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Annie: Hi friends! Welcome to another episode of That Sounds Fun. I'm your host Annie F. Downs. I'm really happy to be here with you today. We have got a great show in store.

Before we dive into today's conversation, I want to take a moment to share about one of our incredible partners, Athletic Greens. So if you're wondering what Athletic Greens even is, it's one thing we can do to be good friends to our health. See, in one scoop of Athletic Greens used, mix it in really cold water, that one scoop contains 75 high quality vitamins, minerals, Whole foods source superfoods, probiotics, and adaptogens, and forms that your body can absorb.

Their special blend of ingredients supports your energy level, gut health, nervous system, immune system, and ability to focus. So many things, y'all. You're investing in an all-in-one nutrition supplement that's lifestyle friendly. So whether you eat keto, gluten-free, paleo, Athletic Greens has got you covered.

And this one habit is way cheaper than getting all the different supplements you need yourself. It's time to reclaim your health and arm your immune system with convenient daily nutrition, especially as we finish up cold and flu season. Yes and Amen. Just one scoop and cup of cold water every day. That's it.

To make it easy, Athletic Greens is gonna give you a free one year supply of immune-supporting vitamin D and five free travel packs with your first purchase. All you have to do is visit athleticgreens.com/soundsfun. Again, that is athleticgreens.com/soundsfun to take ownership over your health and pick up the ultimate daily nutrition insurance.

Intro: Y'all, today on the show I get to talk with my good friend Brandon Heath. He's an award-winning... I mean, we're talking five time Grammy-nominated, eight-time Dove Award-winning, Nashville native singer-songwriter. He was with us on That Sounds Fun on episode 67, if you want to go back and listen.

Brandon just released his new album called *Enough Already* about a month ago. And true to what we all know and love and can count on from Brandon, it is a faith-shaping, honest, wise album full of songs. I absolutely love this guy and his family. I can't wait for us all to have a chance to catch up with him. So here's my conversation with Brandon Heath.

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Annie: You used to do voiceover work?

Brandon: I did. It's a little known fact about me. There is actually one thing. I've never publicly said this.

Annie: Is it about to happen? Brandon Health, on minute one you're gonna drop "I've never said this before."

Brandon: Yeah, I am. I'm just going there right off the bat.

Annie: What real friendship!

Brandon: So early on, I used to do voiceover work for a job.

Annie: What's early on? Like in your 20s or like as a high schooler?

Brandon: Actually like 19.

Annie: Because you're like a unicorn. You're a born and raised Nashvillian, right?

Brandon: I am. Yeah, born and raised.

Annie: So you've always been here. So as soon as you're done with high school, you're like, "Get me in the biz."

Brandon: Well, it's funny. I actually went to high school with a girl named Kristen Robertson. I don't know what her new last name is, but actually bumped into her couple years ago crazily. But I graduated from high school in 97. So we're talking a minute ago, but her mom was in the voice over industry. And if you're wondering what is voiceover, it's the people that read ads. Or you read books, audiobooks. You're kind of paid to use your voice.

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Brandon: So I was like, "That's a thing?" And I did a reel. So you basically read some stuff and then clients or potential clients listen to all these voiceover talents and they say, "Hey, I want that person to read my spot, which is an ad or-

Annie: Or the lingo.

Brandon: I'm in the internet industry right now. So I've been out of it for so long that I don't even really know what the jargon is anymore. But literally, you would go into the studio, you would read... There was probably a producer there or a director who would tell you, "Okay, give me a different inflection on this word" or "this is what's

your feeling." So I still have a pretty young voice. Like I sound young. I guess I do. I tell myself this.

Annie: Certainly. We're still young.

Brandon: Thank you. Thanks. So I got hired to do this PBS puppet show.

Annie: Oh, I want you to keep talking. What is it?

Brandon: It was called Wisharoo Park.

Annie: I'm googling it right now.

Brandon: You will find it.

Annie: Wisharoo Park?

Brandon: Because I found it-

Annie: Oh, yeah. I'm not thinking you're lying. I just want to see it.

Brandon: No, no, no. Two weeks ago, I bumped into a dude who was also on the show that I hadn't seen in years. And he didn't... Well, he knew that I was Brandon Heath, but he didn't realize that I was on this puppet show with him.

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Brandon: This animated... Well, not animated. It was live puppets Like Jim Henson kind of vibes.

Annie: Were you holding the puppet too?

Brandon: No.

Annie: No.

Brandon: No, no, no.

Annie: You just would read the script. You were just acting out.

Brandon: I was.

Annie: What character are you?

Brandon: I am Ranger Bob.

Annie: Are you telling me the truth?

Brandon: I'm telling you the truth. And I've never seen said this on the record.

Annie: You were Ranger Bob on Wisharoo Park?

Brandon: Yeah.

Annie: Okay. I don't see the... Oh, yes I do.

Brandon: There it is.

Annie: Here's the same song. Do you remember the same song?

Brandon: I'm Ranger Bob you'll see, I name and plant these trees. I remember that part. That was me.

Annie: Hold on.

Brandon: Welcome to my magic world. My name is Wish*a*roo. That's it. [singing]
Wisharoo park. Wisharoo park. Welcome to Wisharoo. Okay, yeah, just keep rolling.

Annie: It's Ranger Bob coming?

Brandon: [singing] My name is wish*a*roo. That's Monkey B.

Annie: Yeah, certainly.

Brandon: Monkey B is the guy I bumped into. Here it comes. Are you ready? I'm Ranger Bob you'll see, I name and plant these trees. Yeah, that was me. Yeah, that's it. You can stop it now.

Annie: Wow. Oh, there you are. I mean, it almost looks like you, Brandon.

Brandon: I don't think they really-

Annie: It's a brown-headed guy.

Brandon: I was 19. I was 19 years of age when I did that.

Annie: Wow.

Brandon: I'm 43.

Annie: How long did you do the show?

