



3 LESSONS PODCAST

How to Become Your Own Banker and Use Life Insurance to Invest in Real Estate with MC Laubscher

Episode #11 Transcript

Matt Bowles: Foreign. Hey, it's Matt Bowles and this is three real estate investing lessons I wish I knew. My guest today is M.C. Laubscher. He is a real estate investor since 2001. He's also a best-selling author of multiple books and the host of the top-rated Cash Flow Ninja Podcast. He is also the founder of Producers Wealth, a firm helping business owners implement and execute advance best alternative wealth strategies. And he is a member of the Forbes Finance Council and the Million Dollar Round Table, a peer group for the top 1% of financial professionals worldwide.

M.C., welcome to the show.

M.C. Laubscher: Thank you so much for having me. I've been looking forward to this conversation.

Matt Bowles: Man, I am so excited to have you here. Let's just start off, let people know. Where are you recording from today?

M.C. Laubscher: Newtown, Pennsylvania. So, Newtown, Pennsylvania, I'm here in Bucks County. Beautiful time of the year. The leaves are all types of different colors, so we're loving fall right now over here.

Matt Bowles: Well, as the listeners can probably tell, you do not have a Bucks County, Pennsylvania accent. So, can you share a little bit about where you are originally from and share a little bit about your story growing up and the role of rugby your life?

M.C. Laubscher: Yeah, I appreciate it. The accent is from South Africa. So originally from South Africa, I grew up in a very, very interesting time actually in South Africa's history if you think about it. I was a young man when Nelson Mandela was released from prison and then like three years later, he was elected president in the country.

So, I remember during that time too. You know, there's so many lessons. And so, and I look back now as, just as a gift growing up during that time, right. Because as imagine when there's massive societal changes and political changes where you literally, you had an old failing apartheid kind of like regime that failed and disappeared and you had a new system come in.

So, there was a lot of unknowns. People didn't know what was going on, what's coming next, what's happening also. So, a lot of uncertainty, a lot of like unpredictability. How do you plan when you don't, you don't even know what's going to happen tomorrow.

So really as a business owner and as an investor, I look back at those days and I'm like, man, that was like a gift because I saw what people did also during times of great uncertainty and when you can't see ahead into the future. And it's amazing. I mean we all know about, you know, the kind of like what the effect that and the Behaviors of large groups of people. Panic is sets in and people do really silly things.

People listening to this can probably relate to 2020, when people were fighting with each other over toilet paper in Costco. That's kind of the stuff that you do when people start to panic in large, large crowds, in large numbers. So, I saw all of that stuff and I saw the people that actually flourished and came through that pretty well. I saw what they did. And they, you know, they focus on the things that they can control and, you know, they lived every single day focusing on those things and just controlling their environment, so to speak, in their mindset.

But yeah, originally from South Africa, I finished university there and then I ended up, I traveled quite a bit. I had a scholarship playing rugby in university and I ended up playing rugby in the United States.

That's how I ended up here. And it was an amazing experience. I mean, a young man that gets to play in a city-based league, national League. So, every weekend I was playing in a different city against a different team, seeing a different part of the United States, which is an amazing country.

So, I had a lot of fun young guy. I came to the States with one suitcase, a backpack, sense of humor, sense of adventure, and a couple hundred bucks and, you know, let it run.

Matt Bowles: Well, I want to hear also about your real estate investing journey because I know that ties directly into this story. And you actually started real estate investing right before you came to the U.S. can you share what led you to decide to buy your very first rental property? Where was it and what was that first experience like?

M.C. Laubscher: Yeah, so I was, as I mentioned, traveling quite a bit. And I loved history, economics, business, and a little bit of investing at that time, right? And I just started to read a couple of books on it.

And then my mom actually gave me Rich Dad Poor Dad by Robert Kiyosaki. She said, "If you like business books and, you know, economics and investing, you're going to love this one." So, I read that book, and that was kind of my purple pill moment, as I call it, because it just changed my paradigm completely.

And I looked at my situation then and said, "All right, I'm a young guy, I'm traveling, I'm making a little bit of money playing sports, and I'm also doing some odd jobs making money. I have a very unique situation here where I can build a real estate business and start investing in real estate and still pursue my career in sports. And then when that's over, I have something to retire to, and I'm just not retiring from sports."

