A post about a bike race started your Series A.

We went through everything you've said in public since 2021. You've told **73 stories** on tape. **9** have made it to your feed.

Two things you said this spring

The story already raises money. Writing it is what hurts.

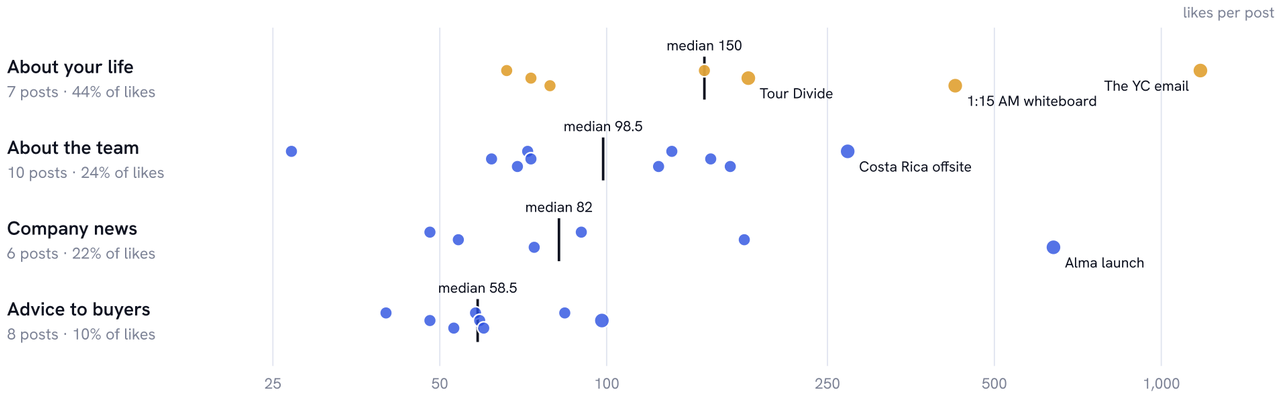
“I posted about this on LinkedIn... this taught me about committing to something and being a founder, and Caroline from Base10 reached out about that, and that sparked up the conversation.”

You, on YC Root Access, April 2026, at 11:12. A few months later Base10 offered the Series A before you went out to raise.

“When you post on LinkedIn, you die a little inside every single time.”

You, on Venturing with Vishesh, May 2026, at 14:04. In the same talk: you'd been the whole marketing team, and the drafts from your OpenClaw don't meet your bar.

The posts about your life do the work.



44%

of all your likes came from the 7 posts about your own life.

10%

came from the 8 posts of advice to buyers.

6:03 PM

Your two best stories put a clock on the moment: the YC email (1,176 likes) and the 1:15 AM whiteboard (425).

Ten stories you've pointed at in a single line.

“I had a gun pulled on me in the middle of the desert in Wyoming.”
Post 24 · 180 likes

“The race organizer begged me not to start because he thought it was too dangerous.”
Post 24 · 180 likes

“You get taken advantage of.”
Post 24 · 180 likes

“Billion-dollar companies try to copy what you're building.”
Post 24 · 180 likes

“You realize you are actually the problem.”
Post 24 · 180 likes

“How to medevac someone in a foreign country (she's alright)”
Post 29 · 272 likes

“I'd fly to a prospect's city and tell them my grandma lived nearby and I was visiting her”
Post 16 · 150 likes

