

00:00:00 Welcome to the hair of the dog podcast. I'm your host, Nicole Begley. And today we are diving deep into the underground world of commercial pet photography. Have you ever considered that maybe you would like to do some commercial pet photography? What does that look like? How does this work? Is this even the right decision for you today? I have my friend J.

00:00:23 Nichole Smith on the podcast with us and we are breaking down. If commercial photography is even the right fit for you because it's not the right fit for everyone. And that's okay. But if you want to find out if it is for you, go ahead and stay tuned. See in a minute, Welcome to the hair of the dog podcast. If you're a pet photographer,

00:00:45 ready to make more money and start living a life by your design, you've come to the right place. And now your host, pet photographer, travel addict, chocolate martini connoisseur, Nicole Begley. Hey everybody. Welcome back to the hair of the dog podcast. I am your host, Nicole Begley. And today I am here with my very special guest Jane Cole Smith.

00:01:08 What's up Nick, how are you? Welcome back to the hair of the dog podcast. Thank you. I'm really excited to be here. I'm excited for our topic today. If you guys caught episode 65, Nick was on the podcast before talking all about the power of color in your branding. So it was an incredible episode. So go check that out.

00:01:29 But today we are talking all about commercial photography and why it might not be for you. Oh my gosh, Nick, welcome to the podcast. I'm so excited for this conversation And I'm so excited with it, for it, with you because you are someone who has decided commercial photography is not for you, right? Not at this point in my life,

00:01:51 maybe at some point, but yeah, not right now because yeah, we're going to talk about why, but first I want to kind of take a little rewind back in. Why don't you let everybody know about how you learned about this whole commercial photography world, what your experiences in it, because it's kind of like this enigma, this like secret society that you have to have the secret handshake on and like,

00:02:16 know who to ask. And even then people were just like, oh my gosh, no, I don't want to share, But You and I both firmly believe that by sharing important information, then it just improves the industry as a whole. And that way more people are bidding on the right projects at the right price. And just, it truly ensures that some pet photographer somewhere is getting paid properly for the work they are doing.

00:02:43 Yes. Amen. Yeah. So actually, you know, I was one of the OG pet photographers back in 2004. I started in Seattle and my business was called Dane and Dane studios. And back then, there was only about five pet photographers in the whole country that I could find the time, including like Jim Stratfield and New York and Jamie flew Hoff and I were in Seattle.

00:03:05 So there was just, it was just such a new industry then, but because I was also a graphic designer and because I also started another business right away, as you do, if you pay off, I understand, I understand this. So I can't lead Someone business-wide. I mean, I already had two cars, I had design and photography, but we,

00:03:28 I met John and Gila Kurtz, and together we founded dog is good, which is a lifestyle brand for pet lovers. And that was about a year after I launched my pet photography business. And then just after that as well, I met Brandy Algren, who's the publisher of city dog magazine. And we ended up sharing a physical space together. So I jumped straight into being in this world of actually spending a lot more time,

00:03:50 doing stuff for brands than I was for pet parents because of my skillset and because of my relationships. And that taught me very early about what it is that businesses need when it comes to pet photography. And then a little bit later on, I got into some of the bigger, bigger brands, you know, the piranhas and stuff, and that in and of itself is an entirely different world.

00:04:13 So I got to really understand the difference between the real people, small business and the big, big corporations. And watching that evolve over, you know, over almost two decades of how people are hiring and how they're finding photographers and what they are, and aren't willing to pay and what they expect. And it's changed a lot since then. Yeah. Yeah.

00:04:33 It's been a, it's been a crazy ride for sure. I mean, yeah, 2004, I mean, it's fairly new back then. It was probably on like, oh gosh, we had one for the animal behavior management line. I was on the board of Joomla. Was that the, the platform? Oh my gosh. Yeah. Yeah. Same with like dog is good.