So, you know, being the quick start that I am on the Kolbe score, within like six months of reading Rich Dad Poor Dad, I purchased my first property. And it was actually in South Africa, a single-family property. I purchased the property, I put some tenants in it, I collected the rent, paid all the bills associated with the property, and at the end of the month, Matt, you're not going to believe it, there was money left over.

And I looked at that and I'm like, "Just like the book. This is amazing. Like, wow." And then it just struck me like a bolt of lightning. I was like, "Well, how many times can I do this?"

If I have one of these and I manage it well, I screen the tenants well, collect the rent, pay the bills, and I have money left over, how quickly can I scale this? Because this is great. I mean, I'm getting cash flow from managing it properly. I'm paying down the debt with someone else's money that they're paying me in rent. The property is appreciating if you buy right, as I know that you share quite a bit on. I'm so aligned with that because you make your money on the buy.

And if you buy in the right place, a growing place where, you know, the neighborhood that I bought, this was actually in South Africa, by the way, a lot of people were moving to because it's easy access to commute into Cape Town. So, yeah, that's kind of when I decided, "Okay, we got something here." And of course, as you know, when you take that dive, you're like, "All right, I'm ready. Let's go." Lessons get learned, right? That's when school begins.

Matt Bowles: So, let's talk about that journey. You buy your first one, it cash flows positively. The light bulb goes on that you would like to try to start to scale this concept. So, can you take us from there on your journey of building and scaling your real estate portfolio?

M.C. Laubscher: I was very excited, but I learned a lot of tough lessons. Being a landlord that doesn't live in the town or city that is in, if you don't have the proper systems and processes in place, is not a good recipe. So, I was out of country too, so it was interesting.

But the lessons that I learned right away were that sometimes tenants don't pay rent. That's not a shocker for real estate folks, right? Sometimes they might even damage your property, and other costs can increase, and you've got to manage it well.

So, as I was doing that, I bought some property in the United States at that stage, single-family too. And then I met a gentleman who kind of changed my life completely. I met him through the rugby network. Believe it or not, the rugby network is incredible because there are just people from all walks of life. You could have white-collar, blue-collar, it doesn't matter where you're from. If you can get on a rugby pitch, make some tackles, and score some tries, you have friends for life, right?

So, through the rugby network, I was introduced to this gentleman who was explained to me as a guy that is in real estate. He does some real estate. And of course, as two fellow ruggers do, we grabbed a beer and talked a little bit of real estate.

And he asked me about what I was doing. I said, "Well, you know, I bought this property, I bought another one." And he's like, "So wait a second, you've actually bought real estate?" And I said, "Yeah, yes." He goes, "Okay, great."

Turns out that he was from a family on the north side of the city of Chicago that had a very large multifamily real estate portfolio. And I was explaining to him that, look, I'm basically unemployable right now. I'd love to learn more because of the Rich Dad Poor Dad mindset of, you know, "I'll work to learn," right?

I'm out of town, down, traveling all the time, playing rugby. But then he said, "well look, when you're in town, come jump in and I'll, I'll teach you the business", which was amazing. So, at that stage, as a young kid, whenever I was in town, I would just jump in. I literally started picking up trash at his multifamily real estate properties. It was quite amazing if I think back now.

Then I started doing handyman jobs, maintenance, eventually some construction, turning over apartments. Then eventually I would lease those apartments, do market research, look at all the different things that were happening in the neighborhoods, go secret shopping, check and see what competitors were doing, what their properties were like, and what we could improve on our end.

Then eventually I got my real estate broker's license, and I was managing, boy, 500-plus units for him. So, I started right at the bottom, and I loved it. I loved the real estate game. I loved my single-family properties, which I still had, but I also loved the multifamily real estate asset class. That's how I eventually got into it because I actually learned that business from the ground up.

So interestingly enough, before I started to invest as a partner with other folks in larger projects and buildings, I would look at a building and think, "I know exactly what's going on there on the weekend. I know when the cops are getting called. I know when they're not getting called. I know what's happening during the day. I know what it looks like."

So, I think that was one of the greatest opportunities that I had. And just again, the Rich Dad Poor Dad philosophy of working to learn, because those lessons eventually led to where I am today.