Brandon: So we did two seasons at once. No. I think we did one season and they picked up the show for a second season. "They" being PBS. So it aired for two years. And then-

Annie: Were you strutting around town like, "I've got a gig"? Was it like people would be like, "What do you do?" and you're like, "Well, I'm a singer-songwriter, but mostly, I'm an actor." Or you did not tell?

Brandon: I don't know that I would have called myself an actor. A voice actor I guess. But, no, I didn't really tell anybody. I was kind of shy about it. I just thought it was kind of a funny gig.

Annie: So it's just like a job. So I mean, I guess if you did a whole season in like a week, was it... I mean, you weren't going in every Thursday and doing the show? Or were you?

Brandon: No. We would do like a week and a half. And they would have catering and we would just all hang. One day-

Annie: The Monkey didn't know it was you? Recently when you ran into the Monkey, he didn't realize it was you?

Brandon: His name is Sam.

Annie: Hi, Sam.

Brandon: So no, he didn't. So here's the thing. He's a backup singer on the... He's on the Mike Huckabee show. And he's a background singer on the Mike Huckabee show because he has a live band. So I walk in to do soundcheck in rehearsal and I see Sam, and he introduces himself as Sam. And I realized that I remember him, but he does not remember me. He knows me as Brandon Heath but he doesn't know that Brandon Heath was Ranger Bob with him like 25 years ago.

Annie: Literally, 25 years ago.

Brandon: He did not know that was me.

Annie: Oh my gosh!

Brandon: He did not know. So I was like, "Dude, after we rehearse, I'm gonna blow your mind. Strap in because I'm about to blow your mind." So I told him and it did. For sure, he did not know that was me. Anyway, now you know.

Annie: Wow. Okay, so Wisharoo Park ends. Were you devastated or were you like, "I'll get another gig." Or was it like, "Oh, man, I thought this was my next thing."

Brandon: Well, I mean, yeah. Thinking back I think I was bummed because honestly it paid pretty well, you know. And you just go in and you just read.

Annie: And sing.

Brandon: And sing. Totally. At that point, I wasn't like a professional songwriter. I didn't have a record deal. So I didn't really know what my life was going to turn out to be. I'll be honest with you, like, I wasn't seeing myself being a voice actor forever because I wanted to be a singer-songwriter. That's what I wanted to do. But it was good for a 19, 20-year-old kid.

Annie: Yeah, no kidding.

Brandon: I was like, "I'll do this. This is awesome."

Annie: There was a country artist, Lauren Alaina, that was on the show.

Brandon: Yeah. I love her music.

Annie: She's awesome. The next week, I'm listening to The Highway channel 56 on Sirius and the lady says, "In an interview recently, Lauren Alaina said..." And I was like, "She's talking about..." What she said is what Lauren said on the pod.

Brandon: Oh.

Annie: And she quotes Lauren saying something she said in here and I'm picturing Wally or someone from K-Love saying, "Brandon Heath just revealed-

Brandon: Wally would be that guy.

Annie: "...he was Ranger Bob."

Brandon: ...because he digs it up. Oh, yeah.

Annie: That's what I think you've just done.

Brandon: I'm throwing it out there. It's fine. It's totally fine.

Annie: You're gonna get some sort of wish or report merch now mailed to you.

Brandon: But I haven't thought about it for years. It just is one of those things that you did. Like I worked at Starbucks. It's just one of those gigs that you had in the past. But then when I saw Sam a couple weeks ago, I was like, "Oh, yeah, that was a season of my life that a lot of people don't know about."

Annie: Yes. When I moved here, a lot of our friends worked at Starbucks because they had health insurance.

Brandon: That's exactly right. For part-time even. I don't know if they're still doing that.

Annie: I don't either.

Brandon: And they gave you shares in the business.

Annie: Did you still have shares in Starbucks?

Brandon: I think I cashed out.

Annie: Wow.

Brandon: When I... Well, I don't want to say I quit. When I retired from Starbucks-

Annie: When you hung up your apron.

Brandon: Yes. When I hung up my green apron, you had the option to cash in your shares or stocks or whatever. But literally, they call you a partner. That's why they call you. You're not an employee of Starbucks. You are a partner.

Annie: Because you own a little piece of it.

Brandon: That's exactly right, which is brilliant.

Annie: Fascinating.

Brandon: Hey, listen, I listened to your podcast during the prayer... You were talking about prayer. So I listened to one of the episodes with Beth Redman.

Annie: Beth Redman. Wasn't that incredible?

Brandon: You talked about having one phone that is your phone phone and then one phone is for your social media and stuff.

Annie: Yes.

Brandon: So here's the deal. With my phone, in 2019, I took social media off of my phone. And it was a decision that I made with my wife. We were kind of in a season of really looking at ourselves. And to me, one of the things that was hard for me was social media. To be more specific about social media, yes, it was the first thing that I looked at when I got up in the morning, which is a problem. The other part of it is that social media was becoming this thing for me personally that I compared myself to other people.

Annie: Oh, wow.

Brandon: And I started to really not like myself a lot.

Annie: Wow.

Brandon: So we decided that I don't have social media on my phone anymore. So when you're posting on Instagram or YouTube-

Brandon: I send it to my wife and she posts it for me.

Annie: Wow. How different is your brain because of it? Did you feel different?

Brandon: Yeah, for sure. Well, I'm not held slavery by what am I posting today? Now, I will say, because I want to be transparent and honest, during my release week, I did put it on my phone.

Annie: Certainly.

Brandon: Because you ramp things up when you've got things coming out. So I did have access to it then. But it's off my phone. And I haven't really had it since 2019. And it's been wonderful. It's been wonderful.

Annie: That is fascinating.

Brandon: So Beth was saying she took down all the TVs around her house, which I think is hilarious. The Bible says cut off your right arm if that's what... If it causes you to sin, cut it off.

Annie: That's it.

Brandon: So for me, I think there are ways that we can cut those things out of our lives. It doesn't have to be as radical as like taking all your TVs out of your house. But listen, if that's what you need to do... And you even said you're not disciplined enough to not go to social media.

Annie: It's 100% true.

