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SIDE F.

FOUNDERS' JOURNEYS SPARKS BY FIRE AND DRIVEN BY PURPOUSE.



#0

EDITION

Because everything begins somewhere—with a story that might inspire you, challenge you, or simply remind you that you are not alone.



What Doesn't Get Told

Andrea Monge Roncal

There's a part of the story that almost never makes it in. It's not necessarily the product, the metrics, or the funding round. It's what brought us here in the first place. A moment. An intuition. An impulse we can't always explain—but can't ignore either.

Side F was born out of the need to look in that direction. The one that doesn't make headlines. That doesn't get celebrated on stage. But is present in every step: in the decision to begin, in what's held in silence, in the force that sometimes feels bigger than the idea itself.

Not long ago, I attended my first international event, where I crossed paths with people from over 100 countries—all building, leading, or dreaming of transforming something. In those moments of connection, something lit up. They weren't just pitching. They were sharing stories. Stories that started in very different places, but all carried something in common: an inner fire that deserved to be told.

Since I started my own journey, I've always been searching for impact to transform what hurts, what inspires me, and what I don't want to leave unchanged. And along the way, I've discovered that storytelling isn't just a way of understanding the world—it's a way of standing with it.

That's why Side F isn't just an ebook. And it's not exactly a magazine either. It's a space to recognize the invisible side of those who build. The side no one sees—but the one that changes everything. And when we name it, it might remind us we're not so alone.

Thank you for being here.
Andrea

Global Entrepreneurship Congress 2025

Most international events showcase innovation. But a few go deeper—where what's truly exchanged isn't just business cards, but conviction.

I went from "I'm not ready to be here" to "there's a reason I'm here. "

The Global Entrepreneurship Congress (GEC) was that for me: a space where I witnessed how the journeys of thousands of founders, from vastly different backgrounds, all carry the same silent questions. I attended without knowing exactly what to expect. I was invited as part of Peru's national delegation and ended up on stage in my first-ever international panel.

What kind of ecosystem creates a space like this?

The GEC was born in 2009, led by the Global Entrepreneurship Network (GEN)—a global platform that now spans over 170 countries. GEN supports the development of inclusive entrepreneurship ecosystems through a wide range of programs, from startup policy to innovation in underrepresented markets.

The GEC brings together entrepreneurs, policymakers, investors, and changemakers to co-create solutions, share knowledge, and expand access to opportunities. It's not just a congress; it's a snapshot of what the future of entrepreneurship could look like —when the center isn't only about scale, but about purpose.

Founded 2009

Country Reach 170+

Organized by: GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP NETWORK


Credit: GEC Official Photography


Credit: GEC Official Photography


Credit: GEC Official Photography





During my first panel at
the Startup Huddle Demo

Founders I met at the GEC — What drives them, what they're building, What's next?

At a global event like the GEC, not everything happens on stage.

Sometimes, the most meaningful moments unfold in the spaces in between — a hallway conversation, a shared smile after a panel, a drink, a question asked at just the right time.

After the event, I reached out to the standout founders I connected with and asked a few driving questions:

Who are you?
What drives you?
What did you take away from the GEC?
And what's next?



RICH SMITH (USA)

Credit: GEC Official Photography

Rich's GEC Highlights:

"There were so many moments to highlight; who can pick just one? For me it was connecting with fellow ecosystem builders committed to closing real-world gaps; from overlooked founders to untapped regional potential. The most powerful exchanges often happened in the in-between moments, where strategy met lived experience. I was deeply inspired by the vast knowledge of the GEC team and the warm, intentional welcome from global ambassadors. Their willingness to share openly, for the greater good of entrepreneurs everywhere; this event reminded me that this work is both global and deeply personal."

BIO

Rich Smith is an entrepreneur, mentor, and builder of ecosystems. As the CEO of Critical Business Group and Founder of Impact Week TLH, he helps turn strategy into traction. Whether guiding students, startups or business owners through growth and scale or mentoring the next generation of founders, his mission is to build resilient companies and thriving communities.