I'm still very active in multifamily. I'm a partner in many historic resorts, which was an incredible business to learn too, oil and gas deals, and a lot of other types of businesses.

But, you know, really, real estate, if you approach it as a business and you see it as a business from the beginning and manage it as a business, I mean, it's incredible. It was a great start for me.

Matt Bowles: Well, I want to ask you also about how you started to learn about life insurance, how that relates to real estate and then also your entrepreneurial journey in terms of building producers' wealth, your current company and what that offers today specifically for real estate investors.

M.C. Laubscher: No, I appreciate that.

So, the same gentleman that I met, whose family had that very large multifamily portfolio. They also had, at that stage, a structure that was known as a family office. Now, at that stage, I had no idea what a family office was, but essentially, it's a private wealth management firm that manages a particular family's wealth. These are families that are very affluent and have enormous wealth, so they have a team of advisors just working on their wealth.

And in that family office, they have many different financial professionals, right? Whether it's legal, accounting, CPAs, tax strategists, and life insurance people. I had lunch with him one day, and he had some of his advisors with him. During that lunch, I knew what the CPA and the tax strategist guy were doing. I knew what the legal guy was doing. But I was kind of like, "Hey, what is the life insurance guy doing? What's he doing here?"

And he explained to me, "Well, we keep our family's money in life insurance. We've had a business now for three-plus generations. We generate money in the family business, then we position all of that in our family bank, which consists of life insurance policies structured very specifically, like they do in family offices. And then we just leverage our life insurance because that's where we warehouse our cash to buy real estate. And we do it over and over. We make money in our operating businesses, we park it all in life insurance, and we just keep on buying real estate."

And then, obviously, looking at life insurance and real estate, I was like, well, this is like a match made in heaven. They have a lot of very similar characteristics. So, I always try to model the behaviors of successful people. And I always tell people, you don't have to be a Rockefeller to do what the Rockefellers do. You could start small, and it could make a massive difference in your life and in your family's life. You'll see over time that the trajectory of your growth and, of course, your wealth is going to be incredible just by incorporating what you've learned, what you're already seeing, and modeling these behaviors.

So, I took action. This strategy is known by a lot of people as *Infinite Banking*, *Bank on Yourself*, and so forth. I set up my first policies with someone, and then I tried to use them for real estate, which I did. One of the challenges I learned from the very beginning was that sometimes policies are not structured correctly as they are in family offices.

And then once it's set up, here's a shocker for you, man. Most people in financial services don't actually have what they sell, so it's tough for them to advise. Because I would say, "Well, can you help me use this?" "Well, I don't really have one of those." "What do you mean you don't have one of these? You sold me one of these. You don't have one of these?"

Anyway, I started to look at this and go, okay, as an entrepreneur, because at that stage I was building my real estate business, my rugby career was done, and I was exploring a couple of other opportunities, this whole *Infinite Banking* strategy really was working very well for me.

So, I started to share what I was doing at meetups. I think back fondly on it now. You had these real estate meetups and investor association meetups. And I'm going to date myself now, but years ago it wasn't as easy as going onto Meetup.com or Facebook groups and that kind of stuff. You had to go get the free newspaper at the 7-Eleven and check where all the local real estate meetups were going to be, right? Or the free papers they gave away in that area.

Anyway, I went to these meetups, met incredible people, and eventually I was just sharing what I was doing and teaching it. A lot of people at that stage would say, "I'm very interested in doing this myself too."

So as an entrepreneur, I said, you know, there's a massive opportunity here to bring this family office strategy to investors and business owners in a manner where there's an alignment between serving them, helping them, and then doing what's best for the business owner and the investor.

Because with most financial services, it's kind of like you're on opposite sides. Sometimes, if you think about the Wall Street model, they want assets under management because that's how they get paid. Well, that's not necessarily the best thing for the business owner or investor because they want to keep their money where they can deploy it into their business and their investments to grow their portfolio.

So, I looked at this as a massive opportunity to build a company where our mission is to elevate the financial well-being of business owners and their families. And we do that through setting up wealth strategies, Infinite Banking, business planning, and now a lot of legacy planning.

So, I started this in 2015. This is our 10th year. What started in 2016 was Cashflow Ninja, the podcast. As I was building Producers Wealth, I was interviewing all of my clients because I just love to learn. That's why we connect so well. You're the same as me. I love stories, and I love learning what other people are doing.

