

GLOBAL VENTURE PARTNERS

Corporate Structure, Licensed Media Portfolio,
Commercial Content Model, Audience Evidence and Leadership
Backgrounds

*An evidence-based review of GVP, Robb Report Africa, Rolling Stone MENA, Billboard Africa and TIME
Africa*

Public sources reviewed through September 2026

Executive Summary

Global Venture Partners (GVP) presents itself as a Dubai-based investment and business-development group focused on growth across the Middle East, Africa and Asia. Public records and publisher announcements show that GVP has built a media portfolio around regional licenses or partnerships involving Rolling Stone MENA, Billboard Africa, Robb Report Africa and TIME Africa. Its official website lists a DIFC address in Dubai and describes its purpose as combining creativity, commerce and investment. [1]

The best public ownership disclosure located is a Forbes 2024 biography of GVP managing director Josh Wilson. Forbes identified Akon, Brandon Martin and Jason Coke as GVP shareholders. It did not identify Wilson as a shareholder in that sentence, even though multiple current profiles describe him as GVP's founder or managing director. Exact share percentages, the full current shareholder register and ultimate beneficial ownership were not independently verified from a corporate registry. [2]

The strongest business-practice evidence is not that GVP has been proven to auction 'news' to the highest bidder. Rather, multiple independent commercial marketplaces openly advertise publication on the exact GVP-linked regional domains for fixed prices, with some promising publication, article writing, editorial coordination or refunds if publication does not occur. Meanwhile, the regional sites themselves maintain sections labeled Partner Content or Contributor Content. This creates a commercially valuable pathway in which the prestige and SEO authority of famous parent brands can be monetized even when the regional website's measurable audience is small.

[8][9][10][11][18][19]

The traffic evidence is especially important. Billboard Africa is the clearest control case: public estimates put it at only about 2,151-2,172 monthly website visits while the main Billboard.com site was measured in the tens of millions. Rolling Stone MENA has vendor-disclosed Ahrefs/Semrush-type organic traffic estimates of roughly 1,700-3,200 monthly search visits, despite very high domain authority scores inherited from RollingStone.com. Robb Report Africa is too small for a dependable public Similarweb-type monthly estimate, while one commercial placement seller claims 295,000 organic visits and backlink/referring-domain numbers that nearly duplicate the entire RobbReport.com domain. [8][9][12][13][14][15][16]

The pattern raises editorial-transparency and audience-representation concerns. A client may be purchasing something materially different from conventional earned-media exposure: a branded, indexed URL on a high-authority parent domain; a backlink; reputational search visibility; possible AI/search discoverability; and some social distribution. That can have real commercial value, but it is not equivalent to placing a story before millions of habitual readers.

The leadership review identifies four central figures: Josh Wilson (founder/managing director), Jason Coke (co-founder/managing partner and publicly identified shareholder), Brandon Martin (publicly identified shareholder and, at Billboard Africa's 2025 launch, GVP CEO), and Akon/Aliaune Thiam (publicly identified shareholder). No reliably identity-matched criminal conviction or arrest was found in the sources reviewed for Wilson, Coke or Martin. Akon has a documented criminal record that includes a 1998 New Jersey felony gun-possession conviction, a 1998 Georgia stolen-BMW arrest/case that was later dropped, a 2008 guilty plea to reduced charges arising from a 2007 concert incident, and a 2025 Georgia bench-warrant arrest tied to a suspended-license matter. [2][6][28][29][30]

CORE FINDING

The evidence supports a business ecosystem built around licensing globally prestigious media brands into regional markets and commercializing the resulting brand authority through sponsorships, partnerships, events, contributor/partner content and third-party publication-placement markets. The ethically significant question is not whether the regional sites have value; it is whether readers and paying clients are clearly told what kind of value is being sold — editorial exposure, sponsored/partner content, SEO authority, reputation management, or some combination of those.

Issue	Evidence	Assessment
Ownership	Forbes identifies Akon, Brandon Martin and Jason Coke as GVP shareholders; Josh Wilson as MD.	Strong public disclosure, but not a substitute for the current corporate shareholder register.
Media structure	GVP is tied to Rolling Stone MENA, Billboard Africa, Robb Report Africa and TIME Africa through ownership, licensing or launch partnerships.	Documented, not speculative.
Paid placement	Multiple outside sellers advertise fixed-price publication on GVP-linked domains, some with money-back guarantees.	Strong evidence of a commercial placement market; does not prove every article is paid or sold directly by GVP.
Editorial labels	Billboard Africa and TIME Africa maintain Partner Content sections; Robb Report Africa and TIME Africa publish Contributor Content.	Shows formal non-standard editorial channels on the sites themselves.
Audience	Regional subdomain traffic is low or difficult to measure while parent domains have millions of visits.	Parent-domain prestige/authority should not be equated with regional readership.
Criminal history	Akon has documented convictions/arrests; no matched criminal record found for Wilson, Coke or Martin.	Use only identity-matched records and distinguish arrests from convictions.

