

*Meet the Personalities 006*

Wayne Resnick

Podcast Transcript

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**Wayne:** It's the most intimate form of media available, way more intimate than social media, television, even entertainment things like music and movies. And people would say, "Well, music is very intimate." That's true. Not as intimate as radio. So the connection is much stronger.

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Welcome to Meet the Personalities, the podcast where we sit down with radio personalities for a candid talk about their take on the business of radio. I'm your host, Tom Smith, and today I'm joined by Mr. Wayne Resnick. Now, Wayne is part of "The *Bill Handel Show*," Monday through Friday on KFI AM 640 in that Los Angeles market and that's on from 6:00 AM to 10:00 AM. But Wayne has been a mainstay on KFI for not only years but decades kind of as a fill in host and also you've had a weekend show that's kinda bounced around, right?

**Wayne:** That's correct.

**Tom:** Well, Wayne, thank you so much for joining me. I appreciate it.

**Wayne:** You bet.

**Tom:** All Access said you're gonna be joining “*The Bill Handel Show*” and this was a few weeks before, you know, you started. And that you were retiring from a career in federal law enforcement.

**Wayne:** That's correct.

**Tom:** I did not know that.

**Wayne:** I just retired 28 years with the United States Probation and Parole Agency.

**Tom:** Wow.

**Wayne:** And was basically doing that side-by-side with being here at KFI.

**Tom:** So one of the things that we always talk about on Meet the Personalities is everybody's path to the microphone is a little bit different. How did you get into radio? How does federal probation officer make its way to radio?

**Wayne:** I don't know how much help this is gonna be to anybody else to copy my path to radio. But it starts with, first of all, you'd have to get a job with United States Probation and Parole because then this will cause you to move to Los Angeles. I was up in Santa Barbara and I was the program director of a methadone clinic and...

**Tom:** Really?

**Wayne:** Yes. And one of the things that we did is the drug testing for people who were on federal probation and parole. And one day they come. You know, they come to audit your contracts and the PO up there, I'll never forget him, David Gonzalez, he says, "You know, they're hiring down in Los Angeles. It's a good job. You should look into it." And I did. So, I moved to L.A. to start that job in March of '89 and it was the first time in my life I ever needed a traffic report because I've only ever lived in Santa Barbara where they have traffic reports but you really don't need it.

And the only other places I've lived were in West Virginia where you do not need a traffic report ever. So I moved down here. I know I'm commuting to downtown. I need a traffic report. I didn't know at that time that almost every radio station has a traffic report. I didn't know that. So I'm flipping, looking for the first... It's basically the first traffic report. I'm gonna leave it there. And it was KFI. It just happened to be KFI. Hadn't really heard any talk radio. I didn't really know what it was about. But I knew you had the traffic reports.

So I kept it there so that's what I listen to and it blew me away. The whole paradigm of talk radio just blew me away.

**Tom:** How old were you at that time?

**Wayne:** Twenty-six I think. So I became a fan of the station and at that time there was a guy, I think it was on the weekends at the time, Joe Crummey is his name. And he's still a friend. And if I didn't know him, he didn't know me. I was just a listener. And one day I got a wild idea and I wrote a theme song for his show. And I recorded it and I sent it to him. And he liked. He got it and he liked it. And he called me and we became friends. But...that's what got me through the door at KFI, was meeting him and coming in, I think that he had me screen calls for him every Friday. That was my first job at KFI. It was screening calls for Joe Crummey.

**Tom:** And this is 1990 at the time?

**Wayne:** '90 or early '91. I don't specifically remember. And then screening for other shows and then some producing, and then doing some bits on the air with him. And that went on till about '94. And in '94...and I'd never thought about being a host or anything. And in '94 another station flipped to a talk format. Joe went over there, couple other people from KFI went over there. One of the people that went over there was a guy named Bill Smith who was doing an overnight shift on the weekends as a host, but he went over to this other station.