“doing 70+ interviews in a week to find one great hire”
Post 3 · 73 likes

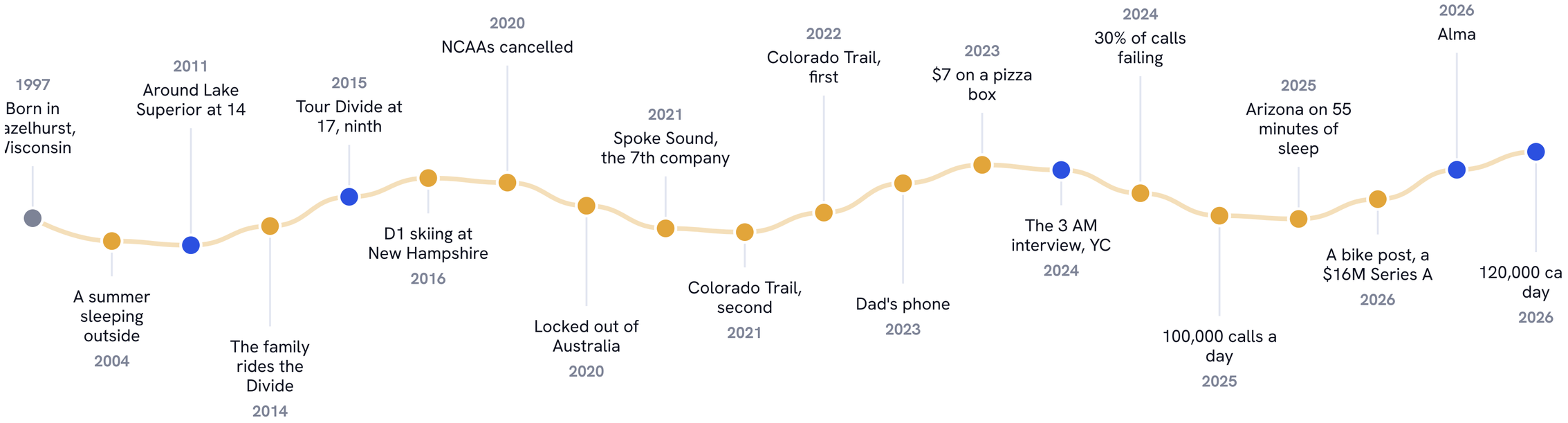
“a publicly traded company booked a call just to tell us how awesome we were”
Post 25 · 69 likes

“nearly 200 investors reached out”
Post 13 · 1,176 likes

1997 to this month

Your route so far.

never on your feed on your feed



Before Phonely: a kid who didn't know how to quit.

2004 · age 7

A summer sleeping outside

His dad was outdoorsy to the bone. At seven, Will slept outside for an entire summer.

Hazelhurst, Wisconsin

Dad's garage practice

He grew up watching his dad, a vet, build a practice from their garage into a real business.

2011 · age 14

Around Lake Superior

72 days in kayaks with his dad and two brothers. The youngest ever to do it. On your feed (73 likes).

2014 · age 16

Luke wanted to race it

The family rode the Great Divide in 45 days, then heard racers do it in 15. His brother Luke wanted to race. Dad said: only if Will goes too.

2015 · age 17

Tour Divide: ninth, youngest ever

2,700 miles in 17 days 10 hours, the last 37 without sleep, after riding about 100 miles all year. On your feed (180 likes).

2016 · age 18

Biked home from college

After his first year at New Hampshire he rode home to Wisconsin. Friends remember that one more than the records.

“When you're that age... I didn't know how to quit things.” Better Running, at 35:55. He adds that not giving up has gotten harder as he's gotten older.

Then ten turns made Phonely.

2020
NCAAs cancelled
He finally qualified senior year. COVID took the race.

2020
Locked out of Australia
The border closed on his PhD place. 'The kick I needed.'

2021
The seventh company
He missed the deadline. The accelerator added Spoke Sound anyway.

2023
A nice-to-have
He shut Spoke Sound: it served a want, not a problem.

2023
The 30-day sprint
6 AM to 11 PM, no sugar, to find his maximum. Phonely came out of it.

2023
Dad's phone
His dad's biggest problem: getting the phone answered.

2023
$7 on a pizza box
The first sale, after two hours on the phone.

2024
One call center
It out-paid every small business combined. They went up market.

2024
The week before YC
Four nos, a lost pitch, a 3 AM interview from a car.

2025
A bike post
Base10 read it, called, and offered the Series A first.

None of the ten has been told on your feed. Two get a passing line. The rest you've only told to podcast hosts.

Never on your feed

“Senior year was my last chance to make it.”

He missed the cut as a freshman, a sophomore and a junior. Senior year at New Hampshire he qualified, and in March 2020 COVID took the race away. There was no fifth year to go back to. He says the chip from that week is the one he still carries into Phonely.

How it could open

> **I trained my whole life to race at the NCAAs. The year I finally made it, they cancelled the race.**

You, on Founders in Motion, May 2026, at 1:42

3
years he missed the NCAA cut

2020
the year he made it

0
NCAA races he got to start

1
chip he still carries into Phonely

Never on your feed

“So I had like four rejection emails.”

In three days he collected four rejection emails from Australian angels and VCs, then came second at a pitch night that ended at 9 PM. The YC interview ran on US time, so he slept in his car outside Nisal's house and knocked on the door at 3 AM. Two hours of sleep later he flew to Sydney to pitch more VCs. Somewhere between Melbourne and Sydney, YC asked for a second call. They got in during the investor event, and he skipped every VC meeting after that.

> How it could open
>
> **The week we got into YC, four investors turned us down and we lost a pitch competition.**

You, on The Founder Initiative, September 2025, at 6:21

4
rejection emails in three days

2nd
at a pitch night the night before

3 AM
the interview, from a car outside Nisal’s

1,176
likes on the post about the email that followed

Never on your feed

“It took me about 2 hours to close that sale.”