Key Focus & Mission:

- Championing founder-first strategies through **Critical Business Group**, helping businesses scale with clarity, efficiency, and purpose.
- Creating immersive experiences like **Impact Week TLH** to spark ideas, collaborate, engage people and community.
- Providing one-on-one mentorship to students at **Florida State University's Jim Moran College** and offering early-stage, real-world guidance to founders through the Venture **Mentoring Team.** To create his own business Academy
- Acting as a network organizer with the **Global Entrepreneur Network (GEN)**, connecting dots across regions to support capital access, global exposure, and scalable growth.
- Advocating for sustainable exits through services like the **CBG Business Exit Blueprint**, aligning operational excellence with financial readiness for long-term legacy.



A Sneak Peek/Shout-Out

We have been planning for GEW 2025! Now with the help of GEC our local effort; **Impact Week TLH (Tallahassee, Florida)** is expanding its reach. We have a sharper focus on partnerships, founder wellness, and meaningful access to resources.

Personally and professionally: I am working on a reimagined incubator “Studio” model designed to disrupt the stagnation of traditional accelerators. And we continue to help business owners exit by getting the best value for their business through our Deal “Due Diligence” services.

Connect with Rich on LinkedIn or through CRITICAL BUSINESS GROUP





CARLOS FERNANDO VILLACRESES (ECUADOR)

Credit: GEC Official Photography

Carlos's GEC Highlights:

The GEC in Indianapolis was a vibrant space of connection among ecosystem actors. What struck me the most was the strong spirit of collaboration—attendees were always open to conversations, cooperation, and co-creation.

A common thread throughout the event was the idea of delivering value and pursuing purpose. That's incredibly powerful.

●●● BIO

Carlos is a consultant in strategy, innovation, and automation with artificial intelligence. Dedicated his career to strengthening the entrepreneurial ecosystem and the development of MSMEs in Latin America, working across the public sector, academia, and private enterprise. His purpose is to build bridges between innovation, public policy, and business collaboration to transform realities.

Key Focus:

- Former Undersecretary for **MSMEs and Handicrafts in Ecuador**, where I led national policies to strengthen entrepreneurship and productivity.
- Founder of **Kafevisa Consulting**, a firm specialized in business strategy and AI-powered automation for sales, customer service, and internal processes.
- Professor and mentor in digital transformation and innovation programs at universities such as **USFQ, UDLA, UTPL, and UTA**—training the next generation of entrepreneurs and leaders.
- Ecuadorian delegate at international forums including the Global Entrepreneurship Congress, ACE Michigan, and the Ibero-American SME Forum.
- Advocate for collaborative economies and territorial development, with experience in strategic planning, public innovation, and capacity building.



Sneak Peek / Announcement

At Kafevisa, we're about to launch a smart automation solution for Latin American MSMEs—integrating conversational AI, data analytics, and CRM into one accessible and personalized platform. It's designed specifically for early-stage entrepreneurs.

We're looking for strategic partners who want to democratize technology and accelerate the transformation of thousands of businesses across the region.

Connect with Carlos on LinkedIn





Rohan's GEC Highlights:

The Diplomacy Workshop with Meridian was 🔥. It flipped the script on how we think about entrepreneurship — not just as innovation, but as international engagement. Sitting with changemakers from around the world, we explored how diplomacy isn't just for governments anymore — founders, builders, and creatives are all on the frontlines of global connection.

BIO

Rohan Brown — ecosystem builder, tournament architect, and a relentless connector of global talent and capital. From hosting pitch battles that turn founders into legends to bridging early-stage startups with state agencies, I'm on a mission to make innovation borderless and accessible. Currently driving founder-first initiatives in Nevada with UNLV, UNR and GOED.

Key Focus :

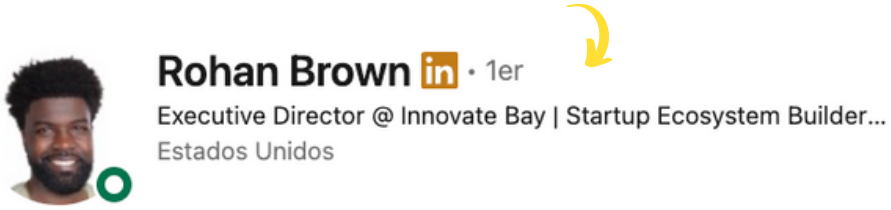
- Dealflow with a Purpose: Turning pitch competitions into pipeline engines for investors and public-private partners.
- Startup Relocation Strategy: Showcasing cities like Las Vegas and Reno as the next-gen innovation hubs.
- Championing Diverse Founders: Designing platforms where underestimated talent gets over-delivered opportunity.
- Ecosystem Weaving: Connecting education, government, capital, and culture to build thriving startup communities.
- Narrative Building: Creating space for founders to own their stories — and pitch them like it's the main event.



