Search Off the Record - 42nd episode

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[00:00:11] **Gary Illyes:** [00:00:11] Hello and welcome to another episode of Search Off the Record, a podcast coming to you from the Google Search team, discussing all things Search and having some fun along the way. My name is usually Gary, and I'm joined today by Lizzi Sassman from the Search Relations team, of which I'm also part of. Say hi, Lizzi.

[00:00:29] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:00:29] Hi, Gary.

[00:00:30] **Gary Illyes:** [00:00:30] Hi. Okay.

[00:00:31] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:00:31] Oh, did I do it appropriately now and now I've thrown you

off? [00:00:34] **Gary Illyes:** [00:00:34] Uh.

[00:00:35] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:00:35] Oh, no. [chuckles]

[00:00:36] **Gary Illyes:** [00:00:36] Nevermind. That was Lizzi and continuing with our Spotlight series, in which we present folks from the larger Search Marketing community who inspire us, today we have a very special person, someone who's pretty close to my heart and someone who I enjoy hanging out with when we get a chance at conferences, Barry Schwartz. Hi, Barry.

[00:00:55] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:00:55] Hello. I'm very nervous now. I don't inspire

people. [00:00:59] **Gary Illyes:** [00:00:59] You already do that and you don't even know.

[00:01:03] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:01:03] Aw. I'm going to cry.

[00:01:04] **Gary Illyes:** [00:01:04] I mean you inspire me in some weird sense, I guess.

[00:01:09] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:01:09] Oh, thank you, I guess. I don't know how to take compliments. But I appreciate the compliment.

[00:01:13] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:01:13] [laughs] That sounds a little bit more accurate. [chuckles] [00:01:16]

Gary Illyes: [00:01:16] I mean, when I was on Twitter, you inspired me to talk less, for example.

[00:01:21] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:01:21] [gasp] Is Barry the reason why you've been silenced?

[00:01:25] **Gary Illyes:** [00:01:25] Actually no, which is very surprising to me. Barry has been following us around much like a stalker on Twitter and looking at what we are doing and why are we doing it and taking our words apart. And it's actually super useful to us.

[00:01:41] And I think that many people will find this weird, but it is, in fact, very useful because then we pay more attention to how we are saying things. So it leaves less wiggle room except when we actually need the wiggle room. So I do think that having Barry around is actually super, super useful on Twitter.

[00:01:59] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:01:59] I mean you have to say that because I'm right here in front of you, talking to you.

[00:02:03] **Gary Illyes:** [00:02:03] Trust me, I don't have to. [chuckles] And I actually say things and Lizzi can testify.

[00:02:10] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:02:10] Yeah, he would say it behind your back as well. I can confirm

that. [00:02:13] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:02:13] Good to know. I appreciate that.

[00:02:15] **Gary Illyes:** [00:02:15] Yeah. So, usually, at the end of each episode, we actually just get around

and talk about the interviewee behind their backs, just to make sure that we voice our opinions in a way or other. But that's actually off the record. You are not invited.

[00:02:33] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:02:33] Wait. We are Off the Record right now. Would this be off Off the Record, like even a step removed, we're off the record right now. No?

[00:02:41] **Gary Illyes:** [00:02:41] Are we, though?

[00:02:42] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:02:42] Hmm.

[00:02:43] **Gary Illyes:** [00:02:43] Anyway, Barry, who are you and why are you selling links on Search Engine Roundtable? This is a question from the Webspan team.

[00:02:50] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:02:50] That's a good question. So I'm Barry Schwartz. I started a blog probably almost two decades ago, just to sell links on my website. And then Google decided to do something crazy, come out with this nofollow action view, for some reason. And they were like, "Well now you need nofollow links on your blog." And I'm like, "But no, I can label them sponsored."

[00:03:11] Well I fought with you guys for years and years and years. And then you decided to press the big red button and then my website went poof. And it's gone. That's it, I'm done.

[00:03:19] **Gary Illyes:** [00:03:19] Wait, with the podcast or with the answer?

[00:03:23] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:03:23] With us. He's done with us. [laughs] We pushed him too far. Yes.

[00:03:27] **Gary Illyes:** [00:03:27] Okay, so you're saying when nofollow was introduced, so that must be like 2005, 2006?

[00:03:33] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:03:33] Yes.

[00:03:34] **Gary Illyes:** [00:03:34] And do you still have that manual action or it was revoked by then? By now?

[00:03:38] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:03:38] I never had-- it was a pre-manual action since-- I mean they may been a manual action, I can backend somewhere. But there was no way to see manual actions.

[00:03:45] **Gary Illyes:** [00:03:45] Oh, right. That was way before the manual action viewer was actually launched. Interesting. Very interesting.

[00:03:52] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:03:52] How did we communicate that this was something that we knew that you were doing? Or how did you know? If there was no manual action, how did you know that this was--

[00:03:58] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:03:58] Oh, you knew.