Report Structure

- 1. Company identity and corporate structure
- 2. Ownership, founders and senior management
- 3. GVP's regional media portfolio and licensing relationships
- 4. Commercial content and paid-placement ecosystem
- 5. Traffic and audience forensics
- 6. Cross-publication content patterns and reputation value
- 7. Technical and operational indicators
- 8. Leadership dossiers: Josh Wilson, Jason Coke, Brandon Martin, and Akon
- 9. Criminal and arrest-history summary
- 10. Editorial due-diligence example: Igor Raykhelson
- 11. Unresolved corporate questions and recommended records requests
- Sources

1. Company Identity and Corporate Structure

Global Venture Partners' current public website describes the group as focused on facilitating growth in business, entertainment and investment across the globe, particularly the Middle East, Africa and Asia. It gives an address at 7th Floor, Gate Village 10, Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), Dubai, United Arab Emirates. [1]

The public-facing corporate name is not fully consistent across GVP-linked properties. GVP's website uses 'Global Venture Partners Investment Group.' TIME Africa's legal policy names 'Global Venture Partners LTD' and says it is registered in the DIFC. Robb Report Africa's legal policy uses 'GVP Investment Group LTD.' Rolling Stone MENA's privacy policy says the publication is part of 'Global Venture Partners Investment Group Ltd.' [1][3][4][5]

Those variants may be a single legal entity, related entities, trading names or imprecise website drafting. The public sources reviewed do not resolve the issue. A current DIFC corporate extract and shareholder/director registers are necessary to establish the precise entity structure.

CORPORATE-NAME ISSUE

Because several similar legal names appear across the group's own properties, a publication-ready ownership statement should identify the exact contracting entity for each media license. Until registry documents are obtained, this report treats 'GVP' as the operating group while preserving the legal name used by each source.

Best public ownership disclosure

Forbes' 2024 Under 30 Summit Africa biography for Josh Wilson states that Wilson was the managing director of Global Venture Partners 'with shareholders Akon, Brandon Martin, and Jason Coke.' Forbes also said the group's first move in 2024 was licensing Rolling Stone for the Middle East and North Africa. [2]

This is the strongest public evidence found naming GVP shareholders. It does not reveal ownership percentages, preferred/economic rights, intermediary holding companies, or whether Wilson also owns equity.

Person	Public GVP role	Public ownership evidence	Current confidence
Josh Wilson	Founder / Managing Director	Not named in Forbes' 2024 shareholder sentence	High on operational role; ownership unresolved
Jason Coke	Co-Founder / Managing Partner	Named by Forbes as shareholder	High
Brandon Martin	Identified as CEO at Billboard Africa launch (2025)	Named by Forbes as shareholder	High on shareholding as of Forbes disclosure; current CEO title should be reconfirmed
Akon / Aliaune Thiam	Shareholder; no day-to-day GVP management title located	Named by Forbes as shareholder	High on 2024 public disclosure; percentage/current status unverified

Working corporate structure

Based on the public record, the most defensible high-level structure is:

- Global Venture Partners / GVP group — Dubai/DIFC-based investment and media operating platform.
- Publicly identified shareholders — Akon, Brandon Martin and Jason Coke (Forbes 2024 disclosure).
- Senior operating leadership — Josh Wilson (founder/managing director), Jason Coke (co-founder/managing partner), Brandon Martin (identified as CEO at the June 2025 Billboard Africa launch).
- Licensed/partner media properties — Rolling Stone MENA, Billboard Africa, Robb Report Africa and TIME Africa.
- Property-level editorial and partnership teams — regional editors, staff writers, partnership executives and contributor/partner-content channels.

2. GVP's Regional Media Portfolio and Licensing Relationships

Property	GVP relationship	Key public evidence
Rolling Stone MENA	Part of Global Venture Partners Investment Group Ltd.	Rolling Stone MENA privacy policy states this directly.

Property	GVP relationship	Key public evidence
Billboard Africa	Launched in collaboration/partnership with GVP.	Billboard launch coverage quotes Josh Wilson as GVP MD and Brandon Martin as GVP CEO.
Robb Report Africa	Operated under exclusive African license by GVP Investment Group LTD.	Robb Report Africa legal policy states GVP is exclusive African licensee of Robb Report Media under license from Penske.
TIME Africa	Operated by Global Venture Partners LTD as TIME's exclusive African licensee.	TIME Africa legal policy and TIME's launch announcement state the relationship.