A Sneak Peek/Shout-Out:

Pitch Mayhem returns this November during Global Entrepreneurship Week — with a final showdown in November right before FI. New sectors. New stakes. New partners. Let's make some noise.

Connect with Rohan on LinkedIn





DANIEL ANGEL (COLOMBIA)

Daniel's GEC Highlights:

Connecting with fellow Latin American colleagues who share this mission—and with strong U.S.-based institutions eager to support entrepreneurship.

BIO

Director of Rebel Business School in Colombia, an organization that helps people from any background start a business—with no upfront investment, no debt, and no need for a business plan. We've worked with NEET youth, Venezuelan migrants, victims of conflict, single mothers, and older adults.

Key Focus & vision:

- At Rebel, we've helped over 40,000 people start their own businesses.
- 60% of participants generate sales during the program.
- 89% are still operating after the first year.

A Sneak Peek/Shout-Out:

We're about to launch the first Rebel School program for the U.S. market, offering bilingual content in English and Spanish tailored to the Hispanic community.

Connect with Daniel on LinkedIn



Daniel Angel Castro · 1er

🔥 Te ayudo a crear o mejorar el impacto de tus programas de...

Bogotá

The meaning of

SIDE F

When I met Ony at the GEC, something stood out beyond his role or resume: his presence carried a quiet strength, the kind that comes from building with both purpose and memory. His journey wasn't only shaped by entrepreneurship—it was shaped by resilience, roots, and the decision to keep showing up.



ONY SNOW

My name is Ony, and I am the founder of Opallite was lucky enough to be one of the many attendees to GEC this year. I am also a father, a dreamer, part of the LGBTQ+ community, a sit-down comedian, a poet and a builder of what doth not yet exist—and I am walking through the hardest chapter of my life.

I'm 33, and I did everything I thought I was supposed to in life (according to my parents). I got a college degree from IU and started a family. I became a husband, a provider, and had a solid tech job as a software engineer. I was building a life of purpose and passion. But in 2023, during the so-called "**market correction**," the life I had began to unravel. I didn't know the tech world I'd given myself to (And that every career advisor, newspaper, college professor, suburban parent, radio talk host and self made entrepreneur – for at nearly two decades said I should pursue) would crash & never return to what it once was—and so for months, I hammered away relentlessly, trying to get back into the industry. Unknowingly wasting my time.

I came very close—more than once—but ultimately, it was fruitless. 2023 came and went with seemingly no way back to who I was. I was lost and thought I had hit rock bottom. Then, in August 2024—rock bottom bottomed out. As of today—just nine months ago—in addition to losing my career and role as a father figure, I lost my children, my marriage, and my home. I became a survivor of domestic violence— became dangerously sad & had to receive help to cope with everything I lost.

I was a full-time father to my radiant daughter Luna—who is special needs and the very heart of my world—and to my three amazing, wonderful boys: Avery, Jackson, and Kooper, for seven incredibly fulfilling years and with all of it gone, I didn't just lose the scaffolding of my life. I lost the whole damn sky above it.

And yet, even then something in me refused to stay silent. A quiet, stubborn voice (that I probably got from my mother) kept rising:

“It’s not too late.
You’re not too old.
Rise up from the ashes.
Start something.
Help someone.
Catch fire—just like Katniss.
Maybe get a bow”

Eventually, through lots of therapy and creative workshops in the lab (the shower) that voice became **Opallite**—a company forged in the fallout, built to protect and uplift digital artists and creators in a time when AI-generated content has shaken the very ground we walk on. It’s a bold vision conceived by my own lumpy space brain (because we’re literally made of stardust) & made from my very own blood sweat & tears & tears & even more tears. (Seriously guys It’s okay cry - in the great words of **Myles Smith** - “let it out, let it go, you can let the river flow”)

And out of all of that emotional fertilized soil—came the idea to create a new ecosystem—a marketplace bound to hardware, designed to anchor real creatives in a world increasingly untethered. Some would say now is the worst time to start a business—especially one this grand—while fighting homelessness, divorce, and hustling gig work just to survive. (**Embrace** your hero's journey) But… really, if you think about it… when you have nothing, you also have nothing to lose.