I was having the most amazing conversations with clients because they were in all types of different businesses and investing in different things. So, I started to think, well, why don't I start recording this and publishing some podcasts?

And that's kind of what gave birth to Cashflow Ninja. Of course, that turned into its own company and has taken on a life of its own. That podcast really helped spread the message of Producers Wealth because we operate in all 50 states in the United States, and we've helped over 500 business owners, investors, and their families in the past 10 years. But Cashflow Ninja really put some rocket fuel behind what we were doing.

Matt Bowles: So, at this point in your journey, you have been investing in real estate for nearly 25 years. You alluded to the fact that you had made all kinds of mistakes and learned from the school of hard knocks along the way over those years. And at this point, based on your own experience, all the people you've worked with, learned from, and all of that.

I want to ask you to reflect back on the last 25 years of your real estate investing journey and distill down the top three lessons, most important that you've learned where if you could go back to the very beginning and give yourself three pieces of advice that you wish you knew when you were starting out, what those three lessons would be.

So, let's go through them one at a time. What would lesson number one be?

M.C. Laubscher: You need to be in two businesses at all time: the business that you're in. So, if you're a real estate investor building out your real estate business, you need to be in that real estate business. But there's a second business you also need to be in, and that's the banking business. And you could structure your own banking system.

You know, it's interesting when I reflect back on my journey. I read Rich Dad, Poor Dad in 2001. I think the book came out in 1997 or something like that, so I wasn't quick to that. But I got there, I read the book, and that really changed my paradigm. And I've read it every single year since, by the way, because when the student is ready, the teacher appears.

And I think it was about the third or the fourth time that I read that book that I looked at those oversimplified financial statements that he has in there, which are fantastic. But I just had a light bulb moment that I looked at this and said, "Wait a second. So, all of these liabilities that's on my financial statement is someone else's asset. So, whose is this?" Because there's always a counterparty to, you know, we've got the double-entry bookkeeping system, so there's always a counterparty. So, whose asset is this?

And it always turns into the bank. Then I look at the banking system and I'm like, "Wait a second. This is amazing." They have a system here where they have a pool of liquidity that they can deploy, but it always comes back to them.

You buy a piece of real estate. You and I are in a transaction. We go to the closing table. I'm buying the property from you. I bring a check to closing, or we sign all the documents. That check comes out of my bank account. It goes straight back where? Into your bank account, back to the banking system.

And it doesn't matter. We could go out for a couple of beers and something to eat too. The same thing. Whoever picks up the tab is going to use, you know, a credit card or a debit card. There'll be a merchant account for the restaurant that it'll go into. They will pay employees and all of the respective people involved, and that'll then go into their bank accounts. So, it's a pretty wild system.

And the other thing is too, if you think about it, whether you deposit money into a bank to spend, save, or invest, or whether you go to that same bank and you borrow money from them to spend, save, or invest, the bank makes the money.

So, this whole structure, this whole system, this banking system, is a family office strategy where you could set up your own bank, your family bank, that becomes the banker to your business. You always have access to liquidity for whatever you need from your own bank. You don't have to go begging at a bank or try to, you know, get another credit card and so forth.

You know, one of the things that helped me back in the beginning, especially when you scale, right? You would buy a property, you would get a tenant in there, start collecting rent. You buy the second one, put a tenant in there, start collecting rent. All of a sudden, one doesn't pay. Something breaks, you know, there's an expense at the other one.

Especially in the beginning, when you're not doing things at scale, if you don't have access to liquidity, now you're just going to have to rely on credit. And I did that every single time. It was almost like I took a

couple of steps forward and then a couple of steps back, and a couple of steps forward and then a couple of steps back.

And as soon as I started to set up this system, this infinite banking system, now I had liquidity that I could tap into. I don't have to go to the bank, and I don't have to go on cards. I could use that, and it's kind of like a buffer for you to get through those big expense months or, you know, a little bit less income and so forth.

So that really moved the needle. If I have to think about the one thing that has made the biggest difference, it was this. And I've heard all the sayings. You've heard them. I've said them, by the way, about how cash is trash, you know, all those different things that we could say.

But I can tell you this: cash is king when you really need liquidity, whether it's to solve current problems, cash flow problems, big expenses, or whether it is opportunities.