Robb Report Africa's legal page explicitly states that GVP Investment Group LTD operates the site under an exclusive African license from Robb Report Media, LLC under license from Penske Media Corporation. [3]

TIME Africa's legal policy states that Global Venture Partners LTD operates TIME Africa and is the exclusive licensee of TIME USA LLC for the African continent. TIME's own launch announcement described the property as a collaboration with GVP. [4][7]

Rolling Stone MENA's privacy policy says the publication is part of Global Venture Partners Investment Group Ltd., while Billboard Africa's launch was publicly announced as a collaboration with GVP. [5][6]

Property-level management

Public sources show GVP group leadership operating alongside title-specific editorial management. At Billboard Africa's launch, Nkosiya Khumalo was identified as editor-in-chief; TIME Africa currently shows direct GVP participation in partnership and editorial functions, including a September 2026 announcement that GVP appointed Peace Hyde as Director of Global Strategic Partnerships for TIME Africa. [6][32]

3. Commercial Content and Paid-Placement Ecosystem

The strongest evidence of commercialization comes from third-party PR/guest-post marketplaces that publicly advertise publication on the exact regional domains. These offers are not merely generic 'outreach' services; some promise publication, article writing, editorial coordination, permanent placement or refunds when publication does not occur. [8][9][10][11]

For Robb Report Africa, Essentras lists a \$2,500 placement fee, a one-to-two-week turnaround and a money-back guarantee if publication does not occur. It states that clients may upload their own article or have an editorial team write it and that the service handles publisher coordination and editorial review. [8]

For Rolling Stone MENA, GuestPostLinks lists a \$2,641.90 content placement and offers both 'Article Publication' and 'Article Writing + Publication.' The listing displays Ahrefs- and Semrush-labeled traffic/authority metrics for the MENA subdomain. [9]

For Billboard Africa, a PeoplePerHour seller advertises complete content ideation, creation, pitching and publication, with a refund if publication is not achieved. The visible offer price and the body-copy price are inconsistent, which itself illustrates why marketplace pricing should be treated as reseller advertising rather than publisher rate-card evidence. [10]

For TIME Africa, PeoplePerHour listings advertise placement on africa.time.com with very high DA/DR scores and prices stated in the thousands of dollars, again including article creation, pitching and publication and a refund or publication guarantee. [11]

Regional property	Observed third-party offer	What seller promises/markets	Evidence level
Robb Report Africa	\$2,500 on Essentras; other sellers have offered lower/higher prices	Sponsored placement, editorial coordination, optional writing, money-back guarantee	Strong evidence that placement is commercially marketed; not proof GVP directly collected that fee
Rolling Stone MENA	\$2,641.90 on GuestPostLinks	Article publication or writing + publication	Strong
Billboard Africa	PeoplePerHour offer with ~£1,015 visible price; body copy references \$4,500	Ideation, writing, pitching, publication, refund if unsuccessful	Strong evidence of reseller market; price inconsistency noted
TIME Africa	PeoplePerHour listings reference ~\$4,800-\$7,000	Article creation, pitching, permanent publication, refund/guarantee language	Strong evidence of reseller market; not publisher invoice evidence

What the publications themselves disclose

Billboard Africa maintains a dedicated Partner Content archive. TIME Africa likewise maintains a Partner Content section, while multiple TIME Africa stories are labeled Contributor Content. Robb Report Africa also publishes articles explicitly labeled Contributor Content. [18][19][20][21]

This is significant because it demonstrates that the regional sites themselves operate formal channels distinct from ordinary staff journalism. It does not, by itself, prove the financial terms behind any particular article.

WHAT IS PROVEN — AND WHAT IS NOT

Proven: commercial marketplaces offer paid/guaranteed placement on the exact regional domains; the sites publish Partner Content and/or Contributor Content; high parent-domain authority is central to the commercial pitch. Not proven: that every flattering article was paid for; that GVP itself directly took payment for every marketplace placement; or that stories are literally auctioned to the highest bidder.

Why the model raises transparency and editorial-integrity concerns

- A famous parent masthead can create an impression of large readership even when the regional subdomain's measurable traffic is tiny.
- High DA/DR and backlink counts can be inherited from the parent domain and marketed as if they describe the regional publication's audience strength.
- Guaranteed or refund-backed placement offers blur the distinction between earned editorial coverage and purchased media access unless labeling and commercial relationships are conspicuous.
- Articles can have significant reputation-management and Google/AI visibility even without a large number of actual readers.
- When the same subjects and bylines appear across multiple licensed titles, readers may reasonably want clearer disclosure of how the content originated and whether money, agency relationships or partnership arrangements were involved.

4. Traffic and Audience Forensics

The central analytical problem is metric substitution. Total website visits, organic-search traffic, social views, followers, domain authority, backlinks and parent-site audience are different measures. Regional subdomains may inherit search authority from a parent domain without attracting anything close to the parent publication's readership.