So the program director at the time, David Holley, said, "Hey, you wanna go on the radio at midnight on Saturday?" And then I said, "Okay." And I did it and then next week he said, "Do you wanna do that again?" And I said, "Sure." And it just kind of...it was a week-to-week thing for awhile and at some point I had a show.

**Tom:** And there you have it. That's Wayne Resnick's...

**Wayne:** It's a circuitous path to get there. But, you know, you never know. The only thing I could say is this, if somebody's interested in being on the radio, you can go to school, you can take communications courses and you can do those things. You can also, if you can figure out a way to get somebody who's already in radio to like you or to feel that your presence is helpful to them, that's another good path because that will literally open the doors for you.

**Tom:** And it's different for everyone. And your path is definitely a unique...

**Wayne:** I somewhat fell into it. I mean, it's literally that thing of...there's...can I bring up something, this television show, "Night Court" with Harry Anderson? You remember that show?

**Tom:** Sure.

**Wayne:** And there's one episode where they ask him like, "Well, how did you even get to be a judge?" Because he was an unconventional judge on the show, right?

**Tom:** Right.

**Wayne:** And he told the story about some judge died, I think. Remember, this is a fake TV show. But in the story of the show, a judge died and they needed a new judge. And it was in the middle of the night and he said, you know, they called everybody on the list. And nobody picked up except me. He became a judge because he was the only person on the list that answered the phone when they needed a judge. And for me it was kind of like, they needed somebody to go on the radio at midnight on Saturday and I happened to be there.

**Tom:** So where did you grow up?

**Wayne:** Santa Barbara.

**Tom:** School in Santa Barbara.

**Wayne:** Yes.

**Tom:** Came down...

**Wayne:** Until 16, and then Charleston, West Virginia.

**Tom:** Okay.

**Wayne:** Which is...yes, your reaction is appropriate. Your reaction is too mild for the culture shock that that was.

**Wayne:** Okay. And was that...family moved there?

**Tom:** Family move. So then you...16 till what? Finish up school there and then came back for college?

**Wayne:** Till after college and came right back.

**Tom:** So then law enforcement was apparently what you went to school for?

**Wayne:** No, I have a psychology degree. I fell into that career also. You know, I was working at the Methadone clinic and this guy said, "Hey, they're hiring for federal probation." I said, "Well, the pay is more than I'm making now and the benefits are better than I have now. Let me see what that's about."

**Tom:** And away you go.

**Wayne:** And then that lasted 28 years.

**Tom:** On KFI's website, you're...I think you're holding a guitar rocking out and there's a little bit of a tongue-in-cheek phrase [SP] in there. Something about rock and roll Rabbi or something like that.

**Wayne:** I went through a phase, which I'm now out of as you can see, I went through a phase recently where I had a long hair, okay? I don't know why. I decided one day, man, I'm not gonna get a haircut and I'm gonna have long hair for a while. Is it very late rebellion? Probably. And when I had a long hair one day...I had long hair and I think I'm possibly wearing a suit jacket maybe. And I'm playing this guitar. And somebody took a picture and I put it up there. And I think the caption says something like, "*Wayne* thinks rock and roll *Rabbi* is a good *look*. *He will die alone.*"

**Tom:** That's I believe the word for word. I mean, it kinda reminded me of the late '80s or early '90s kinda mullet. Perhaps you had a parachute pants on.

**Wayne:** See, I hate that you say that but I can't correct you really.

**Tom:** Was it three years ago?

**Wayne:** Three years ago it was like this, like you see now. And I don't know if there'll be a picture accompanying this podcast. But just a normal...you know, I have a normal hair, right? It's just normal hair.

**Tom:** We'll take a picture. Let's take a picture with it.

**Wayne:** But something...this is about two years ago this started and I let it grow. And I just was like, "I'm not cutting it." And it was really long and at first I got a lot of compliments. I mean, a tremendous number of compliments. Fast forward

to...this is literally like a month ago, and I saw a picture of myself that somebody had just taken. And I went, "Oh, my God. You can't look like that. You have to stop looking like that." And I went immediately and got a haircut.