The other thing, if you have this system in place too—and that's why I wish I had it earlier. Right? And it wasn't too late, but I mean, yeah, I wish it was earlier. When you have access to capital and you have your own system, opportunities find you all the time.

I mean, I've been involved with projects and it's like, "Oh, we need someone to put down the earnest money as one of the partners, basically." And they're like, "Well, it could take a couple of weeks, and, you know, I got to liquidate some stuff." And I'm like, "Well, I have my own banking. I could get the capital for the down payment or the earnest money or something."

So, opportunities just present themselves when you have access to liquidity.

So, lesson number one is be in the business that you're in, but also be in the banking business. Always be in two businesses. And, you know, that's a lesson I learned from Nelson Nash. He was a great mentor of mine. So, I wish I'd learned that one earlier.

Matt Bowles: All right, lesson number two, that you wish you knew when you were starting out.

M.C. Laubscher: Yeah. You know, real estate is one side of it, and I mentioned the banking system that you have, right? But the other lesson that I also wished that I knew earlier is how life insurance and real estate are the exact same asset classes. They just have different collateral. The one is a building and the one is a person.

And when I say that, you know, the first time, usually people are like, "What are you talking about? Real estate and life insurance are the same? How is that the same?" And this is why family offices just love these two asset classes.

But if you think about it this way, let's just take real estate and life insurance. So, when you buy a property and let's just say you put a mortgage on it, you put your 10, 15, 20% down. You put a mortgage on it. First, there's a payment period for that mortgage, right? Fifteen years, 30 years, right? And then the second thing is every single time you make a payment, you actually build more equity in that property because you're paying down principal and, of course, interest. But you're getting more equity in that property as you're paying down that mortgage.

With a life insurance policy, you can structure a life insurance policy the same way, with different payment periods. Whether it's five payments, 10 payments, 15, or 20, you get to decide the number of payments that you're going to make. And with every payment into that contract, you're building up equity just much faster. Usually, 70 to 80% of your premiums, if structured correctly, is all going to the equity in the life insurance policy, whereas it's a little bit less in real estate, right?

The second thing of how these two asset classes are extremely similar is when you, if it's, you know, let's just say it's an investment property, put some tenants in that property, collect rent from them, pay the expenses, and at the end of the month you've got positive cash flow. With life insurance, if you set your contract up with a mutual life insurance carrier, you become a shareholder, an owner of that life insurance carrier. So, when the life insurance carrier is profitable that year, you get to participate in the profitability through a dividend, which gets paid as cash flow into your policy every single year.

They're not guaranteed because nobody can guarantee a profit, right? Just as you cannot guarantee it with real estate. But these companies have been paying dividends since around the mid-1800s, every single year, consistently. One carrier has been paying them since 1847. It's kind of insane.

The other thing is, when you have real estate, there are some incredible tax benefits involved with real estate, and we don't have to go down every single one. Your audience is very familiar with the tax benefits. But the same applies to life insurance. With life insurance, the money that's put into that contract is guaranteed, and it's guaranteed to grow. Then you get the dividends, but it's also growing tax-free. That money will never be taxed. The dividends that you receive are tax-free. You can access the money tax-free, which is another similarity that I'll get to, and then the death benefit goes tax-free to your beneficiaries.

The other similarity between the two is when you want to access liquidity. Let's just say you have a property with some equity in it and you want to use that equity to go buy another property. Well, you can get a home equity line of credit, a HELOC, or you could do a cash-out refinance. With life insurance, it's the same thing. How do you access the equity to leverage the life insurance contract to buy real estate? You can get a life insurance line of credit. So that's how you access the equity of it, the exact same way as you would do with real estate using a HELOC.

The other thing, which is fascinating, is if you look at the real estate world and you look at mortgages, there's an entire market for mortgages and secondary and tertiary markets for buying and selling mortgages. Well, guess what? You could do the exact same thing with life insurance. It's called life settlements. There's an entire market for those contracts.

The other thing with real estate too, if it's bought correctly and managed correctly, you're going to get appreciation of your asset, right? It's going to increase in value. With a properly structured life insurance policy, you're going to get appreciation as well as the equity goes up, but the appreciation comes through the death benefit in that specific contract.