00:04:57 And then dad, like trying to do e-commerce in 2006 was like insane, like right. I mean, the advantage is we were in Facebook while it was still easy, you know, but oh man. Yeah. It does feel like a lifetime ago. Yeah. Yeah. Oh man. All right. Well, let's talk about this commercial photography world and you know,

00:05:15 there might be people out there that see, ah, commercial photography. Oh my gosh. Did ending big pay day. Oh. By pictures. Places where I can see them. Oh my gosh. And it sounds amazing. And there are definitely some good benefits from that, but there's also this whole other side of it that people need to be prepared for before they even start to dip a toe in those waters.

00:05:38 What are, what are some of those? And yeah. So I think it does have this reputation for being, like you said, this big paycheck, right. And it's true. Like most of the photography I did was for small business and bigger business was, you know, five figures. And

you know, when you're eating along getting 300 for a shoot and then a thousand on a good session,

00:05:57        like having someone pay you 12,000 or 25,000 for a photo shoot, sounds pretty exciting and amazing. But there are a lot of strings that come with that kind of money and not all of it is profit because you do have a considerable amount of expenses in this sort of work as well. So the first thing I just wanted to point out is you are not ready for commercial.

00:06:18        If you were just starting out as a photographer, you know, just say, no, just no, you might be ready for doing some influencer style type stuff where you're kind of more with your cell phone and doing some cool, you know, flat lays or little product features with their own dog. Like that stuff is kind of a different realm than what I'm talking about now.

00:06:36        But if you're just starting out, you're not totally comfortable behind the camera. You're not, you don't have full sensor equipment. You can't even imagine the idea of trying to coordinate a massive photo shoot with a bunch of people and props and communication and all that. Like not for you, just save yourself the trouble. If that's, you know, come join me,

00:06:56        inherit the dog academy and let's continue to grow your craft and get super comfortable because yeah, you want those camera settings and knowing how to get the shot to be complete and total second nature, because you just can't add that stress on top of all the stress that comes along with a commercial shoot. Now, I mean, that being said, we're always going to be like,

00:07:16        I still get a little nervous before I go. Yeah. That normal nerves is not what I'm talking about. It's like the, oh my gosh, how am I? They want to shoot outside at two o'clock bright sun in this outdoor like area, this or that with this very specific look. And I'm like, how the heck am I going to do that?

00:07:36        Like, you need to know how to, how to get that done. And then you can still be a little nervous about getting it done, but you need to know, You need to have done it before. I don't know the light modifiers. You need to know this help you need. Yeah, exactly. Yeah. Okay. For sure. So you need to be experienced and know your camera inside and out and being confident that you can deliver what they need.

00:07:57        All right. That is number one. And I'll just want to add on to that cause I have never, I, I have, so my whole career been the opposite of like an equipment snob. Like I spent like one of the shoots I did for a period. I did the whole thing with a 50 millimeter prime, like, you know, so I am not a CA I am not an equipment snob.

00:08:14        And I think you do what you need to get it done. And with private clients, you can get away with just about anything as long as you can get them great artwork for their walls, but it's not the same with commercial, but you can rent equipment. So if you don't have full

sensor equipment, but you feel confident and comfortable, you can use it,

00:08:30        you can rent it a couple of times to get used to it and then rent it or two bodies to be fair for the shoot. So you have that equipment for the client. So this isn't like a, you can't do it until you have tons of money because I don't believe that, but you do need to have the right equipment to get the job done.

00:08:48        Yeah. That's a good point too. Like, this is definitely more in the wedding photography realm of like you can't get and your camera breaks. Like if it's a private client and you're like, oh my camera just like pooped. The bed doesn't work anymore. Okay. You can reschedule, you know, generally, but a commercial shoot. No. And in many cases you might be liable for all the expenses that everybody has incurred to be there.