**Tom:** All right. Well, it looks good.

**Wayne:** Thank you.

**Tom:** So personal life.

**Wayne:** Yes.

**Tom:** Married?

**Wayne:** No.

**Tom:** Children?

**Wayne:** No, no, no.

**Tom:** How far away from KFI do you live?

**Wayne:** Four miles, maybe three-and-a-half.

**Tom:** So super easy commute. Your traffic report isn't so relevant anymore.

**Wayne:** That's so funny you say that. That's right. I guess right now I don't really need a traffic report.

**Tom:** I mean, four miles, that can take a long time in Los Angeles without a doubt.

**Wayne:** Yes. But it's surface streets and it's driving here at 5:30 in the morning. So even if there's a lane closure on one of the streets it's still not a traffic jam.

**Tom:** So are you still doing the weekend show?

**Wayne:** No.

**Tom:** Okay. So now you're just full time with the "Handel" crew?

**Wayne:** I had a few runs of doing the show Sunday nights being on the air till 10:00 and then being back here. Sometimes at 5:00 a.m. when "The Bill Handel Show" started, you remember? It used to start at 5:00.

**Tom:** Sure.

**Wayne:** And I would fill in some time. So there were times when I would be on the air till 10:00, go home, try to settle down. I'd be back on the air at 5:00. And when they hired me to be on the "Handel Show" full time, I knew two things. One, that needed to be my focus, "The Bill Handel Show," helping with that show,

but also that there was no way I was gonna wanna keep to having that turn around.

**Tom:** And now one of your roles in the “Handel Show” is sports.

**Wayne:** I give the sports report. This is already causing significant controversy because there are...

**Tom:** Trending on Twitter.

**Wayne:** People who like sports, you know, they have very particular interest in what they wanna hear about. And so if I do a sports report that's really just giving the scores and the stats, then I hear like, “We don't care about that.” And then if I do a sports report that's really a story about something happening in the sports world, then I hear from people like, “Hey, you didn't give the scores.” So it's impossible to please everybody in the sports world.

**Tom:** Indeed. And with the NCAA Tournament going on right now, do you have a pick?

**Wayne:** My pick is Gonzaga, not necessarily... I have no connection to that school, you know. I didn't go there. I don't know anybody who work there. And if you ask me intellectually, do I believe they will win? The answer is I don't think so. I think North Carolina probably, if you're asking me to like bet. But if you're talking about just the team that for some reason has captured my imagination, it's Gonzaga.

**Tom:** Okay. Wayne Resnick's pick. And that is on March 21<sup>st</sup> of 2017. We'll see in the coming weeks what that winds up being. So what is a typical day look like for you now that [inaudible 00:15:01] retired, doing the "Handel Show?" Are you up at like 2:00 a.m. prepping for the show or is your prep happen before you go to bed?

**Wayne:** No. This is what I'm doing and it's not...I don't feel very retired, but I get up at 5:00. And I only need about 20 minutes max to get ready. And then I come over here. I get here about 5:45. I get the rundown from Michelle, the executive producer, and the stories for "Handel on The News" which is the first hour of the show. And then we start the show, finish the show, go home, do whatever I want. And then in the late afternoon, could be the early evening, because one of the other things I do on this show is I help Michelle produce the show. So in the afternoon, and I have a lot of flexibility about when to do it, but I will I look for stories for the show. I will, if something really complicated has happened, I might write a little summary of that for people on the show and kind of do producing job if you will.

And that's how it works. It's sort of a split day.

**Tom:** And what sources do you use for the consumption of the news that you look at and then share with the team and then ultimately makes its way to the airwaves of KFI?

**Wayne:** It's a tremendous number of sources, probably 50 different specific sources that I look at every day. It's every major newspaper. It's a lot of the online news sites that are geared towards younger people like "Vocative." Mike is one of them. I look at "Wired." I look at "Feiss." I look at Reddit. I look at what people are putting on Reddit. And it goes on and on. I mean, we could spend the rest of the podcast just listing, but every day is like a research prior except it really isn't. It's more like I wanna read what all these different sites are reporting on. And then things jump out at you as being appropriate for the show.