[00:03:59] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:03:59] You knew? Oh, okay. Just like a vibe thing?

[00:04:02] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:04:02] No, more of like your traffic just stopped.

[00:04:05] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:04:05] So did that happen to you? [chuckles]

[00:04:08] **Gary Illyes:** [00:04:08] I feel that you deserved that.

[00:04:11] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:04:11] I enjoy it. I enjoy the torture from those bots and people together. In general, I like torture, so I'm getting penalized. I've been hit by lots of penalties over the years. Not all intentionally like the sponsor links, but like, Panda hit me once or twice, I believe. So I've been hit and I actually enjoy it because I don't make money off the blogging for the most part. I just do it just to drive Gary and John and friends crazy.

[00:04:36] **Gary Illyes:** [00:04:36] Wait, so why did you have sponsor links if you were not making-- or if you are not making money with the blog?

[00:04:42] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:04:42] Depends on how much money can you make. I had Jewish tuition, private school. What does that pay for? Maybe a lunch every-- for one kid for one month.

[00:04:50] **Gary Illyes:** [00:04:50] Oh. I would have imagined that the links on searchengineroundtable.com are actually quite expensive. Well, if I wanted to buy a link from you, how much would it cost?
[00:04:59] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:04:59] How many shares of Google stock do you own?

[00:05:01] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:05:01] Oh. I didn't realize that this was like a bargaining situation. [chuckles] Do you need to bid? Like do I need to outbid Gary?

[00:05:08] **Gary Illyes:** [00:05:08] I will pay for a burger when I'm in New York and invite you to watch me eat that burger.

[00:05:15] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:05:15] I think I've seen that before, so I'm not sure how exciting that would be.

[00:05:19] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:05:19] [laughs]

[00:05:21] **Gary Illyes:** [00:05:21] Yeah, that's fair. Okay. Anyway, you seem to be always online. Like, as you said, you're following us around and looking at what we are saying and it doesn't matter when we are saying things, you are going to pick it up and you are going to publish something about the things that we said. It happens everyday, 24/7. How? How do you that?

[00:05:43] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:05:043] I have drones flying all over the place, watching you guys. So if you look at your window right now, you probably see something flying outside your window.

[00:05:50] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:05:50 And the drone is live tweeting what we're saying right now?

[chuckles] [00:05:55] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:05:55] Right now.

[00:05:56] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:05:56] Oh, my God.

[00:05:57] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:05:57] To be honest, it's at 24/6. I'm offline for the Jewish things. So that's hard for me, I hate being offline. But I guess it's good for me, too. But it's easy to track. I mean, Twitter's public, so you just see when you tweet and then I get all these alerts popping up. Like lights flash in my room, "Gary tweeted, Gary tweeted."

[00:06:15] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:06:15] I mean, I also see that you're posting-- sometimes you put a disclaimer that this is a auto-scheduled post. Like you'll say, "I'm on vacation," you're communicating that you're taking a break and that the tweets are coming out anyway. So as to not throw people off the trace, I guess?

[00:06:32] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:06:32] The reason for that is because I'm technically not allowed to be online. So I want to make sure that anybody who's seeing that I'm posting, they know it's not live. Meaning I'm offline. If I post something online and I'm an observant Jew, so if I do that, I'll be struck by lightning and die. No, I wouldn't die, but you know. I just want to be big and clear that I'm not online and everything posted is scheduled and pre-written.

[00:06:56] **Gary Illyes:** [00:06:56] Yeah, that makes sense.

[00:06:57] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:06:57] Do you have alerts set up, I guess? I mean, is there like a secret to monitoring all the updates that come out or is this like a secret sauce thing, that if you share it, then everyone else will know and start tweeting at the same time as you. Or you're not worried about that?

[00:07:12] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:07:12] I'm super active on Twitter, so I use TweetDeck, which is like a dashboard right over here on my right-hand side. And I just track to see what people are saying. I have a Google list, I have a Bing list, I have a Ronald Reagan list, I don't know.

[00:07:25] I have a list of things that I track to see, insert any controversial person name in that area, and I

track whatever they're saying. And I also get tons of RSS feed, I'm still big in RSS. I don't know if you remember when Google Reader was around, Google Reader told
me I was their number one consumer of RSS feeds. In terms of on a daily basis consuming RSS feeds, than anybody else. They sent me over a schwag.

[00:07:48] Now I use Feedly. I do have Google alerts, which I hate. The algorithm stinks. Gary, if you could work on that or somebody at Google could work on that, that would be useful. And I track the SEO communities. It's mostly the forums and also different online forums, to track what people are saying very, very closely.

[00:08:07] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:08:07] I mean, it still seems like an intense of amount of information. Like a fire hose of all these things all over the place. Do you have an aggregate that sees, you know, "Hey, this is like spiking thing," or is it by person or this person is more important, they said it, so it must be something?