Property	Best public regional traffic evidence	Parent-site benchmark	Defensible assessment
Robb Report Africa	No dependable Similarweb-style monthly estimate; evidence suggests low thousands and likely <10K	RobbReport.com: ~1.45M June 2026 Semrush visits; other aggregations ~2.7M	Regional audience unproven; do not use parent traffic as Africa traffic
Rolling Stone MENA	~1.7K Ahrefs-type / ~3.2K Semrush-type organic search traffic	RollingStone.com: ~12.78M June 2026 visits	Likely thousands, not millions, of search visits
Billboard Africa	2,151 monthly visits; Similarweb 2,172	Billboard.com: ~14.63M June 2026 visits	Best measurable control case; small web audience
TIME Africa	No dependable Africa-subdomain monthly estimate located	TIME.com: ~12.32M June 2026 visits	Parent traffic cannot be substituted for regional audience

Robb Report Africa: the 295,000-visit discrepancy

Essentras attributes 295,000 organic visits per month, 338,000 ranking keywords, 12.9 million backlinks, roughly 47,000 referring domains, a Semrush Authority Score of 63 and Ahrefs DR 84 to the Robb Report Africa property. [8]

By comparison, independent aggregation for the entire RobbReport.com domain reports approximately 13.99 million backlinks, 46,176 referring domains and an authority score of 63. The near-identity of those link metrics strongly suggests that the commercial listing is relying heavily on root-domain or inherited authority rather than a distinct Africa-edition link ecosystem. This is an inference from the numbers, not proof of the seller's methodology. [13]

Metric	Robb Report Africa seller listing	Entire RobbReport.com domain
Backlinks	12.9 million	13.99 million
Referring domains	~47,000	46,176
Authority score	63	63
Claimed organic visits	295,000/month	Parent site measured in the millions of total visits

RobbReport.com itself is clearly a substantial site. Semrush showed about 1.45 million visits in June 2026, while HypeStat's aggregation reported roughly 2.7 million Similarweb monthly visits in another measurement window.

[13][14]

Robb Report Africa's LinkedIn page, by contrast, currently shows only 116 followers. That social figure is not a website-traffic metric, but it is another indicator that the regional operation remains much smaller than the global brand. [33]

Rolling Stone MENA: authority versus regional search traffic

GuestPostLinks currently displays Ahrefs-type traffic of approximately 1,700 and Semrush-type traffic of approximately 3,200 for mena.rollingstone.com, while also showing DR 90 and Authority Score 80. [9]

Those numbers illustrate the core issue: a regional subdomain can have elite authority metrics because it sits within RollingStone.com while its own search traffic remains in the low thousands. RollingStone.com itself received about 12.78 million visits in June 2026. [15]

Billboard Africa: the strongest control case

HypeStat reports approximately 71 daily visitors, 2,151 monthly visits and a Similarweb figure of 2,172 monthly visits for africa.billboard.com, with about 125 daily pageviews, 1.76 pages per visit and a 2:59 average visit duration. [12]

Billboard.com itself recorded roughly 14.63 million visits in June 2026 according to Semrush. On those figures, the main site's traffic is thousands of times larger than the regional subdomain. [16]

Billboard Africa nevertheless appears to have a much stronger social operation than its web traffic alone would suggest. A person involved with its social-media operation reported reaching 70,000 Instagram followers and, over 90 days, 9.3 million views, 10,300 net new followers and 448,000 interactions. These are self-reported social analytics, not independently audited website visits. [34]

TIME Africa: parent authority without a public regional traffic number

No dependable public Similarweb-level traffic estimate for africa.time.com was located in this review. TIME.com itself was measured at roughly 12.32 million visits in June 2026. The parent number should not be presented as TIME Africa's audience. [17]

Commercial sellers nevertheless advertise TIME Africa placement using DA/DR scores in the 90s, showing that the prestigious root domain is itself part of the commercial value proposition. [11]

5. Cross-Publication Content Patterns and Reputation Value

The same subjects and, frequently, the same bylines recur across multiple regional titles. That pattern is relevant because it demonstrates a cross-title contributor/partner-content pipeline, though it does not establish who paid whom for any individual article.

Subject	Robb Report Africa	Billboard Africa	TIME Africa
Alessio Vinassa	Contributor Content by Jenna Amy	Partner Content by Jenna Amy	Contributor/Partner Content by Jenna Amy
Sashin Govender	Contributor-style coverage by Jenna Amy	—	Contributor Content by Jenna Amy
Niklas Freihofer	Contributor Content by Jenna Amy	Partner/tagged coverage	Partner Content by Jenna Amy

Robb Report Africa's Alessio Vinassa story is explicitly labeled Contributor Content and is by Jenna Amy. TIME Africa's partner archive also lists a Jenna Amy article on Vinassa, while Billboard Africa's Partner Content archive includes a Vinassa profile. [18][19][21]

The commercial value of such placements can be substantial even when direct readership is small. A permanent article on a high-authority parent domain can rank for a person's name, supply a prestigious search result, generate a backlink, become part of reputation-management campaigns, and potentially be retrieved by AI/search products.