00:09:13        So new Bring three for a whole truck load of cameras Just in Case. Oh man. Okay. All right. So that's number one. Number two is, okay. I'm going to say it all these pet photographers, but like I photograph pets because I don't like people.<inaudible> all commercials. Not for you, honey child. No. Yeah, pretty much all commercial work.

00:09:44        You're going to have to include people. That's not true across the board. Certainly there are like gigs for, you know, the, the cover of the front of dog food bags. And it's a dog running at the camera and I've seen, you know, gig after gig, after gig where that's true, but to be serious about commercial photography and being available to clients,

00:10:03        inevitably, you're going to have to photograph pets and people together, sometimes even children. Oh my God. And sometimes not dogs. Right? Like Guinea, pigs and rabbits and like cats. Oh my God. Cats. So yeah, you need to be comfortable with people. And the reason for that is that, you know, we have data that says that images of people and animals together sort of looking straight into camera are the ones that perform best in a lot of different ways.

00:10:31        So companies know that. So those are the images they weren't. Yeah, absolutely. So you have to be comfortable working with those people and yeah. Just even shooting. So the shooting and the posing, but then also there's so much communication going on with either the business or if you're working with a bigger company, like the, the ad agency, possibly you have so many people with so many ideas and so many opinions and so many people to make happy that you need to be comfortable having real conversations with people and,

00:11:07        and being able to kind of take that direction and being able to insert like, oh yeah, we could definitely do that. I have this idea too, you know, but know that it's there, they're hiring you. So They are the boss. Yeah. Yeah. So a tremendous amount of communication, but with photographing people as well, it's not even just the actual

photographing and posing of the people.

00:11:30 Oftentimes there's model finding those people as models. Sometimes there's wardrobe, dressing, those people, providing hair and makeup to make sure those people look good and inevitably they do not follow directions. So there is this like, you know, like you tell them to bring clean shoes, they do not bring clean shoes. And so yeah, it, it does add another level of complication.

00:11:52 And if that is, so if you are a super, super duper duper introvert, this is probably not for you. Yeah. And with those models, like usually it's on the photographer to find the model dogs, to find the model clients to set up that hair and makeup to source the wardrobe. So yeah. There's a lot of moving parts. Yep.

00:12:14 Yep. Yep. All right. Number three. This is my personal reason why I do not seek out commercial work at this point in my life because it does not fit my lifestyle by design because commercial clients tend to need everything yesterday. And yeah, I don't have to remember my schedule for that. Yeah. This is one of the biggest reasons it's an incredibly challenging market to take on,

00:12:42 is that not only do you have to often schedule the shoe and deliver the images like yesterday, but when they contact you one thing, a bid or quote or information, you need to get back to them within like seconds, because usually they're emailing several people at one time. So if you even want to chance at the job, you have to get back to them immediately.

00:13:02 And then oftentimes they're like, can you do this next week? And you're like, oh, so if you've got a complicated life and like a day job and like all these other things you need to coordinate, that is going to be very, very challenging for you to make work with most commercial scenarios. Now, small businesses are often a little bit more flexible,

00:13:21 but not really because they procrastinate and they have no idea how long this stuff takes. So they're like, oh yeah, we have a trade show in two weeks. And you're like, okay, that means we need to shoot next week. And I need to get you the images in a day so that you have time to get your postcards created or whatever it is that they want.

00:13:37 You know? So it is, it is a right now yesterday faster, faster kind of a industry for sure. Yeah. Yeah. And with two kids, and now that they're older, even though they're easier to take care of, I am now like chauffer duty all the time. Yeah. I've got a lot going on. So that is definitely challenging.

00:13:55 And even like you said, the smaller businesses, you know, I do want to mention that there are like quite a few different levels of commercial photography. So if you're going through and you're just like, oh, you know, like I don't have, I don't have the experience, the scheduled the, to do like a Purina job, but maybe there's a local dog Walker that just needs

some commercial images.