[00:08:23] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:08:23] Yeah, obviously. So if certain Google rep say something and what they're saying is interesting and they haven't said it before, if they're reiterating something that I think is important, I will cover that for the most part. If they're tweeting about, I don't know, this guys being blue, which you guys tweet about a lot, which is very, very unusual. I'm not sure why you guys talk about that so much.

[00:08:40] But when you do, I try to avoid the stuff that is mundane. But if it's an important stuff, I will try to cover within 24 hours, Monday through Friday. And then if I see the SEO communities spiking and chattering a lot, I call like an SEO chatter, I will tell and take notice. I will see that there's a lot of chatter about some type of update. And I'll ask Google, "Hey, was there an update?" And they'll be like, "No, leave me alone." And then I stop and just leave you guys alone.

[00:09:04] **Gary Illyes:** [00:09:04] Well, which is not quite true. But anyway, do you have a preference for topics that you like to write about? Something that's more fun or something that's more entertaining for you?

[00:09:17] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:09:17] Mmm, dramatic. Or are there certain types of posts that you actually enjoy writing?

[00:09:22] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:09:22] Yeah. What do I like to write about, that's a good question. So I love covering the algorithm update stories, especially when you don't announce them beforehand. I hate when I get embargoed stuff. I hate it. But I'll take it and because it's important.

[00:09:38] And I love to find new tests and pre-launches before you actually launch them, both the user interface-wise and feature-wise. I think those are fun and actually got me on Brian Williams before Brian Williams of NBC was scandalous. I got onto NBC Brian Williams on Dateline or whatever it was called, because I spotted one of the-- I think it was called "universal search" when it first launched.

[00:10:00] And I spotted that like a week or two beforehand and Brian Williams was like, "Come down." So I went to Rockefeller Center ages ago. And I went to a room with tons of cameras and I never really speak to him. I just spoke to the camera. And he was there on the other side somewhere.

[00:10:17] **Gary Illyes:** [00:10:17] That's amazing. That was also a really long time, 2007, 2006. Yeah. How did you actually spot that?

[00:10:25] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:10:25] Probably forums or-- it was before Twitter, I think. Or it was early Twitter.

[00:10:30] **Gary Illyes:** [00:10:30] Someone posted about it, I guess.

[00:10:32] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:10:32] Yeah, I don't usually find things myself. Sometimes I see tests but very rarely do I see the tests because you guys put me on a black list that say "Don't show Barry test". But other people see the test and I follow up what other people find.

[00:10:41] **Gary Illyes:** [00:10:41] Yeah. Is this new? Is this new, Barry? Is this

new? [00:10:44] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:10:44] [chuckles]

[00:10:46] **Gary Illyes:** [00:10:46] Is this new? Oh, you have a hat!

[00:10:48] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:10:48] People send me schwag all the time, so I show it off, so.

[00:10:51] Gary Illyes: [00:10:51] Have have a hat that says, "Is this new?" That's amazing, I want that hat. Ah, wait. No, I would need a hat that says "No." I actually have that hat.

[00:11:00] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:11:00] Oh, wait. On the back, it could say. "No." So the front, it could say, "Is this new?" and then the back, "No." Wait, is there anything on the back?

[00:11:05] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:11:05] No.
[00:11:06] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:11:06] No, you're just checking? You might've missed it? [chuckles]

[00:11:07] **Gary Illyes:** [00:11:07] Boring, I don't like it. So you write articles but I happen to know that's not the only work that you do. What else do you do?

[00:11:19] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:11:19] What else do I do? So the main thing I do is RustyBrick, it's a software company. We build software applications. both online, like web-based, as well as mobile-based. Anything from, I don't know, emergency room hospital software to party-planning software to bus software, taxi cab software, you name it. We've pretty much built anything that's custom.

[00:11:38] **Gary Illyes:** [00:11:38] That's amazing. When did you start RustyBrick?

[00:11:40] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:11:40] When I was 14 with my twin brother, Roddy. Nobody knows I have a twin brother. So, it's off the record.

[00:11:45] **Gary Illyes:** [00:11:45] Yeah, that's new information and I will blog about it.

[00:11:48] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:11:48] Oh, is this breaking news on this podcast? You've never announced this before?

[00:11:52] **Gary Illyes:** [00:11:52] Yeah.

[00:11:53] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:11:53] Well, it's on the website. If you check out rustybrick.com, you'll see us there.

[00:11:56] **Gary Illyes:** [00:11:56] Where can you get more traffic, on rustybrick.com or on searchengineroundtable.com?

[00:12:00] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:12:00] Oh, there's no competition. Search Engine Roundtable gets way more traffic.

[00:12:04] **Gary Illyes:** [00:12:04] Aw, that's sad. You see, there are all these important websites on the internet and they don't get traffic. This is mean.

[00:12:11] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:12:11] Well, I don't write anything new on RustyBrick for the most part. I keep it pretty quiet.

[00:12:14] **Gary Illyes:** [00:12:14] But that doesn't mean that it's not important website, right?