ARTICLE-LEVEL VALUE

The product being sold may be less 'mass readership' than 'digital legitimacy': a respected masthead, a permanent indexed URL, high-authority backlink, branded search result and reusable reputation asset. That distinction is central to understanding the economics of the model.

6. Technical and Operational Indicators

Billboard Africa currently resolves to the UK IP address 77.72.2.127 and uses a WordPress/LiteSpeed/Google Analytics-style stack. The same HypeStat record identifies africa.robreport.com among other sites on that IP. Shared hosting is not evidence of improper conduct and does not prove common editorial control, but it is consistent with centralized technical infrastructure for related regional properties. [12]

The Billboard Africa hosting record also surfaced an SSL certificate common-name reference containing 'africa.robreport.com' and 'wilsonworldwideproductions.com.' Because certificate/hosting data can be stale or misconfigured, this should be treated as a technical clue rather than a definitive corporate-ownership finding. [12]

7. Leadership Dossier: Josh Wilson

Role. Josh Wilson is publicly identified as GVP's managing director and is widely described in current professional profiles as a founder/leader of the group. Forbes' 2024 GVP biography places him at the center of the venture while naming Akon, Brandon Martin and Jason Coke as shareholders. [2]

Background. Wilson began in film and television. Forbes Middle East and Wilson Worldwide materials describe him as founder/managing director of Wilson Worldwide Productions, with work or commissions involving BBC, National Geographic, Disney, Channel 4, Sky, ESPN and other media companies. Forbes included him in its 2018 European 30 Under 30 entertainment list. [24][35]

Media-business significance. Wilson's prior production and journalism background makes him the most directly media-experienced member of GVP's senior leadership. He has also written for Forbes and other trade/media outlets, according to his published biographies. [2][24]

Criminal/public-record review. Searches combining Wilson's name with GVP, Wilson Worldwide, Dubai, television/production and other identifiers did not produce a credible criminal conviction, indictment, charge or arrest that could be reliably matched to this Josh Wilson. Same-name results were excluded. This is not a certified criminal-background check.

8. Leadership Dossier: Jason Coke

Role and ownership. Jason Coke is publicly described as GVP's co-founder and managing partner, and Forbes' 2024 biography names him as a shareholder. [2][23]

Background. Current profiles describe Coke as an entrepreneur, investor, finance professional and media executive operating across Africa and the Middle East. Elevate Africa describes him as managing partner and co-founder of GVP, a Dubai-based venture holding firm spanning media, financial services, infrastructure, energy and education. His LinkedIn profile lists education at the City University of New York-College of Staten Island. [23][36]

Criminal/public-record review. Searches using Coke's name together with GVP, Dubai, Africa, finance, investment and other identifiers did not locate a reliable criminal conviction, indictment, charge or arrest that could be matched to this individual. Same-name or unrelated Coke-family records were excluded. This is not a certified background check.

9. Leadership Dossier: Brandon Martin

Role and ownership. Forbes' 2024 biography names Brandon Martin as a GVP shareholder. At the June 2025 launch of Billboard Africa, published coverage identified Brandon Martin as CEO of Global Venture Partners. Because GVP's current minimalist website does not publish a management roster, his exact current 2026 title should be independently reconfirmed. [2][6]

Identity linkage. Public records strongly suggest that the GVP-linked Brandon Martin is Brandon Martin Sr., the renewable-energy executive associated with Akon. Forbes names both Akon and Brandon Martin as GVP shareholders; PR Newswire identifies Brandon Martin Sr. as Akon's business partner in Akon Lighting; and SEC-filed contracts identify Brandon Martin as CEO of Akon Lighting. The link is strong but should ideally be confirmed through GVP registry records before attaching high-stakes allegations from unrelated records. [2][26][27]

Renewable-energy background. SEC materials show Brandon Martin as CEO of Reach Construction Group when CUI Global acquired the solar EPC company in April 2020. The company said Reach had executed more than 40 utility-scale solar projects and that Martin would continue as CEO after the acquisition. A later SEC filing states that two million restricted shares were issued to Brandon Martin as part of the transaction. [25][37]

Criminal/public-record review. Searches combining Brandon Martin with GVP, Akon Lighting, Reach Construction and relevant locations did not produce a reliable criminal conviction, indictment, charge or arrest that could be matched to this executive. Numerous unrelated criminal records exist for people named Brandon Martin; they were excluded rather than attributed without identity evidence.