Brandon: So I just want to, number one, commend you for saying that because a lot of people won't say that. Number two, I'm with you in that, in that I had to just get rid of it off your phone.

Annie: It has made me so much better.

Brandon: And I don't even have the ability to like... I also turned off... I can't add apps without my wife-

Annie: Wait, there's a way to do that where it's like Kid controls?

Brandon: Let me just tell you. You can kid-proof your phone. So I can't even add apps. I have to have my wife unlock my phone to add apps. And that is to keep me away from social media things that just aren't good for me. So yeah, you can kid-proof yourself out of your phone.

Annie: You know what's funny is people will say, "Wow, you are so disciplined." And what you and I both know is we have all these high walls because we are weak. I have high walls because self-control is the least growing fruit of the Spirit in my life. So I've got to build these boundaries that help me create the art I want to make and be the person I want to be. That's an interesting idea because I would love to delete TikTok and not be able to get it back.

Brandon: I'm not even on TikTok.

Annie: Yeah, don't do that.

Brandon: It's a problem.

Annie: Why?

Brandon: Well, here's the thing. So my label, you know, marketing-

Annie: Your new label?

Brandon: My new label-

Annie: Centricity. Welcome to Centricity.

Brandon: Thank you.

Annie: They're wonderful over there. I was with some of them last night. I think they're brilliant.

Brandon: They really are wonderful. I'm so happy to be there. And you know what? I'm not saying that they want me to be on there. But it is a helpful tool.

Annie: Yes, of course.

Brandon: One of their most successful new artists was discovered on TikTok. Was discovered on TikTok.

Annie: Yes. I know.

Brandon: So I mean, there are good things that come from social media platforms.

Annie: Every team who helps you make a product says, "Please go everywhere and say that this product exists because you've worked really hard on it and everyone's worked really hard on it." So, of course, they want you on everything.

Brandon: It's also really important for me to say... so I'm talking about Katie Nicole. And Katie is an incredible artist. We've written together. I've spent time with Katie. So Katie put a couple of her own songs on TikTok and they were wonderful. And Katie is using the platform in a good and positive and healthy way.

Annie: Right, right.

Brandon: So she would be an example of someone who uses it in a positive way. But me as someone who receives... You know, I find ideas sometimes... Well, often I will go to... where will I go? Now, I'm saying I don't have social media on there. But every once in a while, I like getting ideas from our backyard because I'm passionate about my backyard.

Annie: Oh, I've heard how passionate you are about your backyard.

Brandon: So I go on Pinterest.

Annie: And get ideas.

Brandon: Is that social media?

Annie: I mean, I think it-

Brandon: I don't know. I go there for inspiration.

Annie: It's not social. I mean, it is an app and it can take your time, but you're not making friends on there.

Annie: There are similarities in a way where you can absolutely get lost in it for hours.

Annie: Certainly. Certainly.

Brandon: But let's just say it's not like... I probably go on Pinterest once every two months.

Annie: If you're doing a new firepit or if you're doing a new-

Brandon: Totally.

Annie: Are y'all gardening back there, too?

Brandon: I would like to garden. This summer we're not going to be home much.

Annie: Oh, yeah, you're touring an album. Is everybody going with you? The kids?

Brandon: I'm touring and I'm doing backyards, which we can get into-

Annie: I heard you loved it the last round.

Brandon: I love. I'm passionate about playing in people's backyards.

Annie: Why?

Brandon: It's like a new season for me.

Annie: Yeah.

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Brandon: Okay, well, here's the thing. And we can get back to the-

Annie: Summer. I won't forget. I have notes. I'm writing things.

Brandon: So during the pandemic, which I'm just going to hit pause on even that because you were the first person that I knew-

Annie: To get quarantined.

Brandon: To get quarantined.

Annie: I was the first person a lot of us knew to get quarantined. Thank you to our friends.

Brandon: I was looking at our text thread between you and I, and the last time we texted, which shows how great of friends we are was when you-

Annie: We've seen each other in real life.

Brandon: I know. Well, yeah, we have. In fact, we were at a book release party a few nights before.

Annie: The actual night I got exposed, I went to that book launch party and then I drove to the place where the person had COVID, and then I went home.

Brandon: Oh my goodness!

Annie: It was the actual night of Justin Rosolino's? book launch party.

Brandon: That's crazy.

Annie: That's the last we texted was at that book launch party. After it.

Brandon: Well, it was after. I said, "Hey, I heard you have the Coronavirus."

Annie: Oh, that's right.

Brandon: "Tell me what is it? How are you?"

Annie: And I was like, "I'm just stuck in my house? I don't have it.

Brandon: It was mild for you, right?

Annie: I didn't even have at that time. I literally was just stuck in my house because-

Brandon: You were exposed.

Annie: Yes. Because our friend, our mutual friend, we were all exposed and she was like the 10th person in our county to test positive. So they made all of us that have watched The Bachelor together that night be in our houses. So I was fine but I was home.

Brandon: We're not so far from that. That just happened a couple of years ago.

Annie: It doesn't feel like it just happened.

Brandon: Well, it doesn't because this thing has evolved in such a way.

Annie: Right.

Brandon: Anyway. In fact, I was also quarantined. I'm remembering because I texted you... I was quarantining myself because I had been in a men's retreat and shaking like 220 hands. I was feeling a little ill. So I think I was actually texting you to compare notes a little bit.

Annie: Yes, that's exactly right. Right.

Brandon: And you were like, "Well, I don't think I have it." And I ended up not having it either. But you know, it's part of the thing. It goes into your head and you're like, Oh.

Annie: Especially then there was just so much unknown and so much fear.

Brandon: And our friend, one of the first confirmed cases in Nashville, she was even saying like it's a head... It's like that's part of the challenge is the emotional challenge. That COVID... not to minimize that it's a very physical challenge as well and people have lost their lives, but I think all of us have experienced some sort of trauma through all that. And I am careful to use the word trauma. But I do believe that all of us are experiencing some sort of trauma from that season.