[00:12:17] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:12:17] Well, duh. It's because it doesn't get much traffic from Google, you define that by sending traffic to it.

[00:12:22] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:12:22] You personally? Yes. [chuckles]

[00:12:23] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:12:23] You personally.

[00:12:24] **Gary Illyes:** [00:12:24] Yes. I-- yeah. I sit behind computers and I just say, "rustybrick.com, one

traffic per day." One traffic-- Wow, that's very English, one traffic per day.

[00:12:35] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:12:35] Wouldn't that be cool if you could drag people to the website? It's like this user gets that, this user gets that.

[00:12:41] **Gary Illyes:** [00:12:41] Oh, no. That's what Lizzi does.

[00:12:43] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:12:43] Oh, yes. I'm moving around the dials, yeah, one by one. I can't count very high, so just one and that's my limit. Yes.

[00:12:49] **Gary Illyes:** [00:12:49] [chuckles]

[00:12:50] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:12:50] Yeah, we also build-- so we do a lot of consulting work for companies. Like we build software for third-party companies and we also build our own software. We build our own SAS programs, mobile apps. So we do a lot of cool things around software. It's all about, "How can we make their
day-to-day life of a person or a company more efficient," because I'm crazy about efficiency.

[00:13:10] Everything I do is to do the least amount of steps, least amount of actions to get the same thing done.

[00:13:15] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:13:15] I want to know more about the emergency response app. How is that one-- Is that one also with the goal of being more efficient? Or can you tell us about that app?

[00:13:24] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:13:24] Yeah, so that was built for a company that actually manages about 30 different ER departments, emergency room departments. And the hospitals actually outsource the ER departments, the emergency room departments, to this company, which fulfills the doctors' scheduling, the patient billing.

[00:13:40] So you go into the hospital. It's not really the hospital that's managing the ER department. It's a for-profit company that was doing it in this area. So about 30 in this area, meaning New York tri-state area. And we build scheduling software, billing software, you name it. Mobile apps and so forth.

[00:13:56] They actually just got acquired. Maybe not just, but years and years ago, maybe like five years ago, by a bigger company. So we built a lot of their software, which was used for probably 15 years to help doctors know where they have to show up. Hell, it's crazy stuff around, making sure the doctors slept enough so they can go see their patients. It's pretty cool stuff.

[00:14:16] **Gary Illyes:** [00:14:16] Can you think of any other app that you liked developing or that you thought that it will change the world?

[00:14:22] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:14:22] Yeah, I mean, especially in the Jewish world, we built a lot of cool stuff that I think would make Jewish life more manageable because Jewish religion is really a pain in the neck. I can say that because I'm a Jew. And we have all these rules and when you can pray, what you can eat, where you can eat, stuff like that.

[00:14:37] So we built these bunch of apps to help people find the closest synagogue to them, telling them when they can pray this service or that service, showing that what actually they can pray. Because it's very confusing, every day is different. Every time is different. So making Judaism easier for people and making it more accessible to people who maybe like technology, I guess. So.

[00:14:57] **Gary Illyes:** [00:14:57] That's pretty awesome.

[00:14:58] **Barry Schwartz:**
 [00:14:58] I mean, there's many examples left.

[00:14:59] **Gary Illyes:** [00:14:59] You said that you started rustybrick.com when you were 14 and looking at you, you're probably like 80s, 90s years old? So you started with this internet business a long, long time ago.

[00:15:15] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:15:15] Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. Did you start with the app development and then you created the website to promote the apps? Or the other way around?

[00:15:22] So when I was 14, it was 1994. It was pre-apps. Apps didn't really come out until Steve Jobs routed the year after the iPhone was out. Which was like what, 2006, 7, something like that?

[00:15:36] **Gary Illyes:** [00:15:36] Yeah, something like that.

[00:15:37] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:15:37] So we first started with web software, websites, and stuff like that. And then we moved into-- It was basically my brother just wanted the program. He's like, "You get the business," so I went to client meetings, I'm like, "What do I tell them?" He's like, "Tell them we can do anything." So they're like, "Can you build this for us?" I'm like, "Yes." And then we had to build it and we built it.

[00:15:53] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:15:53] As a 14 year old, you're going to client meetings?

[00:15:55] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:15:55] Yeah, but more so when I was in New York Star College in New York City. I used to run from class to meeting, class to meeting and do business that way.

[00:16:05] When I was 14, 15, we didn't know. We got like-- The first one was like a Chinese food store restaurant. A website for them, add a menu and stuff.

[00:16:15] **Gary Illyes:** [00:16:15] I'm flabbergasted. You started RustyBrick when you were 14. When did you actually encounter a computer the first time? When you were a baby or like 1 year old or 2 years old?

[00:16:27] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:16:27] So I remember exactly. It was probably before I was 10. my father worked at Pitney Bowes, which is basically that big postage meter company that stamps postage on stuff. And he had a lot of cool technology there. He brought back, I don't know, some old computers, and he had the phone. You know where you put the phone on the receiver and it makes little fax noises.