00:14:19 So that's technically a commercial job too, but those are very different spectrums of Everything From pricing to licensing to how you show up to what you're delivering to timeline. Oh my gosh. Yeah. Yeah. And I'm glad you mentioned that Nicole, because I think we do always sort of assume that commercial work is just the Purina is we just keep using period as an example because they end up hiring a lot of photographers,

00:14:47 but it's not just period of lots of other clients, other, it's not just the huge dog food companies and other brands that are putting packaging out by the millions. It's, it's lots of different companies who need photography. And sometimes they're not even pet companies, you know, you see shoots done for banks and real estate and all sorts. But yeah,

00:15:07 in fact, one of the best ways you can get started is by starting with small businesses, that's definitely what I recommend. And especially small product businesses because they have physical products to photograph. So they have a little bit more of a hunger and they recognize the need for photography a little bit more. They are sometimes willing to pay a bit more for it than service-based businesses.

00:15:27 Not always, but that can be a really good place to start. And that is a totally different ballgame. And one of the things I've discovered over years of doing this work is that there are basically three, three tiers based on how much revenue businesses earning that sort of small business. And then that like SME kind of middle business mode. And then the enterprise,

00:15:48 the huge companies, there's sort of three tiers and there's some good sort of markers of what they each will be comfortable paying. And they, you know, having that kind of information as a starting point, it's helpful to kind of go into it. But also you have a lot more flexibility with both time and resources. And you can say to small businesses like,

00:16:07 okay, you can find your own models. You can find your own location. Just keep in mind that the less control you have over those variables, the more of a disaster you could potentially walk into because they don't think like you, you know, they might be wanting you to photograph colors and get you these fluffy dogs where you can't even see the color,

00:16:25 right. Or they might want to shoot at noon, which you know, is going to look terrible, but they have no clue or find you a house that's super dark or, you know, all of those things. So in most cases, having more control over those variables helps you have a better outcome, but if they are super, super price sensitive,

00:16:42 then all those things that could potentially cost you time and money, you can put back on them to sort out and say, you know, you have to approve them or something so that, you know, you can keep the cost as low as possible for them. Yeah. That's a great point. I

actually want to throw in one other tip reason that we didn't talk about before,

00:17:02 and that is commercial photography might not be for you if you are terrified of figuring out a system of like handling all of the logistics. So if, if managing a whole bunch of details, like makes you want to run screaming with your hair on fire, this might not be for you. Or if you're like me, cause I am that person, you hire a producer and it is their job.

00:17:30 But then again, you have to have the profit in the job to do that. Cause absolutely I'm totally that person, which is why you and I have collaborated on these things or that person. And I am not, I love logistics. I'm going to get myself a t-shirt that says I love logistics and color coded spreadsheets. That is my jam. Oh my God,

00:17:52 let me organize something Fun. Oh my gosh. All right. So anyway, just to make sure you have a plan by the way. Well, we can help you learn some systems for organizing. Yeah. Because it's not recreating the wheel, but you definitely need to, you need to be able to, to focus on all right. How do I organize all these moving pieces and just have a little system,

00:18:20 otherwise you will lose your mind. Yeah. And at a bare minimum for any commercial shoe of any client of any size, you're going to have at least one person helping you, because you're going to be managing models, showing up and leaving dogs. You need to be held while you shoot someone else. Like being in different, even just eating to answer the door while people arriving you're in the middle,

00:18:38 you know, like you need at least one other person, no matter what to help you. Yeah. And if that other person is good with logistics, because there is so much of that and it can be really overwhelming all those details. Yeah. Yeah. For sure. All right. So then our last thing to consider if commercial photography is correct for you is cashflow in your business.

00:19:02 Wait, wait, Nick. I thought I was doing commercial photography to make money. Why do I need cashflow? I know it's a catch 22, isn't it? Because it can be great for cashflow, especially when you've got those big deposits and big paydays after the fact, but especially with the speed at which these people want things and the absolutely insane tedium that is often required in actually getting paid by them in terms of setting yourself up as a vendor and filling out their background checks and all kinds of crazy stuff for the big ones.