10. Leadership Dossier: Akon / Aliaune Thiam

Ownership connection. Forbes' 2024 GVP biography names Akon as a GVP shareholder. No day-to-day GVP management title for Akon was located in the public materials reviewed. His connection is therefore best described, on current evidence, as shareholder/investor rather than operating executive. [2]

Background. Akon, legal name Aliaune Thiam, is a U.S.-born singer and entrepreneur with longstanding Africa-focused philanthropic and commercial projects. PR Newswire identifies Akon Lighting as a clean-energy company started by Akon and business partner Brandon Martin Sr. [27]

Documented criminal and arrest history

1998 New Jersey felony gun-possession conviction. A records-based investigation summarized by The Guardian reported that Thiam had one felony conviction for gun possession. The 1998 New Jersey case ended in a guilty plea and three years of probation. The same reporting found that widely repeated stories that Akon had served a multi-year prison term for running a car-theft ring were exaggerated or false. [28]

1998 Georgia stolen-BMW case. The same records-based reporting stated that Thiam spent time in DeKalb County jail while awaiting prosecution over possession of a stolen BMW, but that the charges were later dropped. An arrest and dismissed case are not a conviction. [28]

2007 concert incident / 2008 guilty plea. After a 2007 concert incident in Fishkill, New York, Akon faced charges of second-degree harassment and endangering the welfare of a minor. In December 2008, The Guardian reported that he pleaded guilty to reduced charges, was fined \$350 and agreed to 65 hours of anti-gang and anti-violence community service. [29]

2025 Georgia bench-warrant arrest. Associated Press reported that Akon was arrested in suburban Atlanta after failing to appear in court in connection with a suspended-driver's-license citation. AP reported that he was booked, posted bail and was released the same day. This arrest is not a conviction. [30]

CAUTION ON AKON'S PUBLIC 'PRISON' BACKSTORY

The most reliable records-based reporting located says Akon's criminal history was narrower than the prison narrative he had sometimes promoted: a 1998 gun-possession felony resulting in probation, plus other arrests/cases with different dispositions. The report should not repeat the claim that he served years in prison for running a car-theft ring as established fact.

11. Criminal / Arrest-History Summary

Person	Verified conviction located	Arrest / charge located	Disposition / caution
Josh Wilson	None reliably identity-matched	None reliably identity-matched	Public-source review only; not a certified background check
Jason Coke	None reliably identity-matched	None reliably identity-matched	Same-name records excluded
Brandon Martin	None reliably identity-matched	None reliably identity-matched	Identity link to Akon Lighting executive is strong; high-stakes attribution should be registry-confirmed
Akon / Aliaune Thiam	1998 NJ felony gun possession; 2008 guilty plea to reduced charges in concert incident	1998 GA stolen-BMW case; 2025 GA bench-warrant arrest	1998 GA case dropped; 2025 arrest is not a conviction

12. Editorial Due-Diligence Example: Igor Raykhelson

Igor Raykhelson is not identified in the sources reviewed as a GVP owner, founder, shareholder or manager. He is relevant only as an editorial due-diligence example because Robb Report Africa and Billboard Africa have carried favorable/lifestyle-oriented coverage involving him while U.S. court records describe a criminal proceeding against him in Russia.

A July 27, 2026 U.S. District Court order in Colorado states that Raykhelson is involved in criminal proceedings in Russia and that the proceeding asserts he was involved in a conspiracy to inflate titanium-product prices sold to VSMPO-AVISMA between 2016 and 2020. A separate June 2026 federal order in New York states that he had been formally charged in Russia and had an arrest warrant limited to Russian territory. The U.S. courts were addressing discovery applications; they did not adjudicate his guilt. [31]

The relevant question for a media-standards investigation is therefore process, not guilt: what litigation/background screening was performed before favorable contributor or lifestyle coverage was published, and what disclosures apply if outside agencies, contributors or commercial partners originated the coverage?

13. Investigative Assessment of the Business Model

The evidence supports describing GVP's media model as a regional brand-licensing and media-commercialization strategy. GVP gains operating access to internationally prestigious mastheads, builds local digital properties and events around them, and participates in a wider ecosystem in which those mastheads can be monetized through advertising, sponsorships, events, partnerships, contributor/partner content and third-party placement services.

The most ethically sensitive aspect is the potential mismatch between what a buyer or reader may infer from the masthead and what the regional property actually delivers. A Robb Report, Rolling Stone, Billboard or TIME domain conveys enormous institutional prestige. Yet the regional subdomains may have only a few thousand measurable visits—or no dependable public traffic estimate at all. Sellers nevertheless emphasize parent-domain authority scores, search strength and AI discoverability.

That model can be commercially rational and lawful when sponsorship and paid content are clearly disclosed. The concern arises when paid or guaranteed access is made to resemble independent newsroom judgment, or when parent-domain traffic/authority is presented in a way that a reasonable client could mistake for the regional site's actual audience.