[00:16:44] So we had that, I remember that. And I remember my brother, my older brother, not my twin brother who I work with, my older brother trying to download games over the BBS, the bolt and board thing. And it would literally take forever. So you press it, you hit Enter. And you just come back hours later after it downloaded. So that's what I remember. But I don't know what age I was, it had to be before I was 10.

[00:17:04] **Gary Illyes:** [00:17:04] So basically you had a computer or access to a computer for four years and then you started a website development business?

[00:17:11] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:17:11] To be clear, my brother, who was a huge geek in a cool way, was the one who just programmed and tinker all day. I'm like, "Go take mine off of this."

[00:17:19] **Gary Illyes:** [00:17:19] Alright. So you're not cool.

[00:17:21] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:17:21] I'm not cool. I talk the talk, I don't walk the walk.

[00:17:23] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:17:23] Well, yeah. You were talking the talk. So did you acquire the first client? So that Chinese food delivery place, is that something that happened because it was local and you frequented this place of business? And then you pitch it to them? Or how did that come about?

[00:17:39] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:17:39] Yeah, I think my mother was like buying Chinese food for us. And I guess they talked and they're like, "My son does print on websites, do you want one?" And he's like, "Sure." So we probably built it for a few hundred bucks, I don't remember.

[00:17:53] I don't know, it's so long ago. And my memory is not good since I'm 85 years

old. [00:17:58] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:17:58] [chuckles]

[00:17:59] **Gary Illyes:** [00:17:59] Oh. I was close. Do you remember what was the first search engine that you used and enjoyed using?

[00:18:03] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:18:03] Enjoyed using? I'm still looking for the one that I enjoy using, no offense. [laughs]

[00:18:07] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:18:07] [laughs]

[00:18:08] **Gary Illyes:** [00:18:08] Burn.

[00:18:11] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:18:11] The first-- I don't remember the first one, per se. It might've been like Lycos or Excite. I remember I was in high school and my teacher wanted us to do some type of report. So I searched on some search engine. It might have been Excite, one of those search engines.

[00:18:24] And I printed something I found, it was like hundreds of pages of PDF, and I handed it in. I'm like, "I didn't do this myself. I didn't write this myself." He's like, "Yeah no, duh. Obviously, you wouldn't write this yourself." But he's like, "This is great. I'm going to use this, I'm going to use this for my materials." He's into, I guess, some program. And he's like, "You may use the class here, thank you." Because nobody knew how to Google back then.

[00:18:44] They're like, "This is interesting." I remember like-- you know how I am. So I was like stalking some people in a really creepy way, just to drive them crazy.

[00:18:54] **Gary Illyes:** [00:18:54] You'd do that?

[00:18:55] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:18:55] Yeah, I would do searches on their families.
[00:18:57] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:18:57] What?!

[00:18:58] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:18:58] One kid was like from a famous family. I brought all this dirt up about the guy. I'm like--

[00:19:03] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:19:03] Oh, my God. [chuckles]

[00:19:05] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:19:05] I'm not going to say his name. And I freaked the people out. I'm like, "I know everything about you. Do you want to know how much money you have in your bank account?"

[00:19:10] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:19:10] What?!

[00:19:11] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:19:11] "Oh, you could do that?" And nobody knew anything about the internet. They thought that I was gonna hack into their life and ruin them forever.

[00:19:17] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:19:17] Would you just say this to them verbally or you're printing out letters and sending it to them? Like are you delivering this information? They're like, "You're a clairvoyant."

[00:19:25] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:19:25] No. I like to see their reaction.

[00:19:28] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:19:28] Ah, their face.

[00:19:30] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:19:30] I wanted to see their reactions. So I do a face-to-face. I like to see the awkwardness flowing.

[00:19:35] **Gary Illyes:** [00:19:35] Right, that's the beautiful part of it.

[00:19:37] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:19:37] Yes. Although, what's that, Squid Games? I bought a bunch of those Squid Game cards.

[00:19:43] **Gary Illyes:** [00:19:43] Yeah, yeah.

[00:19:44] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:19:44] And walking home from synagogue one week, I just dropped it in every people's mailboxes and I have no idea. I never got them and their reactions were. I want to see their reaction but I just dropped the Squid Game cards in their mailboxes.

[00:19:57] **Gary Illyes:** [00:19:57] Oh, that's a good idea.

[00:19:58] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:19:58] Yeah. I'm weird, I will keep entertained in a very weird way.

[00:20:01] **Gary Illyes:** [00:20:01] Same. Back to early internet. Do you remember if you found anything annoying about the internet back then? Other than that it was slow.