00:19:37 You can, you can, you can expect that in most cases you will be out of money up front to get a shoot set up, to pay a producer, to potentially find a location, to potentially hire models, all kinds of things that might have to be covered by you before you get paid by them. Now, I never liked being in that situation because I felt too exposed financially.

00:19:57 So I always had a, I always made an agreement that I would always get some sort of deposit before I would engage in anything like that. Cause I just think that's good business. And if they suddenly change their mind that you know, trying to get that money back

from them could be really challenging. So I think that's a good best practice, but you know,

00:20:15        you need to be able to hire people. You need to be able to set the time aside in your calendar, you need to potentially be able to push off other clients like things that can be potentially expensive and you obviously need to have great insurance. You need to potentially have multiple camera bodies and you know, hiring equipment. And there are potentially a lot of expenses that go into this before you get paid your money.

00:20:37        And theoretically, sometimes you actually getting paid can be a long time. So like one of the things that always annoyed me and dog is good is we would have situations where people would buy, you know, a huge order from us and then put us on like, you know, a 90 day terms where we'd send them the order. And then we got paid three months later.

00:20:55        I'm like, hold on, Make sense at some companies, if you want, the job might be like that. So you need to be prepared for that. And so this is just another reason that it's not a good fit for most, really small businesses because you often don't just don't have the cashflow to support that and, or, you know, making all this wiggle room in your schedule.

00:21:17        Yeah. Do you also recommend, as you are chatting, it made me think of something else, like some of these bigger jobs, especially you're gonna, they're gonna have you sign maybe some non-disclosure agreements or some other legal, legal ease. So is it a good practice to have a lawyer or somebody that you can trust to review these terms? And that's another potential expense.

00:21:39        Okay. So I'm going to say something. I normally wouldn't say publicly. Yes. A hundred percent. Yes. But in the real world, you're probably not going to have time to have a lawyer review it before you sign it. Right. And every time you do something that makes you more difficult to work with, you're potentially losing that job to someone else.

00:21:58        So yes, from a business standpoint, you absolutely should have an attorney review, any contract you've ever signed, but in reality, they probably have a contract they use over and over. They're not going to make adjustments to it and you either sign it or you don't. So, you know, having a lawyer look over at once for you, even after the job and then call out for you,

00:22:16        anything problematic to look for in the future, the one sort of caveat to that, that I will say, which is a sort of a different animal than the type of commercial we've been talking about is if you're going to do a book deal, which is actually technically editorial, not commercial, but technically you're still working for a business. You have more time for that contract.

00:22:36        And there are some very specific things you want to make sure you don't sign because that is a much longer term relationship. And you want to make sure you're getting paid

properly for that. And you're retaining the rights that you should retain for that, which is like its own podcast probably. Yeah, but that is, that is an exception to what I just said.

00:22:55 But typically, like we said, commercial jobs are working so fast, but a hundred percent you have so many potential people and services in your life that you're needing to call in quickly lawyers being one of them to get this job done. Yeah. Or you, or you as the photographer responsible for creating the verbiage and having the model sign, the model release,

00:23:14 or does the company that's hiring, you have their own model release that they want their models to sign. Typically it's on you typically you need the model release, you need to have them sign it and you need one for humans and one for animals and you actually need one for property as well. Technically animals are property. We like to call them model releases as pet photographers.

00:23:34 Cause we like to think of them as people, but technically it's a property release for a pet, but you also need a property release from a location that you're shooting in. If, especially if it's a recognizable building and you know, things like the props and stuff that you use in the shoot can not have any recognizable brand names on it because this company is going to take those images,

00:23:52 put them out into the world to sell stuff. And they don't want to be getting lawsuits from other people for, you know, third-party copyright violation, trademark infringement. So yeah. Yeah. And there's certain buildings out there. I mean the, that the Eiffel tower only the nighttime show is trademarked and copyrighted. And then I'm like, we're just looking for planning a workshop at a different location.