But really, I am proud of myself, and I proudly share my story with those who’d care to read it. Because I am not ashamed of who I am or where I am in life. I am not ashamed that the suit top and bottom I wore to GEC came from a dumpster and has someone else's name embroidered on the inside (let's be honest tho - I looked real damn good in it despite the facts—) or that my car was totaled the week before in a flash flood and I had to borrow one to attend. I’m not ashamed that I couldn’t afford a ticket and was gifted a promo code by the wonderful people at The Mill in Bloomington, Indiana. (**Seriously**, they have been amazing)

These things do not diminish me—they define the raw truth of where I come from. Some of the world’s most beautiful things grow from the fertile soil of rock bottom, and I am sure that, like myself, there were those at GEC who walked those very grounds—who are also doing everything in their power to grow a garden.



And GEC ? ~Pshhh~ It felt like destiny. A constellation of weird & interesting coincidences led me there like a cat chasing a laser—like the universe was weaving something just for me. I arrived tired, unsure what I was searching for—but what I found was magic (not actually): conversations that shifted my perspective, connections that sparked possibility, and the simple, powerful feeling of being seen. The panels, the energy, the stage—it all felt surreal. But what moved me most wasn't the glitz or polish. It was being allowed to stand, as I was, among giants.

To speak the truth of my journey in a room full of brilliance—and to feel, if only for 4 days, that I belonged in this new world. I was even invited to speak on stage briefly by Elizabeth Gore (CEO & Co-founder of Hello Alice) where I was asked financial questions about **Opallite's** non-existent revenue & budget to which I happily made up answers for. (Idea stage- but every rocket needs a launch pad)

Now, I know this might sound like oversharing to some (Or many lol). But I believe that radical vulnerability is a form of strength. Just like me, there are others walking through their own personal hells—wearing smiles to cover wounds, pretending they aren't breaking. Maybe it's just my inner rebel-scum founder speaking but I believe we need to stop pretending. We aren't all rock-solid 5-star SSR rank superstars capable of reaching the stars without first falling to the dirt. And that's okay. Because the more honest we are about our struggles, the stronger the bridges we build between each other become. It's in sharing our lowest moments that we create space for others to rise. (It's almost like—being real with people helps you create something —real with people *shocked pikachu face). I fully own my journey & my story because I know my story isn't one of weakness. It is a story of fortitude, of resilience, and of unrelenting strength.

About Ony

That my name is Ony Snow & that I'm here. That I'm building
—not because it's easy, but because I have to.
Because my daughter deserves a future worth living in.
Because the creative world deserves a better path forward.
Because someone has to do it.
And like Mark Cuban once said: "**Why not me?"**

My mission is simple: to help people.

My spark is Opallite.
And my reason is love.
My drive is for myself, for my daughter—
but also probably the result of some super gene-combo
that's given me the same fervor and stubborn-as-all-hell determination
as the Skywalkers, the Potters, and the Katniss Everdeens of the world.
The kind of people who get knocked down, lose everything, and still come back swinging—because quitting sure as hell isn't in my DNA.

My key focus as a Founder

- **Launching Opallite as the first human-first digital art platform that doesn't just live online—but shows up in the real world.** We're building a hardware and marketplace ecosystem where digital artists—from every background—can finally be seen, valued, and paid in public spaces like galleries, cafes, and cultural centers.
- **Fighting for the rights, revenue, and recognition of real artists.** With verified attribution, curated drops, and anti-theft tech, Opallite makes sure creators keep their credit, their cash, and their control.
- **Proving that real creativity and raw emotion still run the world.** AI might generate content—but it can't tell your story. We're building a platform that reminds the world why human-made still means something.