[00:20:09] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:20:09] Yeah, there was this guys named Method, super annoying. Outside of that guy, whoever that guys was, the most annoying part-- remember the old days, we had to click on ads to get to download software and you click on ads, go to another page, click on another ad, fill out an answer, like enter the answer. Then go to another page and click on another ad? That was the most annoying part of the internet, just to get free stuff.

[00:20:30] And then the slow, slow internet. That was just-- drove me insane.

[00:20:33] **Gary Illyes:** [00:20:33] Yeah, can relate. I couldn't hear the username of that person that you found very annoying. Can you say it again, please?

[00:20:40] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:20:40] I think it's "Method". Am I pronouncing it correctly?

[00:20:43] **Gary Illyes:** [00:20:43] Oh, never heard. Interesting. So you launched

eventually--

[00:20:46] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:20:46] I think you wanted me to give context, right, when I mention people's names? Shall I give context?

[00:20:50] **Gary Illyes:** [00:20:50] No, in this case, it's fine. I think in this case, it's perfectly fine if we don't give context because reasons.

[00:20:57] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:20:57] But he can give us like bank account information. Like all this stuff from this person. I think it would be very interesting to our listeners, don't you think, Gary?

[00:21:05] **Gary Illyes:** [00:21:05] No, no no.

[00:21:06] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:21:06] No?

[00:21:07] **Gary Illyes:** [00:21:07] No. No. I think we should-- No. Just no. So you launched rustybrick.com because you are a child prodigy and you do things when you are 14 that other 14 year-old people don't do? Do you remember anything about the launch of that website? Like what technologies you were using other than HTML because you probably used HTML for reasons.

[00:21:31] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:21:31] Good question. So I believe, obviously it was HTML. In the early days, we did-- I remember GIFs. We used a lot of GIFs because they were cool back then, now they're cool again.

[00:21:39] **Gary Illyes:** [00:21:39] No. It's GIF [/g/].

[00:21:41] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:21:41] Oh, God. Sorry, I'm just going to leave. [chuckles]

[00:21:44] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:21:44] No it's GIF [/j/]. It's GIF, I think it's two out of three here,

Gary. [00:21:49] **Gary Illyes:** [00:21:49] Why would it be GIF [/j/]?

[00:21:50] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:21:50] Because I said so.

[00:21:51] **Gary Illyes:** [00:21:51] It's a graphic.

[00:21:53] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:21:53] It's GIF. It just sound-- it's sharp, you know. It sounds good,

it rolls off the tongue. GIF.

[00:21:59] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:21:59] Right, I think it was called GIF in the early days. We just didn't know how to pronounce it and then the guy came out and said, Not. And then we all look dumb.

[00:22:06] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:22:06] Eh. Details. You can decide if you looked dumb or not. It's up to you.

[00:22:12] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:22:12] Yeah, and I think early on, we did a lot of PHP. I think it was PHP 2.0 or something? And then before, I remember like Urchin came out. And I was super excited, no one had to print out the HP logs and highlight stuff and bring it to clients, say, "You've got a visit from this search engine or that place."

[00:22:33] And then Urchin sold out. Those Brett Crosby [bleep]. No, I'm joking. I like those guys. And made Google Analytics.

[00:22:40] **Gary Illyes:** [00:22:40] Okay. [laughs]

[00:22:42] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:22:42] [laughs] So Brett Crosby-- I was a huge fan of Urchin from the early days. And when I heard he sold to Google, which he did actually on his wedding day, he actually signed the paperwork on his wedding day.

[00:22:52] **Gary Illyes:** [00:22:52] Really?

[00:22:53] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:22:53] Yes. He actually signed and ran to his wedding and celebrated it. So as soon as he sold and now it's Google Analytics and now they're launching Google Analytics 4, which I'm really, really upset about. I cry every day. Every single day I cry over it.

[00:23:06] **Gary Illyes:** [00:23:06] That's literally why we launch new things.

[00:23:08] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:23:08] Yes, we think to ourselves, "Will this make Barry cry?" and then we launch it. That is our launch criteria.
[00:23:14] **Gary Illyes:** [00:23:14] I mean, we launch it if it will make Barry cry.

[00:23:15] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:23:15] Correct.

[00:23:16] **Gary Illyes:** [00:23:16] It's not like, yeah.

[00:23:17] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:23:17] Yeah, we're not checking beforehand. We heard he likes to be surprised as well. So we prefer not to tell you. If it will surprise him and make him cry. Win-win.

[00:23:25] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:23:25] That's good.

[00:23:26] **Gary Illyes:** [00:23:26] Yes.

[00:23:27] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:23:27] I need more emotions because people tell I'm

emotionless. [00:23:29] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:23:29] Oh, same.

[00:23:30] **Gary Illyes:** [00:23:30] Aw.

[00:23:31] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:23:31] You know why?

[00:23:32] **Gary Illyes:** [00:23:32] It's like you're my brother.

[00:23:34] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:23:34] You know why I'm emotionless?

[00:23:35] **Gary Illyes:** [00:23:35] I feel this is a trick question, but.