So mine was fear of how am I going to provide for my family? What's going to happen with the world, which I know a lot of people were thinking about. So Matt Wertz, one of my closest friends in the world, he was kind of saying, "I might go play backyards." I was like, "that's the thing. I could play backyards." And that's where literally I had been hanging out. I rediscovered my backyard. Now, I will say I have a pretty amazing backyard. It's awesome.

Annie: I mean, you've worked at it though. Y'all have worked at it for the last couple of years.

Brandon: Well, we have but we haven't, because we bought our house and renovated it because of the backyard.

Annie: Oh.

Brandon: The guy that owned it before us was a structural engineer. He had a tractor and he... It's two acres with a creek that runs through it. And it is just like a little slice of Tennessee heaven. And I was like, "Okay, that's where I want to live. God love my wife, she agreed to renovate and move there."

Anyway, I was forced to be in my backyard. Like all of us were. We were going to Home Depot and paying way too much for lumber. The reason there's a whole supply chain probably now. But yeah, I rediscovered my love for my backyard. But I was like, "That's where I'm getting my pitch." America, I'm tired of my backyard. I want to come and see your backyard.

Annie: What is it like to just go into people's backyards, and they invite all their friends?

Brandon: It's wonderful.

Annie: Really?

Brandon: It feels like showing up to a house party. Often people will have been barbecuing all day and grilling out. Or like on my latest little pitch for Brandon in the Backyard—it was just what I call it—I joked about having tasted every variety of potato salad that America can offer.

Annie: Certainly. Yes!

Brandon: And there are like seven or eight different varieties.

Annie: And you've had them all. I just fell in love with America, especially small town America because I discovered cities that I've never played. You know, you don't tour the small towns, but you're literally going into people's backyards. A lot of them were farms.

Annie: Wow.

Brandon: I played in a lot of barns and I saw what the farming community is like, what their families are like. And they are just the most wonderful people. So in a season

where I was even wondering if I wanted to keep playing music because I've got babies at home, America-

Annie: How old are the girls?

Brandon: Palmer is four, Elliston is three. Which I think the last time we did a podcast, I didn't have any kids.

Annie: No, you did not.

Annie: I think Siebe was pregnant.

Brandon: Yeah, she would have been.

Annie: But yeah, no, because it was March 2018.

Brandon: Well, no, then we would have had Palmer because she was born December of '17.

Annie: Maybe.

Brandon: So yeah, maybe I was a new daddy.

Annie: That is wild. A four-year-old and a three-year-old.

Brandon: Yeah.

Annie: That's something.

Brandon: Gosh, a lot of things have happened since I talked to you last on your podcast.

Annie: No, no, no.

Brandon: Anyway, I just want to give a big shout-out to America.

[00:23:41] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation real quick to share about one of our new partners. Let's go. Wild Grain. Were you one of the ones who spent 2020 perfecting your bread-making abilities? You know, I gave the hashtag food blogger alert a real go but you also heard my recent conversation with the lazy genius herself, Kendra Adachi. So you know that my kitchen exploits are going not great. Basically, I need help. No shame if you do too. Wild Grain has got us covered.

Wild Grain is the first bake from frozen box for artisanal bread. Plus, they have amazing rolls, pastries and even handmade pastas. You guys! Wild Grain Wild uses only clean ingredients such as unbleached flour and non-GMO flour and utilizes a slow sourdough fermentation process that's better for you and tastes better than anything you can find in a grocery store.

Plus for every new member, Wild Grain donates six meals to the greater Boston Food Bank. That's awesome. They donated over 120,000 meals so far. Okay, here's how it works. You sign up and choose which type of box you want to receive and how often and then Wild Grain delivers for free a box of breads, pastas, and pastries with easy-to-follow instructions. Every item bakes from frozen in 25 minutes or less.

And if you've got summer travels or your freezer is already stocked, no problem. It's easy to reschedule or skip or cancel. Okay? Are you hungry yet? For a limited time you can get \$30 off your first box plus free croissants—y'all, the croissants are to die for—in every box when you go to wildgrain.com/thatsoundsfun to start your subscription.

You heard me. Free croissants in every box, and \$30 off your first box when you go to wildgrain.com/thatsoundsfun. That's wildgrain.com/thatsoundsfun. Or you can use the promo code That Sounds Fun at checkout.

And now back to our conversation with Brandon.

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Annie: I bet it's been really cool because when you get to do shows like that, you get to talk to everyone who's there.

Brandon: You do. And we were all in the same situation, but we were all in isolation at the time. Yeah. So when you show up with your guitar, and you happen to be one of their favorite artists... Because this is my core fan base. I only opened up invitations to people who follow me on social media.

So I was like, "For the next 10 days, you can invite me to your backyard. Send me pictures. Tell me what you want to do. Tell me what your budget is. Because bottom line, this is how I'm making a living right now. And then hopefully it'll work out." And so I did... I think my goal was 10 and I ended up doing 20 in the fall.

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Brandon: We had over 200 invitations to play in people's backyards.

Annie: Brandon!

Brandon: It was incredible.

Annie: That's so cool.

Brandon: So yeah, you show up and you just see their faces. They haven't seen live music because it's all shut down. My favorite artist is in my backyard eating my potato salad. It was vulnerable because you're relying on your fan base to literally take care of you and your family. And they did. I was like, "I love my job and I love my fans." And I hate calling them fans because it just... I don't know. But they're fans of my music, you know?

Annie: Yes, yes. They love your music. That's great.

Brandon: And they could support me in real-time.

Annie: When you're doing that all through 2020 and 2021, are you writing the new album too? How are you doing those shows that require you to fly and then drive, right? Because that's the other thing is you're probably not busing-

Brandon: No.

Annie: ...and you're not flying to big cities. You're flying to big cities and then driving for hours.

Brandon: I rented a camper from Camp America or RV America, whatever.

Annie: And y'all just RV'd around?

Brandon: We RV'd, yeah.

Annie: That's really fun.

Brandon: Rosy. Rosalina... he was with me.