00:24:15 And one of the shoots, the things, the sculptures that we want to shoot by are trademarked by the sculptor. So you can't use them for commercial purposes without permission. And oh my gosh. So there's yeah. A whole, a whole world of legal, legal quagmires you might end up in. Yeah. And, and the bigger companies will be pretty hyper aware of that.

00:24:39 Shoot. I did for Purina, we did all of these different different sessions inside one really big house that I had to find. And that is in and of itself a really good story because it was in LA and I found some very sketchy places on the way to find this nice one. But we decided to jump in the pool. Cause there was a pool in the backyard and we,

00:24:58 one of the guys I was shooting, his little Yorkie was a really good swimmer. And so they swim around together in this pool. And at the end we couldn't use any of these shots because the legal team of Purina was like, we can not have a dog in water without a life jacket. I'm like Not a child, but no, they absolutely would not allow it.

00:25:22 So, you know, some companies are very, very hyper-aware of their own legal

protection, the smaller businesses you're going to have to look out for them a lot more, make sure that you're not putting them in harms way. Oh my gosh. Yes. All right. So let's recap some of these reasons, the commercial photography may not be for you Never Want to Turn it around.

00:25:48 Let's a couple of benefits here. I think you have to go into this with your eyes wide open because I mean, a, you need to know how it works so you don't get totally screwed and you don't totally underbid. Like it's, it's the same thing as when I was starting as a portrait photographer and I, you know, started my business and I thought that \$175 for a full disc of images,

00:26:10 I was going to like make a million dollars. No, that's great. That's great. For an hour of work, Our work, I didn't know them. So like your first commercial job, they're like \$15,000. Oh my God. Yes. Okay. But you need to pay the models. You need to find a thing. You need to buy us lunch.

00:26:32 You need to do this and that like, oh my God, what? And then, you know, we want worldwide, exclusive license forever and ever, and yeah. Or we want to buy the copyright from you. Okay. Well this is a whole another conversation as well. Also affects the pricing. I mean, there are so many moving parts to Talk about pricing.

00:26:54 I Mean, that's a whole another like three part podcast, But anyway. Oh my gosh. All right. So going in with eyes wide open, you need to be experienced, know your camera. You need to like working with people, both photographing them and dealing with them. Okay. And maybe you don't need to like it, but you need to be able to do it and you need to be able to do it tactfully.

00:27:19 Yeah. I'll hire someone to do most of it for you. Yeah. You can still go home and be like, man, I'm really need a chocolate martini today. That is totally fine. You need to be able to have a schedule that can accommodate the cat-like reflexes of, I need it now of commercial photography. And you need to be able to have enough cashflow in your business to be able to handle any outlays.

00:27:45 Even with taking into consideration, the best practices of getting the deposit before you have to actually outlay any money. It still might take a little bit of time for that deposit to get to you. By the time you have to spend something. Woo. And then what was the other one I threw in there? Oh, logistics. You need to love logistics or be able to hire someone to help you love logistics.

00:28:07 Oh my gosh. Okay. So that being said, does anyone want to do this? It's such a good question. Okay. So there's a couple fairly obvious and less obvious reasons that commercial is so amazing. The first one that most people are aware of is that it is a massive ego

boost, right? Like I will never forget, cause I didn't know what was going to happen,

00:28:31 but I walked into Petco and my images were huge in Petco. And I was like, why? Because I did not sell them to Petco. I sold them to true Panion, which was a pet insurance who had a relationship with Petco and put them up huge inside of Picco. And I was like, this is so that is awesome. Right? Seeing your dog on a dog food bag at the store on a really cool website,

00:28:54 you know, being able to have a portfolio full of those things and being able to work with companies that you really respect and admire for the work that they're doing, the products that they're creating, you know, there is cache to that and, and enjoyment and fulfillment to that. That is really, really cool and hard to get elsewhere. So that is awesome.