[00:23:38] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:23:38] I mean, you should know, I mean.

[00:23:39] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:23:39] Oh.

[00:23:40] **Gary Illyes:** [00:23:40] I should?

[00:23:41] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:23:41] I'm not going to blame you directly but I mean the internet as a whole is often a very trolly place. You could say nice things to me, you can say horrible things to me, it means-- I have no reaction at all. I'm like a blank stare. Nothing matters.

[00:23:52] **Gary Illyes:** [00:23:52] Wait. You said you are not blaming me

personally? [00:23:56] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:23:56] Well, you're part of the issue.

[00:23:57] **Gary Illyes:** [00:23:57] Oh, okay. Usually, I'm the issue.

[00:24:00] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:24:00] [chuckles] Generally. But I don't want you to cry, so.

[00:24:03] **Gary Illyes:** [00:24:03] Oh, I don't do that. My tear ducts are just not there.

[00:24:08] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:24:08] Are people going to enjoy this Off the Record

podcast?

[00:24:10] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:24:10] I have no idea. We haven't even talked about Search or bridged the gap between RustyBrick [chuckles] and Search and how you got involved in SEO. And we are already at the end.

[00:24:22] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:24:22] Should we just end it now?

[00:24:23] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:24:23] Yes, leave them hanging and not talk about Search on Search Off the Record. Because Search is off the record.

[00:24:29] **Gary Illyes:** [00:24:29] I don't think that we have to talk about Search,

though. [00:24:31] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:24:31] Hmm.

[00:24:32] **Gary Illyes:** [00:24:32] It feels like Barry is an interesting person, sometimes. Sometimes he's annoying and we should just highlight that human who's called "RustyBrick". No, who is called Barry Schwartz and just talk about him. Like for example, I'm very interested in his opinion about how one can become the new Barry Schwartz.

[00:24:53] Like, if we wanted to replace Barry Schwartz with someone new, how would we train that person? What would that person need to pay attention to?

[00:25:02] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:25:02] That's a good question.

[00:25:03] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:25:03] Are you planning something?

[00:25:05] **Gary Illyes:** [00:25:05] I don't want to answer that.

[00:25:06] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:25:06] Ah.

[00:25:07] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:25:07] Do you want me to answer that? On a Search

side? [00:25:10] **Gary Illyes:** [00:25:10] Well, yeah.

[00:25:11] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:25:11] It's just follow-- main thing is be consistent. I think John Mueller says this a lot. Consistency is very, very important. And as long as you're consistent about when you do things, you can get it done. It seems like a lot but the Search I do is really generally between the hours of 6AM-- or really 7AM to about 9AM. Or 6AM to 8 AM, in the morning.

[00:25:31] Choosing a two-hour window and I always consistently go through all my feeds, Twitter,

TweetDeck, all types of stuff, forums. Consistently between those times and I write between those times. So I do about, I don't know, 30 minutes of research everyday. And maybe I write for about an hour or so. Maybe less. Each blog post takes me about 4 to 8 minutes.

[00:25:54] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:25:54] Wow.

[00:25:55] **Gary Illyes:** [00:25:55] Wow.

[00:25:56] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:25:56] Do you do warm-up tasks before you start blogging? Or did you used to in the early days?

[00:26:00] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:26:00] What's a warm-up task?

[00:26:01] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:26:01] I don't know, like to just get ready to write. Sometimes I do other things. [chuckles] Like we have our user feedback, I always start with that. I don't know. I read through that queue just to get things moving. I can't just sit down and start writing. But maybe you have other secrets for productivity?

[00:26:20] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:26:20] No, I just write. My blog posts are generally short. Person said X, person suggest, right or wrong, what do you think? Done.

[00:26:27] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:26:27] It's a little more formulaic.

[00:26:29] **Gary Illyes:** [00:26:29] We could apply this template on our docs.

[00:26:32] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:26:32] Dots?

[00:26:33] **Gary Illyes:** [00:26:33] Docs.

[00:26:34] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:26:34] Docs. Oh. Oh, oh, right, right, right. Hmm.

[00:26:36] **Gary Illyes:** [00:26:36] At least the end. Like we should have at the end something like "what do you think?" And then go to Twitter, if you want to comment about it or leave a feedback or something like that.

[00:26:47] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:26:47] It's fine if you send people to Twitter. You should just send people to the forums. This way, if you don't like what they're saying, then delete it.
[00:26:52] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:26:52] What do you mean? We can't delete things on that

forum. [00:26:54] **Gary Illyes:** [00:26:54] Well, that's not cool.

[00:26:56] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:26:56] [chuckles]

[00:26:58] **Gary Illyes:** [00:26:58] Come on. And also Twitter is great because then I don't see

it. [00:27:00] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:27:00] You got to get back on Twitter.

[00:27:01] **Gary Illyes:** [00:27:01] No.

[00:27:02] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:27:02] We miss you.

