also always had white presidents. Guess what, kids? We’re changing that real quick. So I don’t understand the preconceived thing about it, you know? And I’ve been very lucky to have amazing talent, so it’s pushing that through. Once you get one person through, somebody else will give you a second chance, and will be less likely to say no, [37:00] because they kind of trust you. So they’ll be like, “Let’s try it. Let’s try it.”
So I think building up that -- I hear “no” less and less as the years have gone on, --

Q2: Because of the trust...

DAKIN: -- because of the trust that has been built with the editors and the art buyers and the photographers. I think that’s -- We hear “no” less and less once -- You know, I doubt Paul ever hears “no,” you know? I still hear “no,” but it’s less and less. And I’m damn sure Eileen never heard “no,” or at least listened to it.

Q2: And Crystal said something interesting. She said, “It’s important to be liked,” and it reminded me of something. I once talked to a salesman, a while ago, and he said, “There’s two things about being a good salesman. It’s trust and likability.” So --

DAKIN: Well, that’s her job. So my job is to get her booked. So that’s the trust part. Her job is to get herself rebooked.

Q2: So it doesn’t matter if they like you?

DAKIN: It’s -- I don’t care if they like me, as long as they --

(laughter)

DAKIN: It helps, but my job is to make sure that they get seen and they [38:00] get booked. It’s a model’s job to get rebooked. While you’re on that set, while you’re doing it,
that’s the likability part. And I’ve got to play bad cop to her good cop, because she’s going to work 14 hours and they’re going to be like, “Oh, that’s fine, we’ll pay you for 8,” and I’m like, “Dude, that’s not happening. It’s time and a half after 8.” So there’s trust and likability, and that’s the combination.

Q2: And just finally, just for anybody -- you know, a lot of people, they all want to be -- a lot of people want to be models, a lot of -- but they don’t realize that a huge part is, you know, the agents, and all the people, you know, behind that. Now, is there anything you’d like to say to somebody who is thinking about --

DAKIN: Don’t do it!

(laughter)

Q2: -- and what it takes, and what, you know...

DAKIN: Yeah, I --

Q2: At the camera, if you want.

DAKIN: If you want to be in this industry in any shape or form, do not listen to the word “no.” And if they say, “You can’t be a model,” become an agent, and create 60 careers, not just your own. [39:00]

(clapping)

Q2: That was fantastic.

Q1: Thanks, Gary.
DAKIN: You’re welcome.

Q1: You’re super.

END OF AUDIO FILE