Annie: Really?

Brandon: Oh, yeah. Campgrounds. Totally.

Annie: And so were you writing the new album? Are you writing *Enough Already* in the middle of all of that?

Brandon: I started writing *Enough Already* in February of '21.

Annie: Wow. So that backyard experience, how does that play into what we're hearing on the new album?

Brandon: I don't know that thematically it played into it. But I will say this. I don't know that I would have made a record had I not had the support of my fan base.

Annie: Really?

Brandon: It was like, wow, my music is medicine for people. It's really important that I keep doing this. And it was also I still love it. So I have to credit those first people in their backyards. Also credit my wife, you know, because we had to decide if this was a good season to make music. Because that time I had two infants. A toddler and an infant. Now they're three and four. But I needed to be around. So Siebe and I had to pray, "Is this right, signing new record deal?"

So in February, I started writing for a new record with Centricity because Centricity showed some interest in me, which I am so thankful.

Annie: I mean, you have been doing the show for 20 plus years.

Brandon: Yeah. I signed my first record deal in 2005.

Annie: Yeah, I was gonna say I had your first album in 2006 probably.

Brandon: '06 when it came out.

Annie: Yeah. I love that album. You know how much I love that album.

Brandon: Thank you.

Annie: Mac Powell gave it to me. Do you remember that?

Brandon: No.

Annie: Their Christmas party that year... They always give like a basket to everybody that comes at their Christmas party, and your album was in their Christmas party.

Brandon: Oh, thanks, Mac Powell.

Annie: That was in my 2006.

Brandon: That's crazy. How do you know Mac Powell?

Annie: I nannied for them.

Brandon: Did you really?

Annie: Yeah. We grew up in the same town and known him my whole life. I was teaching school and nannying for them in the summer.

Brandon: That's crazy.

Annie: Ain't that's so funny? I know.

Brandon: Did you grow up in Alabama?

Annie: Nope. Atlanta.

Brandon: Atlanta?

Annie: Yeah. They're from Atlanta.

Brandon: Oh, that's right.

Annie: I lived in Atlanta.

Brandon: Yeah, that's right. You're right.

Annie: Ain't that wild?

Brandon: He is a little bit older than us.

Annie: Yes. That is so funny. Okay, so you've been doing this that long. You have the opportunity where you're not in a record deal. You could do anything but you decide to sign... I mean, signing with a new record label is like starting the whole thing again.

Brandon: It really is. In a new season, you have to make sure that their goals align with your goals. And mine are not so much to tour and be gone all the time. I mean, I certainly still want to go and play, and I do play a lot, but I'm not doing the traditional like get on a bus and you're gone for a couple of months type touring.

So they were cool with that. My manager was cool with that. So I just had to find the right team that agreed that I still need to be making music, but I don't have to tour like I used to.

Annie: You may not know this answer, but I'd be curious to hear your thoughts. Why do you think God has you doing it again?

Brandon: Well, for several reasons. This is my gift, number one. It's not my only gift. I want to be careful not to say it's my only gift. But I think it's my most unique gift. And I have a unique voice in the music world, not just in Christian music, but I think in all of music. And I'm still good at it and I still love it. So to me, there didn't seem any indication that it was time to hang it up. But I did need to honor my wife and our marriage and my children.

Annie: And this allows you to do all of that.

Brandon: It does.

Annie: That's amazing.

Brandon: And I get to honor my gift as well.

Annie: I mean, the album, I haven't gotten to listen to all of it, but what I have listened to is awesome.

Brandon: Thank you.

Annie: What was launch week like? Did it feel good to be doing it again? Did it feel different?

Brandon: It felt a little different. I think back in 17, we wouldn't have been releasing records like we do now on Spotify, iTunes, where you release a song at a time. We just released the entire record. You know, but now it's like the trickle effect or whatever. And then, you know, by the time the full record comes out, they've probably already heard half of it.

Annie: It's weird, right?

Brandon: So it doesn't feel like a cannonball into the pool anymore. It feels maybe more like just walking down the stairs. But that's so funny that I went to that analogy...

Annie: That's a very good analogy though. I mean, books follow music by about a decade in a lot of things. So when I think about: what's it gonna look like when books start releasing a chapter at a time or an essay at a time or when we take the stairs instead of cannonball. We still cannonball. I'll be interested in what you think is there-

Brandon: You should be one of the people to try it first.

Annie: Okay, I will.

Brandon: Just pioneer it.

Annie: Yeah. Why not? Can't hurt.

Brandon: Even if you kind of gave a little window into what the book was gonna be about like six months prior, and you had a podcast around it... I don't know.

Annie: You know what? I guess the network can make that happen.

Brandon: Yes, you do.

Annie: That's a great advice

Brandon: Let's talk about you for a second, Annie. You are taking over the world.

Annie: No, no, we're just making a way for other people to do their gifts.

Brandon: No. Listen, I want you to know I'm really excited for you. I'm really excited for you.

Annie: Thanks. I appreciate it.

Brandon: Very thankful. I was on Danville--

Annie: Yeah, you were on Dadville. It was a great conversation.

Brandon: Yes. You know, Barnes and I and Jon, we've been friends forever. So it's so cool to sit down not only with those guys because they're funny, but if you listen to that episode, we talk about our friendship. Which is really cool.

In fact, I got a text on the way here from an old friend who is friends with me and Barnes back in our college days. And she was like... Here, I'm going to read exactly what Betty Ashton said. Oh, goodness! She said, "Oh my goodness, Hey, Brandon, I just finished your Dadville Podcast interview and it had my heart so happy and

nostalgic. Love hearing stories and times I remember his stories I didn't know and just listening to your love and respect for each other. Thanks for making my day." Ain't cool?

Annie: Yes.

Brandon: So Annie, that's what you're doing with your different podcasts. You're giving people a platform and then you're blessing a lot of people. And it gave me something to listen to about prayer last week. So thank you for that.

Annie: You're welcome. It means a lot when my friends like you who've been in this with me for a very long time feel that. So thank you.