Accordingly, this report does not call the model an illegal scheme and does not state that every story is sold. It does find substantial grounds for scrutiny of disclosure, audience representation, reseller relationships and the separation between independent editorial judgment and commercial reputation placement.

Evidence-based formulation for publication

RECOMMENDED LANGUAGE

Public records show that GVP operates or partners in regional editions of some of the world's best-known media brands while outside PR marketplaces openly advertise paid or guaranteed publication on those same domains. The regional sites also publish content labeled Partner Content or Contributor Content. Traffic data reviewed for this investigation indicates that the prestige and SEO strength of the parent domains can far exceed the demonstrable audience of the regional editions. The evidence therefore supports scrutiny of whether clients and readers are given a clear distinction between independent editorial coverage, sponsored or partner content, and reputation-oriented paid placement.

14. What Is Still Not Publicly Established

- Exact GVP share percentages held by Akon, Brandon Martin, Jason Coke, Josh Wilson or any other person.
- Whether Josh Wilson holds equity in addition to serving as founder/managing director.
- A complete current board of directors, company secretary, registered agent and ultimate-beneficial-owner list.
- Whether Global Venture Partners LTD, GVP Investment Group LTD and Global Venture Partners Investment Group Ltd are the same entity, sister companies or inconsistent labels.
- Whether Brandon Martin remains GVP CEO in September 2026.
- The exact revenue split and contractual responsibilities between GVP and the U.S. parent/licensors for each media property.
- Whether the third-party placement sellers have direct contracts with GVP, relationships with individual editors/contributors, agency intermediaries, or another publication-access channel.
- The financial terms behind any specific Contributor Content or Partner Content article unless contracts, invoices or direct confirmation are obtained.
- First-party Google Analytics/Search Console data for the regional sites.
- A complete certified criminal-background search for any executive.

15. Records and Questions That Would Resolve the Remaining Issues

Corporate records to obtain:

- Current DIFC company extract for each GVP legal entity.
- Register of shareholders and share percentages.
- Register of directors and officers.
- Ultimate beneficial ownership declaration, if obtainable.
- Media-license agreements or at minimum the contracting-entity pages for TIME, Robb Report, Billboard and Rolling Stone.
- Current GVP organization chart and title roster.

Questions to put directly to GVP and the licensors:

- Who are GVP's current legal shareholders and ultimate beneficial owners, and what percentage does each hold?
- Is Josh Wilson an equity owner as well as founder/managing director?
- Does Brandon Martin remain CEO of GVP?
- Which exact GVP entity signed each regional media licensing agreement?

- What portion of regional revenue comes from advertising, sponsorship, events, licensing, Partner Content, Contributor Content and paid publication-placement programs?
- Does GVP or any GVP property maintain direct commercial relationships with Essentras, GuestPostLinks, PeoplePerHour sellers, CredibilityX or other placement intermediaries?
- What disclosures are required when a client, PR agency, contributor or commercial partner supplies or funds an article?
- Can GVP provide audited or first-party monthly visitor figures for each regional property?
- How are root-domain traffic, regional-subdomain traffic, social impressions and article views distinguished in client proposals?
- What background, litigation and criminal-record screening is performed on subjects of contributor/partner stories?

Methodology and Evidentiary Standard

This review prioritized official GVP and publication pages, parent-media announcements, SEC filings, established news organizations, court records, professional profiles and public traffic/SEO tools. Commercial-placement marketplace pages were used as evidence of what sellers publicly offer, not as proof of what a publisher itself promises or receives.

Criminal-history searches used names together with employers, locations and known business identifiers. Records were included only when identifiers supported a reasonable identity match. Civil disputes, allegations, charges, arrests and convictions are kept separate. Absence of a credible indexed result does not prove absence of a record.

Traffic figures are third-party estimates unless explicitly described otherwise. Such estimates are directionally useful but can be inaccurate, especially for small subdomains. First-party analytics would be required for definitive audience numbers.

Sources

[1] Global Venture Partners — official website. <https://gvpinvestment.com/>

[2] Forbes — 2024 Forbes Under 30 Summit Africa, Josh Wilson biography and shareholder statement. <https://www.forbes.com/connect/event/2024-forbes-under-30-summit-africa/>

[3] Robb Report Africa — Legal Policies. <https://africa.robbreport.com/legal-policies/>

[4] TIME Africa — Legal Policies. <https://africa.time.com/legal-policies/>

[5] Rolling Stone MENA — Privacy Policy. <https://mena.rollingstone.com/privacy-policy/>

[6] The Herald — Billboard launches Billboard Africa; quotes Josh Wilson and Brandon Martin. <https://www.theherald.co.za/lifestyle/leisure/2025-06-10-billboard-launches-billboard-africa-a-game-changer-for-the-continents-music-industry/>