A Facebook ad brought in one lead. She wasn't even a vet. He talked to her for two hours until she said fine, she'd pay $7 a month. There was no way to take payments, so it went on a pizza box. Later that week came a $30 plan, then $150, then $500.

How it could open

Our first customer paid $7 a month. We wrote it down on a pizza box.

You, on Venturing with Vishesh, May 2026, at 2:49

$7
a month, the first sale

2 hours
on the phone to close it

$500
the biggest plan that same week

120,000
calls a day now

Never on your feed

“30% of our calls were just not working.”

A provider kept sending errors in the middle of conversations and about 30% of Phonely's calls broke. He took a customer's call at 5 AM every morning, said what they knew, stopped charging for what didn't work, and kept fixing. That early group stayed. One of them now pays about $78,000 a month.

How it could open

For a while, almost a third of our calls were failing. Not one of those customers left.

You, on Founders in Motion, May 2026, at 15:32

30%
of calls failing for a while

5 AM
a customer’s call, every morning

All
of that early group stayed

$78K
a month, what one of them pays now

War stories

The ones nobody has read.

2021 · Colorado Trail

The porta-potty

He sat out a storm for 90 minutes. The riders who pushed on froze and stopped. He rode on to second as a rookie.

2021 · Colorado Trail

He watched himself ride

No sleep by day four: he saw himself from behind, and stayed awake on salt and vinegar chips.

2022 · Colorado Trail

Stage five

His five stages of no sleep. At stage four, a fence post turns into a witch.

2022 · Colorado Trail

16 miles of training

A hurt wrist, rain every day, his light dead on day three, no sleeping bag. He won by more than 11 hours.

2022 · Arizona

Fifteen flats

Front brake only for six hours, then a broken spoke and 15 flats. He scratched, at peace: he had tried everything.

2024 · Melbourne

“Already too late”

A VC pushed for a big stake, saying they were too late to voice AI. After YC, Will sent the rejection.

2024 · Voice AI

The hot tub

He met Vapi's CEO in a hot tub and became his fourth customer, before Phonely built its own stack.

2025 · Arizona

55 minutes of sleep

Third in the 300-mile Arizona Trail Race while running Phonely. By his own account, he fell asleep and hit a cactus.

“If you're not thinking about quitting, it's not hard enough.” Eric Rinehart's podcast, at 44:49.

Fights you already pick on tape.

Chatbots that talk

“where a lot of our competitors are building chatbots that talk, we've been able to build that two years ago”

Founder Wisdom, May 2026, at 1:41

When John becomes Josh

“If somebody says their name is John and the AI thinks their name is Josh... it's such a dead giveaway.”

The Voice AI Podcast, Oct 2025, at 8:33

The price race

“Nobody cares if their AI is 20 cents cheaper if it screws up a $200 appointment.”

Your post on competing on price (53 likes)

The demo

“there's a lot of people that promise AI that can kind of do everything, but it's really hard to get reliability at scale”

Founders in Motion, May 2026, at 4:35

Voice is a channel

“it should be a vertical automation and voice should just be a channel”

Venturing with Vishesh, May 2026, at 9:58

VCs who push

“They're not selling, they're buying.”

Venturing with Vishesh, May 2026, at 19:31

Your product can be copied. You've said so yourself.

“Billion-dollar companies try to copy what you're building.”

Your Tour Divide post (180 likes)

“It really bothers me personally that people are like, oh, you're just doing the same thing as everybody else.”

You, on Founder Wisdom, May 2026, at 11:58

Nobody can copy the route that got you here. It's what Base10 read before they called, and it's what the next buyer, hire and investor will read too.

The next ten we'd tell.

1 **“Our Series A started with a LinkedIn post about my bike races.”**
You, on YC Root Access, Apr 2026, at 11:12

2 **“The week we got into YC, four investors turned us down and we lost a pitch competition.”**
You, on The Founder Initiative, Sep 2025, at 6:21

3 **“Phonely started with one question to my dad: what's the biggest problem in your business?”**
You, on YC Root Access, Apr 2026, at 4:19

4 **“I trained my whole life to race at the NCAAs. The year I finally made it, they cancelled the race.”**
You, on Founders in Motion, May 2026, at 1:42

5 **“Our first customer paid $7 a month. We wrote it down on a pizza box.”**
You, on Venturing with Vishesh, May 2026, at 2:49

6 **“Four months in, one customer paid us more than all the others combined.”**
You, on YC Root Access, Apr 2026, at 5:25