Brandon: It's fun.

Annie: The thing we said we would go back to is you said, what else you're gonna do this summer, after May.

Brandon: One thing that I think is really important is family adventures.

Annie: Okay. So my dad was really good at that when I was a kid. We would often go camping. We would even camp at the beach.

Annie: What? On the beach?

Brandon: I know. I don't know how we did that.

Annie: It's hard.

Brandon: Or why.

Annie: But you remember it. So you wins.

Brandon: Well, we were cheap. So we didn't do hotels or resorts. We took our pop up tent-

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Brandon: ...our pop up camper down to Destin.

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Brandon: In fact, more specifically for Walton.

Annie: Seems really heard.

Brandon: You know what I'm talking about. I was actually driving through Fort Walton recently and I was like, "That's where we use to camp."

Annie: Oh my gosh, you saw it.

Brandon: Yeah.

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Brandon: Anyway, we are going to a dude ranch.

Annie: Really?

Brandon: Yeah. It's called Wind River Ranch. You should check it. You know about it?

Annie: I've heard about Wind River.

Brandon: From Mac.

Annie: Yes. I was like, "I know someone who went there."

Brandon: Mac is the reason that I know about Wind River. He takes his family there all the time.

Annie: Yes!

Brandon: And it is a full on like cowboy dude experience.

Annie: Yes! How long are you there? A week?

Brandon: We'll be there for a week.

Annie: Wow.

Brandon: Yeah. And it's amazing. This is my third summer going.

Annie: And the girls love it?

Brandon: The girls love it. In fact, a couple days ago, we asked them, like, "What was your highlight of last year? We took them to Disney World, and they like the ranch more than Disney World.

Annie: No way!

Brandon: So it's a really special place. It's like the base of Rocky Mountain National Park outside of Estes.

Annie: Oh, that's great.

Brandon: And then I'm taking my family for the first time to Malibu, the Young Life camp.

Annie: That is the one where Bob Goff lives near, right?

Brandon: Yeah.

Annie: He has a house up there?

Brandon: He has a lodge around the corner from Malibu.

Annie: Because you think Malibu, California, but it's not.

Brandon: No.

Annie: It's way up in Canada.

Brandon: Think Canada. Think like forest and inlet water.

Annie: Is it like above Seattle? Is it on that side?

Brandon: It's 100 miles north of Vancouver.

Annie: Okay. And the only way to get there is by boat or floatplane.

Annie: Oh, wow.

Brandon: There are no roads.

Annie: Oh my gosh. How many weeks are y'all there?

Brandon: Will be there for two weeks.

Annie: I guess you're doing the music.

Brandon: I'm doing an assignment.

Annie: I mean, why Young Life? I mean, you've been a Young Life guy forever, right?

Brandon: Yeah.

Annie: As long as I've known you, you've been in Young Life.

Brandon: So growing up here in Nashville, my Young Life leaders went to Vanderbilt. Young Life leaders are often college kids. They don't have to be but they're adults who have a faith and want to share the gospel with young high school kids. So that was me in the front high hallway of Hillsboro. I went to two clubs. So club is basically where you meet at somebody's house, like in their great room or something, play games, sing songs. And they invited me to go to camp that summer and it was Malibu.

Annie: Oh, my gosh, they went from Nashville up there.

Brandon: Yeah.

Annie: Wow.

Brandon: It was only my second time on an airplane. My first time I went west of the Mississippi.

Annie: Oh my gosh. So you're 16, 17?

Brandon: I'm 16. Didn't know anything.

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Brandon: So we fly to Seattle. Back then we would catch a boat in Vancouver and it was eight hours to get up to Malibu. So over the years, I have worked there.

Annie: How many times do you think you've been there?

Brandon: Oh, gosh. I can't even count it.

Annie: Really?

Brandon: Like 20 plus times.

Annie: Wow.

Brandon: Easily 20 plus times.

Annie: Oh, yeah. And it is the first time the girls are going.

Brandon: It's the first time that Elliston is going. Palmer went when she was like six months old. So she wouldn't even remember it.

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Brandon: But we're so excited to go.

Annie: What does that feel like to think about taking them there?

Brandon: It's really special. Because that's where, you know, it's kind of like where my life took a turn. It's where I met Jesus on the Nighthold Frisbee Golf Course. That's where I pray Jesus into my life. It's where I witnessed what real community looks like when I would go and work there. And then Bebo Norman kind of discovered me there. I was his sound guy. So if you don't know who Bebo Norman is, he's kind of like an early 2000s, late 90s contemporary Christian artist.

Annie: Legend!

Brandon: Legend!

Annie: He is now on our Mount Rushmore of dream guests.

Brandon: Oh.

Annie: I don't know... I don't know what I'd do if he was here.

Brandon: Are you serious?

Annie: Brandon, I've never been more serious in our whole friends.

Brandon: I mean, I've got his number.

Annie: Don't use it right now. Don't use it. It makes me nervous.

Brandon: Do you know what he's doing now?

Annie: Yeah, he's a doctor. It's unbelievable. Did he go from music to building to doctor?

Brandon: Yeah.

Annie: What a life!

Brandon: In his... not defense but just to tell his story a little bit. Bebo actually was in pre-med but was also playing music and his music took off.

Annie: Oh, he did not walk away from it.

Brandon: So he was like, "I guess that's what I'm gonna do." So, to his credit, he has gone back to his original life.

Annie: So how did he discover you? You were the sound guy and he overheard us whistling a tune while you on set?

Brandon: I finally got brave in the third week of our assignment. And assignments are typically like a month long. And I just was like, "Hey, I write music. Can I play you a song?" So I played him a couple of songs.

Annie: Was that at Malibu?

Brandon: Yeah.

Annie: Wow.

Brandon: Played him a couple of songs. And he came back and told Ed Cash about me.

Annie: Yes, of course. Who people would know now as We the Kingdom.

Brandon: We the Kingdom.

Annie: Yes. So he comes back and tells Ed Cash about you. Why do I not know this? You weren't discovered by Bebo Norman?