- **Leading from the scars, not just the script.** I believe that transparency, lived experience, and vulnerability aren't weaknesses—they're superpowers. I'm building Opallite as a father, a founder, and someone who knows what it means to start over with nothing but belief.
- **Blending tech, art, and community to build more than a company—I'm building an ecosystem.** One that creates layers of trust, income, and real-world opportunity for creators—through strong strategic partnerships and a platform designed to protect what matters most: people

GEC Highlights:

Many of the most real connections I made at GEC didn't happen at the conference itself—they happened on the dance floor at Jamaica Night at the Slippery Noodle, and packed into the tiny karaoke room at the Punch Bowl Social. That's where people drop their walls, move without ego, and let rhythm guide the moment. It's the same energy I look for in friends & business partners: someone who listens, adapts, and isn't afraid to work up a sweat—whether it's gettin' jiggy on the dance floor or standing shoulder to shoulder like karaoke sardines, singing Bohemian Rhapsody with our whole bodies as we try to hit those "Frank" high notes. Jamaica Night and the **Fish Bowl Social** (yes, that's a callback pun to the karaoke sardines) were just small sparks that set off a spectacular firework of moments—each one leading to deep connections and the beginnings of amazing friendships with incredible people from all around the world… and even a few locals from right here in my own backyard.

Jeanette Renshaw, Rebecca Louise, Pretty Ndlovu, Romina Díaz Machco, Laveréna Wienclaw, Jair Hernandez , Marina Lita, Reed Lita, Kevin Celisca, Zana Ahmed and Takisha Jones are just a few of those whose bonds we forged—on the dance floor or canned in Karaoke. (Another sardine pun - I'm on roll!). While every single part of GEC from the set up to the panels were amazing, my favorite part? That would be the people I met, the memories we made & the friendships we forged.

A Sneak Peek/Shout-Out:

Right now, I'm focused on building the right relationships—the kind that lead to meaningful partnerships, aligned support, and long-term success. **Opallite** isn't just an idea—it's a well-defined vision with a stunning pitch deck and a bold mission to reshape how the world experiences digital art.

We're proud to have our first official Advisor and Success Coach on board: **Former heavyweight world champion "Relentless" Lamon Brewster**, who brings unmatched resilience, discipline, and belief in what we're building. He's been a great friend and mentor of mine for years and I am so honored to have him join the team. As a first-time founder, I'm learning in real time what it means to lead something this ambitious.

I'm doing everything in my power to make sure every decision I make is an informed one—and I'm actively looking for **experienced business mentors** who can help guide me as we grow.

We're looking for capital but we're not **just** looking for capital—we're looking for **people who believe in the mission & the vision.**

People who care about creativity, community, and doing meaningful work. If that sounds like you...



Here's the sneak peek at his pitch deck

Connect with Ony on LinkedIn



Ony Snow · 1er
Founder & CEO
Indianápolis, IN



Innovation

Nutri-ice: Reimagining What Already Exists

In the world of innovation, not everything starts with technology. Sometimes, meaningful transformation comes from a very real, very human need. That's the case of Nutri-Ice a product that didn't begin with a formula, but with a question: **What if medical nutrition could feel — and taste — like relief?**

Seeing what was already there

Alan Mackenzie wasn't trying to start a company. In 2016, he lost his wife Alison to cancer. During her treatment, Alison couldn't tolerate most foods. She rejected the nutritional supplements commonly given in hospitals.

The only thing she could manage to eat was ice cream — not out of indulgence, but because it was all her body could handle.

That simple, overlooked behavior became the seed of something bigger.

Mackenzie partnered with oncologist Dr. Jon Krell and chef Alan Rosenthal to create My Doctor's Recipe, a healthcare brand with a clear mission: to develop therapeutic foods people actually want to eat.

A Product Built Around the Body: From that partnership came Nutri-Ice — a frozen, nutrient-dense supplement made by hand in Kent, England, using only natural ingredients and science-backed formulation.



Each 100g portion delivers:

- Over 300 kcal
- 10+ grams of protein
- 27 grams of healthy fat
- More than 30% of the daily recommended intake of Vitamin C, B6, B12, D, Zinc, Iron and Magnesium

What makes it unique is its DJK+ microencapsulation technology, developed by Dr. Krell. This formula allows for timed nutrient release without altering the flavor — meaning it doesn't taste like medicine.
It tastes like dessert.

MADE WITH DJK+™

A New Category: Functional Food with Feeling

Nutri-Ice doesn't fit neatly into existing categories.
It's not a snack.
It's not a drug.