[7] TIME Africa — TIME Announces TIME Africa in Partnership with Global Venture Partners. <https://africa.time.com/exclusive/time-announces-time-africa-in-partnership-with-global-venture-partners/>

[8] Essentras — Robb Report Africa placement listing. <https://essentras.com/publishers/robb-report-africa-under-development>

[9] GuestPostLinks — mena.rollingstone.com placement listing. <https://guestpostlinks.net/product/guest-post-on-mena-rollingstone-com/>

[10] PeoplePerHour — Billboard Africa publication offer. <https://www.peopleperhour.com/hourlie/publish-on-billboard-africa-africa-billboard-com-da-92/1080782>

[11] PeoplePerHour — TIME Africa guest-post/publication offer. <https://www.peopleperhour.com/hourlie/guest-post-africa-time-com-dr-92-da-94-africa-time/1106975>

[12] HypeStat — africa.billboard.com traffic/hosting analysis. <https://hypestat.com/info/africa.billboard.com>

[13] HypeStat — robbreport.com traffic/backlink analysis. <https://hypestat.com/info/robbreport.com>

[14] Semrush — robbreport.com traffic overview. <https://www.semrush.com/website/robbreport.com/overview/>

- [15] Semrush — rollingstone.com traffic overview. <https://www.semrush.com/website/rollingstone.com/overview/>
- [16] Semrush — billboard.com traffic overview. <https://www.semrush.com/website/billboard.com/overview/>
- [17] Semrush — time.com traffic overview. <https://www.semrush.com/website/time.com/overview/>
- [18] Billboard Africa — Partner Content archive. <https://africa.billboard.com/category/partner-content/>
- [19] TIME Africa — Partner Content archive. <https://africa.time.com/section/partner-content/>
- [20] TIME Africa — Sashin Govender Contributor Content example. <https://africa.time.com/ideas/beyond-visibility-why-reputation-is-emerging-as-the-new-business-currency/>
- [21] Robb Report Africa — Alessio Vinassa Contributor Content example. <https://africa.robbreport.com/business/beyond-reinvention-alessio-vinassa-on-building-enduring-value-in-an-uncertain-world/>
- [22] Billboard Africa — site/home and Partner Content example. <https://africa.billboard.com/>
- [23] Elevate Africa — Jason Coke biography. <https://www.weeelevateafrica.org/ambassadors>
- [24] Josh Wilson — LinkedIn professional profile. <https://ae.linkedin.com/in/josh-wilson-6991a646>
- [25] SEC filing — CUI Global acquisition of Reach Construction Group / Brandon Martin. https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1108967/000143774920007208/ex_180278.htm
- [26] SEC filing — Akon Lighting agreement signed by Brandon Martin, CEO. <https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1822995/000182299522000004/akonlightingserviceservicea.htm>
- [27] PR Newswire — Akon Lighting and GATC Health; Brandon Martin Sr. and Akon. <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/akon-lighting-and-gatc-health-announce-partnership-to-analyze-and-provide-ai-driven-genomic-insights-to-over-1-million-people-across-africa-301633786.html>
- [28] The Guardian — records-based review of Akon's criminal history. <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2008/apr/17/news.akon>
- [29] The Guardian — 2008 guilty plea following Fishkill concert incident. <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2008/dec/18/akon-fined-for-throwing-fan>
- [30] Associated Press — 2025 Akon bench-warrant arrest over suspended-license matter. <https://apnews.com/article/akon-arrested-jail-atlanta-georgia-eb8f59b5a945dc4862f762616926cdea>
- [31] U.S. District Court / public reproduction — Raykhelson July 27, 2026 Colorado order. <https://www.casemine.com/judgement/us/6a7dafd40021762387139efe/amp>
- [32] TIME Africa — Peace Hyde appointment, Director of Global Strategic Partnerships. <https://africa.time.com/africa/peace-hyde-joins-time-africa-as-director-of-global-strategic-partnerships/>
- [33] LinkedIn — Robb Report Africa company page. <https://www.linkedin.com/company/robb-report-africa>
- [34] LinkedIn — Billboard Africa social milestone/analytics via Thabiso Matloporo. <https://za.linkedin.com/in/thabiso-matloporo-72a85a152>
- [35] Forbes Middle East Events — Josh Wilson biography / media-production background. <https://forbesmiddleeastevents.com/under-30-summit-2022/>
- [36] Jason Coke — LinkedIn professional profile. <https://ae.linkedin.com/in/jasonlcoke>
- [37] SEC Form 10-Q — Orbital Energy / Reach purchase consideration including Brandon Martin. https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1108967/000143774921026628/oeg20210930_10q.htm

Source note: Commercial marketplace listings can change or disappear. The prices and claims in this report reflect publicly accessible listings found during the September 2026 review and should be archived/screenshot if used in publication or litigation.