Brandon: I've never really officially given him the credit because, you know, he's one of the guys. He didn't solely discover me.

Annie: Certainly.

Brandon: But he would have certainly seen me in those early songwriter days.

Annie: Wow.

Brandon: And then Ed, I would work with years later. But Ed was working with Dave in that in their music, so I witnessed that. And I told Dave on Dadville a couple days ago. I was like, "I remember sitting there stuffing CDs with you and Matt and just being like, 'I want to do this.'" And they were doing it at such a high level now with Ed as their producer. So I also have to give credit to Dan Muckala who was my producer.

Annie: Jenny Muckala who's my voice coach, who keeps our voice working. Does she work with your throat ever?

Brandon: She sure does.

Annie: I think everybody.

Brandon: Yeah, she's the girl to call if you live in Nashville, if you're a professional musician, or voice actor-

Annie: Yes, as you are. If you are a voice actor like Brandon Heath.

Brandon: Yeah, you'd call Jenny and she would work with you.

Annie: So Dan.

Brandon: So Dan, yeah, I give him probably most of the credit. Him and Bob Gough.

Annie: What are you doing? You just have all these names.

Brandon: I know.

Annie: Bob also discovered you? You got so multi-discovered.

Brandon: I wouldn't say that Bob discovered me. But these were all kind of brewing at the same time.

Annie: All at the same time they're all putting you in front of people, introducing you, and getting your music out to the world.

Brandon: I also met Bob at Malibu, just to kind of tie all that together.

Annie: Brandon! That place!

Brandon: Yeah. So it's very important to me.

Annie: I grew up going to a summer camp that our church did every summer. And they still go every summer for a week to the exact same place. And I don't know besides the chapel at University of Georgia at the Wesley Foundation. That chapel and this summer camp are the two places where I'm like, just about all my most important spiritual memories happen in one of these two places.

Brandon: Yeah, totally wild.

Annie: That's Malibu for you.

Brandon: You know what? We've been talking about pods. There is an episode of *This American Life* that there are people... It's about camp. There are people who get camps and people who don't get camps.

Annie: Yeah.

Brandon: And there's literally two camps. Sorry for using that word. But there's like either you know camp or you don't know camp. So camp was a big part of my life. Clearly, it was for you.

Annie: Huge part of my life.

Brandon: And so I want my girls to kind of grow up, number one, around Young Life because I think Young Life is an amazing ministry and community. But also, there's just so much fun to be had. Because camps are usually in places that are out of cell range, that are picturesque, and are simple. And I want them to experience that.

[00:44:18] <music>

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And now back to finish up our conversation with Brandon.

[00:47:09] <music>

Annie: I think memories, for me, and I think for a lot of people, are so tied to place. That the idea that you're getting to take your family back and be like, "What God knew

that we didn't know was this was gonna be my wife and these are my daughters, and in this place I made decisions that walked me to this life that I'm now getting to bring back here." That's unreal.

Brandon: It's really cool that you bring that up. There was one year where I couldn't go to Malibu, so I literally flew to Seattle, got on a float plane, was at Malibu for 24 hours, and then flew back.

Annie: Wow.

Brandon: Because it was my tradition but also like I needed to go there to have a more closer interaction with God. And I've heard people call it like a thin spot between the earth and heaven. But I wasn't able to go there the last couple of years because of the border being closed because of COVID and then the two years before that because of forest fires.

And what I learned is that I don't need to go to Malibu to be close to God. It was a reminder that God is really... he's in our heart. He is everywhere. And while I do agree with you that there's something really important about place, it was also really good for me to just let go of the idea that God only dwells in Malibu.

Annie: That that was His only spot, right.

Brandon: Yeah.

Annie: It's like, how we hold the Yes And of Yes pilgrimages matter.

Brandon: They do.

Annie: And you don't need them.

Brandon: You don't. It's not the new gospel.

Annie: Yes! That's good. Jesus is accessible right now where we are. That was another thing that I loved from that conversation with Beth is that just this reminder that Jesus is praying for us.

Annie: Oh, my gosh, right.

Brandon: I hadn't heard that before.

Annie: I know. I mean, what do we do with that scripture? What's your thoughts on it?

Brandon: Well, immediately I wanted to write a song. I was like, "God, I know what I'm praying to you. But what are you praying for me?"

Annie: Oh, I want to hear that song, Brandon.

Brandon: Yeah. I mean, as a songwriter, that's where we get our inspiration is from thoughts like that, you know? There's another scripture that I was not familiar with in Revelation that when we get to heaven, God has written a new name for us down on a stone. Have you heard this before?

Annie: Yes.

Brandon: And He will show us that stone and it is just between-

Annie: The name he only says. Yes.

Brandon: ...Only to us. And I was like, "I can't wait to hear the name that you gave to me."

Annie: I know.

Brandon: You know what I mean?

Annie: Yes.

Brandon: I can't wait to write a song

Annie: I need to hear both of those songs.

Brandon: I know.

Annie: Or make it one song, but write both of those songs.

Brandon: Yeah.

Annie: Okay. So before you go, just tell me one more thing about *Enough Already*. The album sounds awesome. What's the heart of it? What's it about?

Brandon: Yeah, great question. You know, enough, the word enough has actually kind of been resonating or ruminating with me the last three years. I go to see a counselor. I won't say his name. But I'm so happy to tell people that I see a counselor because I think everybody needs somebody that they can just say everything to.

That's another thing that you said the other day that I loved it. You said something about you have a few people that know everything about you. So like, if anything were to ever come out or whatever, you're like, "It's okay. I got people that know me."

Annie: Somebody already knew.

Brandon: Somebody already knew. No secrets. That is also true for me. There are a few people where there are no secrets. But that's kind of honestly only been in the last three or four years where I just came to a point where I was like, "I really need to be known." And my wife was one of those people. And then I have a core group of men that I meet with regularly in-

Annie: In the backyard, right?