[00:27:03] **Gary Illyes:** [00:27:03] No.

[00:27:04] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:27:04] Well, keep trying. Try different angles.

[00:27:06] **Gary Illyes:** [00:27:06] I don't-- I literally don't buy that.

[00:27:08] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:27:08] Yes. You could ask him, you can try emotional heartstring. What other kind of methods? Threats? How can we--

[00:27:15] **Gary Illyes:** [00:27:15] That would probably work.

[00:27:16] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:27:16] You think a threat?

[00:27:17] **Gary Illyes:** [00:27:17] Well, it depends on the threat.

[00:27:18] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:27:18] I'm going to transfer all your bitcoin to some offshore accounts if you don't go back on Twitter.

[00:27:23] **Gary Illyes:** [00:27:23] Go ahead. Wait, you haven't even touched anything.

[00:27:25] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:27:25] It's the drones. He's controlling them with his mind, I think. I don't know.

[00:27:30] **Gary Illyes:** [00:27:30] Alright, so.

[00:27:31] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:27:31] Do you have Google Glass here? Where's my Google

Glass? [00:27:33] **Gary Illyes:** [00:27:33] It's next to the pod.

[00:27:36] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:27:36] I know we're out of time but-- and nobody can see this, but I have Google Glass. DId you even have Google Glass?

[00:27:40] **Gary Illyes:** [00:27:40] For our listeners, Barry went to the other end of the room and he's now looking for a Google Glass. And he actually found it.

[00:27:48] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:27:48] And now we're looking at the Google Glass. Is it working? Like it's still in working order?

[00:27:53] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:27:53] I haven't turned it on in years. I have SnapChat glasses, I have Facebook glasses. I buy stuff and never use it. I have an issue.

[00:28:02] **Gary Illyes:** [00:28:02] That makes perfect sense. It's interesting that you are like insanely efficient otherwise and very rational. And then you just buy stuff that you never use. It's great.

[00:28:11] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:28:11] It's technology stuff.

[00:28:13] **Gary Illyes:** [00:28:13] I think that's your weakness. That's fair. You mentioned Twitter. If people wanted to find you on Twitter, where would they go?
[00:28:18] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:28:18] My handle is @rustybrick.

[00:28:20] **Gary Illyes:**
 [00:28:20] Alright, on your website, they can call you, I imagine, send faxes?

[00:28:25] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:28:25] We do have a fax number. I pay, I think like $9 a month for it so I could send one or two faxes per year to the IRS. rustybrick.com.

[00:28:33] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:28:33] Could we send you a fax?

[00:28:34] **Gary Illyes:** [00:28:34] We should send Barry a fax.

[00:28:35] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:28:35] You could send me a fax? Yeah, send me a

fax. [00:28:38] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:28:38] Oh.

[00:28:39] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:28:39] It's on the website. I actually have this guy, if you call into our PDX and you're a spammer, I could transfer you to a guy named Lenny. Lenny is like this old man. He's like this AI, one old man that will keep you on the phone for ten, several, probably like 15, 20, 30 minutes. And if a spammer calls me, I will transfer him to Lenny and it's like he goes through his whole life story, his children, his thoughts in the background.

[00:29:02] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:29:02] It's amazing.

[00:29:03] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:29:03] So if you ever want me to transfer you to Lenny, just give me a call and I'll transfer you over to Lenny.

[00:29:07] **Gary Illyes:** [00:29:07] That's actually amazing. Alright. Enough with the

shenanigans. [00:29:10] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:29:10] Oh.

[00:29:11] **Gary Illyes:** [00:29:11] Oh, I could pronounce shenanigans. Wow. That's surprising. Barry, it was a genuine pleasure to have you here. I really, really enjoyed our conversation. I really hope that we are going to meet soon, probably in New York, because you don't travel. And because you hate travel. And again, thank you so much for joining us and I hope that our listeners like what you had to say.

[00:29:34] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:29:34] I appreciate you having me. I'm sorry if this really ruins the podcast going forward. That was my goal, it's to really just destroy this podcast, so if I accomplished that, I'm happy.

[00:29:44] **Gary Illyes:** [00:29:44] I think you accomplished that, yes. Thank you very much. This will show up in our OKRs and we are going to get fired, most likely. That was a lie.

[00:29:55] ♪ [music] ♪ [00:29:55]

[00:29:57] **Gary Illyes:** [00:29:57] Next time on Search Off the Record, we are going to explore how removals really work. We've been having fun with these podcast episodes. I hope you, the listener, have found them both entertaining and insightful, too.

[00:30:09] Feel free to drop us a note on Twitter @googlesearchc. Or chat with us at one of the next events we go to, if you have any thoughts. And of course, don't forget to like and subscribe. Thank you and goodbye.

[00:30:21] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:30:21] Bye.

[00:30:22] **Barry Schwartz:** [00:30:22] Bye.

[00:30:23] ♪ [music] ♪ [00:30:23]