**Tom:** Switch gears real quick to the business of radio from an advertiser's perspective, what do you think is important for an advertiser to consider or what's kind of your take on endorsements, working with sponsors of the show, from a global perspective and if you have any specific thoughts on success secrets?

**Wayne:** Well, first of all, I really do think if you have a business and you're not advertising on radio, you're kinda being a dummy because radio is still the most used form of media. It's over 95% of people use radio at some point during the week. Some don't use it as much as others, but you've got almost every person at some point turning on a radio. And with radio, and I know this from doing the Sunday show, we used to do a lot of theater of the mind things. One night...and I don't remember how we came up with some of these ideas and a lot of them are stupid, but we did them anyway because radio is a place where you can really experiment and play around.

I remember one night, we said, "Okay. Let's get a soundtrack of like horses' hooves clomping and another one of traffic noises. And we'll start the show and I'll be on the phone instead of on the microphone. And without saying that I'm late coming to the station on a horse, without ever saying that, that's what's 'happening.'" And there were people who e-mailed and said like, "That's dangerous." I don't know, stuff like that. And my point is it's theater of the mind and because it's theater of the mind, the listener brings a lot of themselves to the table.

You know, they get to layer their own biases if they have them or their own desires or whatever, onto whatever is happening. And this applies not just to crazy stuff like that but to even ordinary talking about the news of the day. Because you can't see us, it allows you to bring a lot of yourself to the table which makes it...and I bet every single person that you interview for this podcast will say this now. It's the most intimate form of media available, way more intimate than social media, television, even entertainment things like music and movies. And people would say, "Well, music is very intimate." That's true. Not as intimate as radio.

So the connection is much stronger. And I think, and I'll be honest, I don't have really a lot of experience with endorsements and that side of it but I do know that why do I sleep on an REM bed? I sleep on an REM bed because Tim Conway Jr. told me to check it out, not in the hallway but on the radio. And there's another number of things that I've checked out because I heard somebody on the radio

talk about it. And I think that's the real...that's the power of radio. It's something radio can do that I don't think any other medium can even do.

**Tom:** You touched on music and actually when I brought up the rockin' Rabbi earlier, I meant to get to ask you, you a guitar player?

**Wayne:** Yeah, yeah. My parents gave me a guitar and a...Mel Bay is the guy's name, "Mel Bay Teach Yourself Guitar" book when I was, I don't know, nine or something. And it works. By the way, if you need to learn to play guitar, Mel Bay is the guy who's book that you want because he did.

**Tom:** And does your... Now, obviously, you've been playing guitar for decades then, right?

**Wayne:** Yeah. And I had piano lessons as well. So I play keyboards.

**Tom:** Okay. Did your love of music have anything to do with radio? Was it just as simply as organic as the need of, "Hey, I need a traffic report." All of a sudden, boom, traffic report goes to KFI, goes to here I am.

**Wayne:** Well, music is the missing link, right? Traffic report is why I started listening to KFI. Music is how I got in the door because I was able to write that theme song for Joe Crummey and to record it, write it, play it and record it. So music for me, like, they're intertwined. If I didn't play music I wouldn't be here for sure. I don't know how else I would ever get here.

**Tom:** What is the first concert you ever attended?

**Wayne:** Fleetwood Mac at...and I don't remember what they called this stadium at the time because I was in junior high school but at the stadium at UC, Santa Barbara. Fleetwood Mac. Saw my Sunday school teacher three rows down smoking a joint. I will never forget this concert. Rode our bikes there, saw that, oh, and tongue-kissing her I assume boyfriend, could have been a husband. Saw that, that scarred me for a long time. And it was the Rumours tour and they didn't play, "Don't stop." And I remember leaving kinda bummed.

**Tom:** Now did that experience have anything to do with you becoming a probation officer?

**Wayne:** No, unrelated. I mean, I think that it probably got me more interested in music. But, no, I wasn't like, "She's smoking dope. When I grow up I'm gonna put a stop to this." That's not what happened.