Brandon: We did. Well, we met in my living room last night because it was one of those unseasonably cold nights. So that was an incredible experience for me to allow people just into my pain but also to let a counselor in there. And one of the things that he helped me uncover is that my core wound is that I don't feel like I'm enough. There are two very common wounds that people carry. Either I'm not good enough or you're gonna abandon me. So there's the fears.

Annie: Both of those are represented at this table. You're the "I'm not good enough." I'm the "you're gonna abandon me."

Brandon: Well, I'm only half as bad as you are. But anyway-

Annie: That's true. That's true.

Brandon: So yeah. I mean, I think somewhere in it is the fear of abandonment, but it's maybe more like not belonging, which-

Annie: Means you're not good enough.

Brandon: Not good enough.

Annie: That's it.

Brandon: I'm so thankful for people who have the training to help you unpack those things where you can just get down to it because then it's not as complicated as it's always felt. And you don't have to shut it away. So one of the things that I have to do is, number one, be known. But number two, I love to write songs about it, because it

helps me to work it out, to flesh it out. And then sometimes I record it, and sometimes I don't.

So this record is about my wound of not feeling good enough. And it's hilarious how many songs have the word "enough" in it. My A&R guy was like, "Okay, can we think of a different title?" I've got a song called *That's Enough*, which is my next single and I feel is the most important song on the record. But the theme behind the record is that I'm enough already. That God qualifies me because of Jesus. If Jesus was thinking of me on the cross, then Jesus says that I'm good enough in the sight of God. So done. No other qualification needed. Jesus, and done. I am good enough. Period.

So I was writing this song with a couple of friends, *Enough Already*, and I love titles with double meanings. Enough already. But I am enough already. I don't need anything else to tell me. I'm enough already. So that's what it's about. I thought it would kind of really said... the bigger picture of what the record is about. I'm really proud of this one.

Annie: I hope so. I think you should be. I love your music. I love where this points to tell us where your music is going to.

Brandon: Good.

Annie: I just like the idea of like, "Oh, this is where we're going. I love it."

Brandon: That's cool.

Annie: Well done.

Brandon: Thank you.

Annie: Well, the last question we always ask. Because the show is called That Sounds Fun, tell me what sounds fun to you.

Brandon: It sounds fun to be in the backyard with my two little girls. I just finished a little playhouse for them.

Annie: You built it?

Brandon: Yeah. I'll have to show you a picture.

Annie: Yeah, I want to see it.

Brandon: You can publish it if you want after this is done. But it's a little log cabin that my wife found on Facebook Marketplace. And the family that had two girls, the girls had outgrown it and it was time to get rid of it. So they let me have it if I would dismantle it.

Annie: Oh my gosh. You did one of those things like when they put the house on a trailer and drive it across town?

Brandon: Yeah. But it was too...

Annie: Oh, it's a log cabin.

Brandon: It's a log cabin.

Annie: It is a tiny log cabin.

Brandon: Yeah.

Annie: Brandon, that's so cute. So you had to take it apart and put it back together at your house?

Brandon: I'm gonna publish it on my Instagram soon. The whole journey of taking it apart, moving into my house, and putting it back together. You can watch it on my Instagram at @Brandonheath.

Annie: Yes, we'll link to it. That is so fine.

Brandon: I'm so excited just to sit in the backyard and watch them play.

Annie: What are y'all doing the inside of it? Did y'all put a little rug down? Or is it still empty?

Brandon: My wife wants to put a little crystal chandelier inside, you know?

Annie: 100%. 100%.

Brandon: And then I think we're going to just do probably flower boxes on the outside. This is my wife's touch now. I've put it together. She's like, "I'm going to put flower boxes and put a chandelier." And we have two little neighbor girls just right next door who will come over and play too.

Annie: Same age as your girls or real close?

Brandon: Almost identical in age.

Annie: Oh, that is so awesome.

Brandon: Yeah. It's fun.

Annie: My next-door neighbor was my same age growing up and you can't ask for better than that. I mean, we both got sick on the same day at school and the nurse for sure thought we were faking. She's like, "Y'all want to go home and play." We're like, "No, we're seriously sick."

Brandon: Until you barked on it.

Annie: Yeah, yeah, Man, that is a super cool kids' log cabin.

Brandon: I know I'm excited about it.

Annie: Was it hard to put together? Did you have to really do some math to take it apart and put it back together?

Brandon: No, it wasn't hard. I just had to make sure that I labeled it really well.

Annie: Oh, good point.

Brandon: And it took a long time. So just a lot of time. But it wasn't hard.

Annie: That's awesome. Oh, yeah. I can't wait to share you putting that on Instagram and let everybody see it.

Brandon: I'm excited.

Annie: Thanks for doing this today. I love getting to talk to you.

Brandon: Thanks for having me.

Annie: It makes me so happy. And I love your music. So I'm glad that our friends get to continue to hear it.

Brandon: Thank you.

[00:57:26] <music>

Outro: Oh, you guys, don't you love him? He's just the best. What a great conversation. I learn so much every time I'm around him. And hilarious that literally the last time we went to the same event was the day that I got quarantined. Oh, 2020! Y'all, be sure you're listening to Brandon's new album, *Enough Already*, available now at digital and streaming outlets everywhere.

And follow him on social media and tell him thanks for being on the show. It just means so much when you tell our guests how their conversations matter to you. And listen, think about who you know who would love to hear this episode and send it their way. It's one of the best things you can do for the show.

If you need anything else from me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find. Annie F. Downs on Instagram, Twitter. All the places you may need me, that is how you can find me. And I think that's it for me today, friends. Go out or stay home and do something that sounds fun to you. I'll do the same.

Today what sounds fun to me... Oh man, what sounds fun to me today? Well, my follow-up appointment for my wrist surgery where we removed a ganglion cyst, the follow-up is today. So I think I'm gonna get out of my brace. That's what sounds fun to me.

Y'all have a great weekend. We'll see you back here on Monday with a return visit from one of our very favorites and one of my absolute faith heroes, John Eldridge. We'll see y'all then.