It sits in a growing space where clinical nutrition meets emotional design — food that works and comforts.

What It Solves — Beyond Taste

Up to **80% of nutritional supplements** in hospitals go to waste. Not because they don't work, but because people can't — or won't — consume them.

Nutri-Ice addresses that issue at the root. It's small, easy to swallow, and its frozen form soothes the mouth and throat — ideal for patients dealing with nausea, fatigue, or low appetite.

Its clinical impact is substantial:

- Reduces post-operative complications by up to 50%
- Shortens hospital stays by up to 3 days
- Improves quality of life during recovery
- Increases likelihood of survival when used consistently

Originally developed for oncology patients, Nutri-Ice is now recommended for anyone recovering from surgery, illness, or physical exhaustion.



"One in five cancer patients doesn't die from cancer — they die from malnutrition."

— Alan Mackenzie, Co-Founder

"My Doctor's Recipe wasn't born as a business idea — it was a solution. We wanted to create something that didn't just work, but helped. Something that made a real difference during one of life's hardest moments."

— Jon Krell, Co-Founder & Oncologist



Nutri-Ice reminds us that not all innovation comes from inventing the new. Sometimes, it's about re-seeing the familiar.

That a frozen treat could be a source of clinical nutrition — with texture, taste, and science — is a testament to what happens when people build not from an idea, but from a deeply felt problem.

If you're building something in health, food, education, or care:

Maybe it's not about what we can create.
Maybe it's about asking:
What's already here — and what haven't we noticed yet?

SPARKS OF *Inspiration*

100 DAYS WITHOUT FEAR



Michelle Poler is a Venezuelan designer, global speaker, and founder of the movement **Hello Fears**. Her story went viral when, as part of her master's degree in Branding at SVA in New York, she decided to start a bold project:
Facing 100 fears in 100 days.

What started as a school assignment turned into an emotional revolution.

What she discovered while facing 100 fears

Michelle thought she had at least 100 fears. But what she found was even more powerful: She didn't have 100 fears. She had 7.

- ⚡ Pain
- ⚡ Danger
- ⚡ Disgust
- ⚡ Embarrassment
- ⚡ Rejection
- ⚡ Loneliness
- ⚡ Loss of control



Where our fears come from?

Michelle proposed a classification:

- Universal fears: pain, danger, disgust
- Cultural fears: shame, rejection
- Personal fears: loneliness, control

She comes from a Jewish family of Holocaust survivors, and grew up in Venezuela — a country rich in beauty but high in danger. Her fear made sense. It had history. But she realized something powerful:

Fear may come from the past, but it doesn't have to define the future.

The Fear cycle: One of Michelle's most useful contributions is naming the emotional cycle we all go through when we face fear:

1. **Discovery stage** – "I think I'm scared of this…"
2. **Denial stage** – "It's not a big deal."
3. **Determination stage** – "Okay, I'm going to do it."
4. **WTF stage** – "Why am I doing this?!"
5. **Action stage** – You do the thing. You shake. You survive.
6. **Celebration stage** – "I did it!"
7. **Post-WTF shame** – "Okay… I was very dramatic."

After 100 fears, Michelle said: **"Not even once was the actual experience worse than what I had imagined."**

Her tools to keep moving:

She didn't become fearless — she just learned how to walk alongside fear.

- Cognitive tools: things she told herself like, "This will be over in 10 seconds."
- Behavioral tools: like counting 1-2-3 before jumping off a cliff.
- Emotional tools: like dancing before stepping on stage to boost her energy.



What it gave me?

Michelle taught me that we don't get rid of fear — we make space for it.
And we learn to move anyway.

"You will never be ready.
But you can be willing."
— Michelle Poler

A personal note

Fear can paralyze. I know that.
I've felt it in my body, in decisions I didn't take, in words I held back.

But I've also learned that when I look at fear directly — when I name it — it often shows me exactly what matters most.

Sometimes fear shows up before a leap.
Other times, it's the leap that shrinks the fear.

This story stayed with me during moments when I didn't feel ready... but knew I had to act anyway.

That's why I'm sharing it with you. Because fear doesn't always leave — but it can change shape. And when it does, so do you.



100 DAYS WITHOUT FEAR | MICHELLE POLER | TEDXHOUSTON