00:29:13 The paydays can be awesome. Like, you know, getting that check where you're like, oh man, this is the most money I've ever had in my business bank account is like super cool and paying yourself and giving yourself a little gift off the back of that is super cool. That is never gets old ever. Even if it is a check that takes like weeks to clear because of the complicated financial process.

00:29:37 So that's really awesome. One of the things you might not know that you probably have already experienced and I'm sure, you know, you've, you've heard Nicole talk about this and you've been involved in Nicole's programs to work through this, but finding, you know, pet photography, clients, private clients can be very challenging, right? That is like, it's hard for any business to find clients,

00:29:57 but pet photography. I can promise you because I've worked with a lot of businesses in the pet industry and pet photography is one of the hardest to go out and find clients for because it's a luxury. And because the sales cycle is long and the purchase occasions are rare and it's not consumable. So pet photography to private clients is it's hard to find clients.

00:30:19 Whereas commercial, the bit you might not sort of have realized is that you can go look at brands and businesses out in the world that you would like to shoot for, make a list of them, find their contact information and work at like a Procher proper sales system, where you have, you know, you touch base, you touch base again, you build relationships.

00:30:39 You can actually, you know, have a system to go out and shoot for who you want to shoot for. And I've been teaching this for years and you know, a couple of my clients, one in particular, I, I taught her this method and within six months she had three, a for top 10 ideal client, big client, like these are not small businesses.

00:30:57 They were huge brands. And she had shot for three of them inside of six months. So, you know, that system does work. It might sound a little old fashioned, but it is so much easier because you can see who these companies are, identify them and go after them, which gives you so much more control in your business. Because the flip side of that is you can

also have those small packages for local,

00:31:18 small businesses for the vets, the dog walkers, the small makers, and those guys are easier to sell to as well. Then the pet parent, even if you're selling, you know, a \$500, \$1,500 package, like oftentimes that's way easier and takes a lot less time than the whole 10 to 20 hour engagement with a boutique pet photography client. Yep.

00:31:38 And winner winner, the final product, always of commercial photography is high res images. Right? Right. So like there's no product cost involved in this, which I love. And I also love that there's no shipping because it's like you pop them in a Dropbox or a gallery or a drive. And there they are like FedExing stuff at the last minute,

00:32:02 you know? Like I love that. So, you know, it really, really can be a viable way. So the, one of the things I love about it is, especially if you are a pet photographer and you are not in one of these crazy urban areas, like what the hell is going on with Dallas and pet photography At all? Especially back in like the 2010s.

00:32:23 Yeah. Okay. But it was never like Dallas people are not spending like \$20,000 on pet photography in Seattle. Everything's bigger in Texas. I say It is so like there are you, Seattle was a great market. San San Francisco, San Diego, like, you know, Washington DC. There's great markets all over the country. But if you are not in one of those great markets,

00:32:45 you are a little bit stuck in terms of growing your business to some of your financial ambitions. Potentially. If you have that dream of like, I want to be able to leave my corporate job and do pet photography, but you're in a slightly rural area. You're going to really struggle to do that without commercial work, because you just don't have the people in a local radius,

00:33:04 but commercial gives you a global reach in terms of what you can do. Cause people can ship you products. They can fly to you. And especially if you have an area that's beautiful to shoot in where you can create beautiful images and that are really desirable, then there's a reason for them to choose you over someone in a more urban area who doesn't have access to the mountains or the fields or the rivers or whatever that you might.

00:33:26 So you can have a strategic advantage there and you can get your business over that six figures and more, even if you're not in one of those great geographic areas for private client work. So that's another huge advantage. Yeah. Oh my gosh. I love it. So if you guys have gone through this and you're like, alright, I get it.