You can actually reverse mortgage real estate, of course, and you can, in a very similar strategy, reverse mortgage a life insurance contract to pull out tax-free income.

So, I know I've been going on. I could probably keep talking about it, but it was fascinating. It blew my mind when I sat down and looked at all these similarities. Then I realized, I said, "Well, Doug, this is why they do this in family offices." It's an incredible place to park capital in these life insurance contracts, which I heard from that friend of mine that I met years ago, and then leverage that capital to buy more real estate.

And then the cash flow from the real estate, well, you're just putting it back into the life insurance. There's a whole system of this infinite banking that you can build up.

So, I wish I'd known that earlier. I mean, the penny didn't drop until later, and I said, "Wait a second, this is wild." These two asset classes, because life insurance is an asset class just like real estate is, are viewed in family offices as allocations. They look at how much they allocate to each particular asset class, right?

And I wish I knew that sooner. I just wish the penny had dropped a little earlier, because I realized, "This is the exact same thing," and it's incredible if it's used correctly as part of a combined strategy.

Matt Bowles: All right, M.C., what is lesson number three that you wish you knew when you were just starting out?

M.C. Laubscher: Yeah. So, here's the other thing that I think I wish I knew right away when I started out. When I read Rich Dad, Poor Dad, you know, the main thesis in the book is cash flow, right? The first time that you read it. And of course, there are more lessons every time you reread it. It's cash flow.

And it's all about, "Hey, let's just not work for money. Let's have your money work for you," which is fantastic. That's great. Put your money to work. Just give it a spade and a pick and put it out there. Put it to work. That's great.

But what's even better is if you're very intentional and you have a strategy where you're using different types of asset classes. Like I mentioned, real estate, life insurance—there could be other asset classes that you bring in too. But if you position it all together and combine it in a strategy where you have each dollar doing many different things for you simultaneously.

So, if you just have, you know, let's just say \$100,000, and that \$100,000 is buying you real estate, and the real estate is cash flowing, its producing tax benefits, there's appreciation—all the great stuff that real estate does—that's fantastic.

How do we even put rocket fuel on that? Well, what if we took that \$100,000 from a life insurance policy where you do it through a life insurance line of credit or a policy loan, which means you never actually touch that \$100,000 in that policy? It continues to grow uninterrupted, tax-free in there. It has a death benefit that appreciates, increases every year as that asset increases for you. And of course, you know, you have the tax benefits.

So, if you just use that one pool of \$100,000, look at the different things that it's doing. It's controlling real estate, generating cash flow, tax benefits, appreciation of the asset. It's providing a death benefit, tax-free growth in a policy, and more.

So that one pool of \$100,000 is doing many, many different jobs simultaneously. And this is the one—and I wouldn't even call it a hack, I don't even like that term so much—it's the one strategy that the ultra-wealthy and the ultra-affluent, the 0.01% in this country, do every day. Banks do it. Insurance companies do it. You know, we see a lot of entrepreneurs and investors do it.

So don't just let your money work for you. Let it work smart and hard, and in multiple places simultaneously.

Matt Bowles: All right, M.C., for people that would like to learn more about this, they would like to go deeper. How can people find you, follow you, connect with you? Please let people know how they can listen to the Cashflow Ninja podcast. And also, I want you to tell people about your book *Get Wealthy for Sure* and how they can get a copy of it.

M.C. Laubscher: *Cashflow Ninja*, you just go to cashflowninja.com. There's links to Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and all the other fun places where you can find our episodes.

And then, yeah, for your listeners, if they want to download a free copy—an eBook and an audiobook, because I know you guys and girls like to listen to podcasts, so you're probably going to like listening to the book—you just go to getwealthyforsure.com.

When you go to getwealthyforsure.com, you'll find a link where you can click on it and download the eBook and the audiobook. And then there's also links to case studies of how we use real estate and life insurance.

There's also a link if you want to book a call with myself and my team and explore options for you and your family. So that's getwealthyforsure.com.

Matt Bowles: We are going to link all of that up in the show notes. You're going to be able to find direct links there. M.C. this was amazing my friend. Thank you for coming on the show.

M.C. Laubscher: Thank you so much for having me. It was a lot of fun. Appreciate you and appreciate your audience.

Matt Bowles: All right, good night, everybody.

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