7 **“For a while, almost a third of our calls were failing. Not one of those customers left.”**
You, on Founders in Motion, May 2026, at 15:32

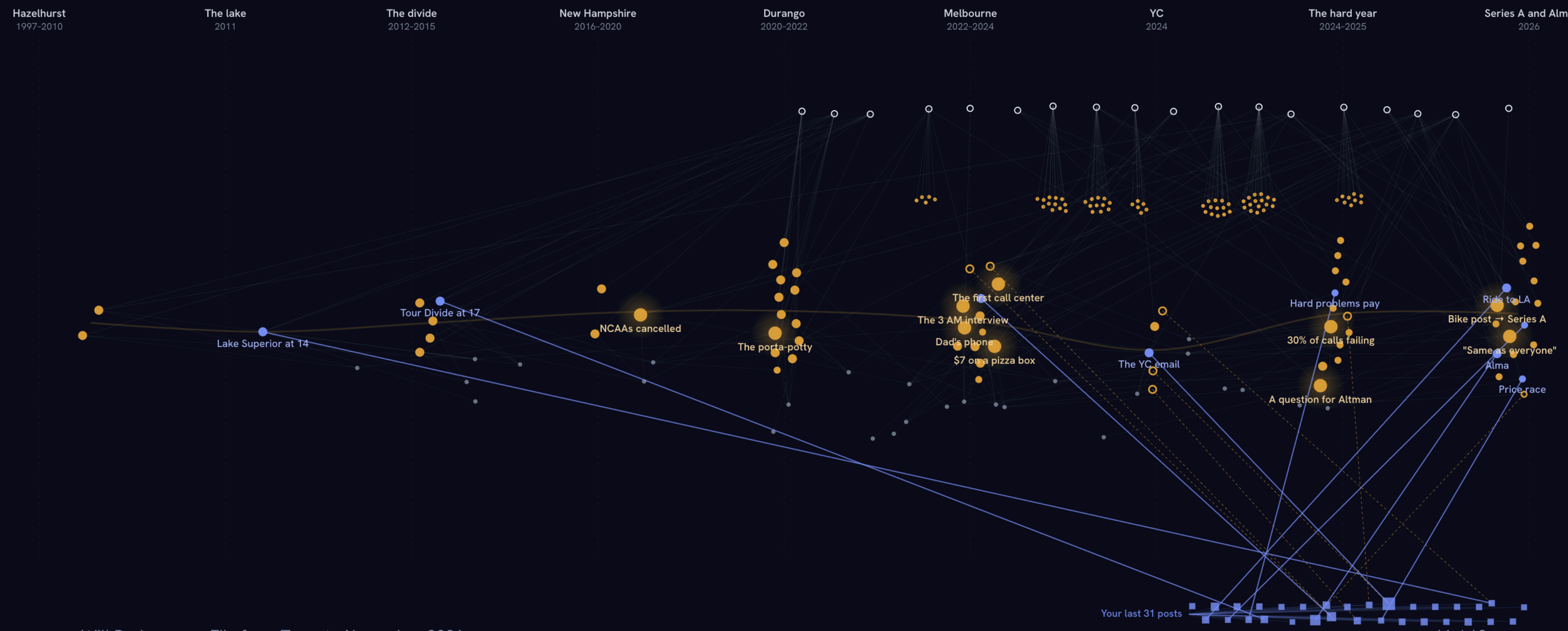
8 **“The comment that bothers me most about Phonely: 'You're just doing the same thing as everybody else.'”**
You, on Founder Wisdom, May 2026, at 11:58

9 **“The best decision of my first Colorado Trail Race was hiding in a porta-potty.”**
You, on Outlook Industries podcast, Sep 2021, at 25:23

10 **“I once got to ask Sam Altman what he'd build on top of AI. His answer is why Phonely exists.”**
You, on Fireside with a VC, Jan 2025, at 16:15

All 73, on one map.

Every story you've told, linked to the second you said it. Gold has never been on your feed.



You talk. We write. You say yes.

You talk

One conversation every two weeks. We come with questions, starting with the ten single lines nobody has heard the rest of.

We write

Drafts built from your own words, with the recording behind every line. Your voice, your capitals, your numbers.

You say yes

You fix a draft or kill it. Nothing goes out without your yes, and you never write from a blank page again.

Month one: the ten stories above, and the ten single lines turned into stories.

“I really just like to post and try to just tell as much of the story from the way that I feel it as I can.”

You, on Venturing with Vishesh, May 2026, at 14:26

That's the whole job. We'll do the part that makes you die a little inside.

Nitesh Dubey · nitesh@tagent.club · will.tagent.club