00:33:45 I get it. I see these potential like pitfalls, the places that people don't think about before I go into commercial and I can check those boxes. I'm okay with that. And this sounds like something I'd like to learn more on. Come check out our different training opportunities over@[hairofthedogacademy.com](mailto:hairofthedogacademy.com) slash commercial. We have some additional

free commercial training over there. So definitely come check that out.

00:34:11 Very, very cool. Definitely want to check that out There. It's hard to find this kind of information and you guys, And the reason for that I'll tell you why is because, like I said, just now, when you are a commercial photographer, your competition is everywhere. Everyone everywhere, Even now Worldwide. Yeah. People are going to Australia,

00:34:33 New Zealand, you know, it doesn't really matter. So nobody wants to share this information because nobody wants you to be their competition. Luckily, I don't really do this work anymore. So I am not your competition. And like Nicole said at the beginning, it's really, really important that everyone gets educated. If you're interested in jumping in, because nobody wants a photographer.

00:34:54 That's like massively underbidding everybody else. And then also you don't want to be that photographer. Even if you get the game because it will make, it will be the most miserable thing you ever do. And you will lose money. If you're underbidding these jobs, it will not be a fun, fun job for you. So I want to avoid that.

00:35:11 I want everybody to be educated, it's that, you know, rising tide raises all boats kind of thing. And so I share a lot of in-depth information that nobody else does because I think it's the right thing to do For sure. And then the secret, if you're sitting out there like, well, if everybody's putting the same, how the heck do I ever get them to pick me?

00:35:29 Well, that comes down to really continuing to hone in on your craft and your style. And you know, then the brands can look at your portfolio and if you're curating your portfolio for what makes your heart sing, you will get hired by the brands that want that same imagery. Okay. Maybe some imagery, you know, some brands want something more over here,

00:35:50 but you're more on, you know, they want punchy, but you're more like cereal, okay. But there's going to be other brands that want your look. So let's not get all hung up on, oh my gosh, I have to shoot this way because this is what sells. No, no, you shoot in a way that you love. And you curate that look like if you make that your number one freaking job in your business to curate the look that you want to create,

00:36:18 both private and commercial clients will choose you. That's exactly what I was going to say. I'm not as commercial As my soap box now. No, this is so important. And this is a big thing I talk about. Cause I mean, obviously I care about brands. I wrote the book million dollar dog brand branding is like so important to me.

00:36:36 And for pet photographers, you have so much opportunity that most brands don't have because you get to create your own imagery so powerfully, but your brand and your style have to go hand in hand and you have to start figuring out what that is. And like we just said, if you get clear on that, you can also get clear on which companies might be a good fit for

that.

00:36:57 Don't go after the ones that are not, you know, like, and then if we all stay in our own lane and we develop our own style and we go off our brands that are like, what we do then, you know, there ends up being a lot less crossover in, in actual hardcore competition. Oh my gosh. Yes, go do it.

00:37:15 People, Nick, this has been such a good conversation. Thank you so much. Hopefully we'll entertain you guys a little bit too, as you learn about this world of commercial photography, if you, like I said, if you guys want some more training, jump over to hair of the dog academy.com/commercial, and you'll see some more from me and Nick over there.

00:37:35 Nick, thanks so much for being here with us and we will see you soon. You're welcome. Ciao. Alright, bye. Thanks for listening to the hair of the dog podcast. This was episode number 145. If you want to check out the show notes for access to any of the resources that we mentioned, simply go to [www.hairofthedogacademy.com/](http://www.hairofthedogacademy.com/) 145. Thanks for listening to this episode of hair of the dog podcast.

00:38:02 If you enjoyed this show, please take a minute to leave a review. And while you're there, don't forget to subscribe. So you don't miss our upcoming episodes. One last thing, if you are ready to dive into more resources, head over to our website@wwwdothairofthedogacademy.com. Thanks for being a part of this pet photography community.