**Tom:** You know, and that's another question that I ask people is if radio wasn't in the equation for you, what would it be? But in that case, it already has been, right?

**Wayne:** Yeah. That's a question that was already answered 28 years ago.

**Tom:** At what level of excitement are you to take this next chapter in being able to devote more time to radio and being part of “Handel Show” in the morning?

**Wayne:** Nine point eight out of ten. And the 0.2 is deducted because it's so early in the morning.

**Tom:** So you'd prefer a little midday action with Gary and Shannon maybe from...

**Wayne:** Well, just in terms of my normal tendencies regarding sleep patterns. But, yes, and here's the thing. Let's be very clear. Radio, I don't care about. I don't care about radio. It's KFI specifically. KFI is the only radio station I've ever been on. One time, when I went home to visit my parents in Charleston, they had me as a guest on their talk station, but that doesn't count. That's it. This is it. This is all I know and this is all I love. And KFI is so many levels above any other spoken word station in this whole country. So just so you know, I'm not a radio person who got to KFI. I'm a KFI person who got to come in the building.

**Tom:** Is there any side businesses, side interests, things that nobody would know, like, “Holy cow, Wayne Resnick likes to bungee jump?”

**Wayne:** Not bungee jump. The things I like to do, I do like music a lot and then the other thing I'm kind of into lately is power lifting. So I'm pursuing a 600-pound deadlift. Now, you know, will I ever get to it? Who knows? But I spend a certain amount of time focused on that and then it's hanging out with friends and occasionally volunteering for like an animal rescue group or something. But it's

not something I have the time to do regularly. And I would say, honestly, that's it. I might still be doing some private consulting on the legal side. But the show, you know, takes a good amount of time.

**Tom:** All right. Well, we covered a lot of territory here and I thank you very much for joining me. Is there anything that you, say, we had a room?

Wayne: Whatever is coming is huge pressure, right? Because it's like, "Do you have another thing?" And I'm not gonna tell you what I want, but do you have more to say?

**Tom:** No, no, no, no. This was gonna be very easy.

**Wayne:** All right, let's see how this goes.

**Tom:** We're sitting in the annual meeting of the L.A. Chamber of Commerce and you have small, medium business owners and executives all around you. And they all want to do business with you. They all want Wayne Resnick to endorse them.

**Wayne:** This is the most pleasant day dream I can imagine right now. I could narrow it down. I would love...I mean, I'd love...there's so many things in the world of music that I would love. And one thing I'm real big on is let your kid learn how to play musical instrument. Get your kid a little keyboard, a little guitar or whatever. So, you know, like guitar center or sweetwater.com or something like that would be great. Anything pet related, I would love to be able to tell KFI

listeners about, anything in the world of like fitness and especially things like supplements and stuff to weed out. Not because I love supplements so much, but because there's so much crud out there to find something that's actually legitimate is exciting. And also tech stuff, I'm so in the tech these days. I love...if it's a gadget, I will figure out a reason that I need it.

**Tom:** Are you one of those first in line for XYZ coming out like?

**Wayne:** I'm very often an early adopter of stuff. And, you know, the price you pay is it's buggy and it's not till two versions later that it's really usable. But I just...I love clever ideas for gadgets or tech to either do something that you had to do yourself before or to make the things you do better. So I'm really into all of that kind of stuff.

**Tom:** Wayne, thank you so much. We're gonna do this again sometime in the not so distant future.

**Wayne:** It was a pleasure and an honor.

**Tom:** That wraps up this installment of Meet the Personalities. My thanks again to my guest, Wayne Resnik. Again, he's on "The Bill Handel Show," on KFI AM 640 right here in the Los Angeles market, Monday through Friday, from 6:00 a.m. till 10 a.m. And you just heard Wayne Resnick's take on the business of radio. I'm Tom Smith. This was Meet the Personalities, until next time.

**Tom:** This episode of Meet the Personalities was recorded by Gil Perez. It was produced and engineered by Micah Palmquist.

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