

EPISODE 203

BW: *"I didn't realize how many people that have become "successful" in society, some of them started really late or some of them started and they had like 7 million in debt or they had disabilities. I just, didn't realize I was like, Oh, this is not impossible. This is actually a possible thing. So through that, I experienced that. But the push for me was Adidas had gone through this moment where this article came out and essentially it said that they were stifling, intentionally stifling the careers of black professionals like me. I was like, whoa. And I was like, I felt resistance, but I didn't know it was systemic. And lo and behold, all this information will come out and that would be the case. And it inspired me to say, Hey, Maybe this is an opportunity for me to just try something that's for me and my community because I'd spent so much time, and I think you find a lot of creatives that work within a corporate organizations, right? We're like, oh, how can I lead the brand to this way to help this community but it also will help its business. And you spend so much time trying to convince people that aren't from that community, that this is good for business. This feels like I'm just smashing my head against the wall, but what happens if I just try to try it outside of this system and that's what I started to do. And it started to gain traction, but it came from all of those things and all those feelings and all those experiences, but it was hard because I didn't know a lot of people that were doing entrepreneurial things."*

[INTRODUCTION]

Hey friend, welcome back to The Light Watkins Show. I'm Light Watkins and I have conversations with ordinary folks just like you and me who've taken extraordinary leaps of faith in the direction of their path, their purpose, or what they've identified as their mission in life.

And in doing so, They've been able to positively impact and inspire the lives of many other people who've either heard about their story or who witnessed them in action or people who've directly benefited from their work.

And the goal is to expose you to as many people as possible who found their path and to humanize them. And after hearing all of these stories, hopefully you eventually give yourself permission to move further in the direction of whatever feels like your path and purpose.

Because what you'll see is that anyone who does that has had to overcome many of the same obstacles that you might be facing right now.

And this week I'm in conversation with someone who I've been following on social media for a bit and I always get so much value out of his shares. His name is Bima Williams. And Bima is a podcaster, he's a creative, he's got his own sneaker collab with Sakhni and he's a marketing guru. And Bima's life story fits the profile of my ideal guest.

He had early success in his more conventional marketing career at companies like Adidas and Nike, but something didn't feel right. He wanted to do more of his own thing. He saw himself interviewing disruptors and luminaries in the field of marketing and entertainment, but he didn't have any industry contacts.

He didn't have interviewing experience. It was really just a dream that he could have easily talked himself out of pursuing. After all, he had great jobs. He was very successful on paper. He was respected in his industry, but deep down he felt like his career trajectory wasn't for him. Does that sound familiar?

So he decided to take the leap of faith. He resigned from Nike and he put himself out there on LinkedIn by asking for help in pursuing his dream of becoming an interviewer. And he started a podcast and he began creating more content on Instagram. And then the next thing he knew he was tapped to interview Tyler, The Creator and Dapper Dan and John Batiste and a host of other luminaries.

And although he definitely had imposter syndrome, his interviews started to go viral on YouTube and social media. So it turns out his heart voice was actually right on the money. Not only was his calling align with where his future was heading, but he was pretty good at it. And he's still getting better at it as he continues to create content and make himself available for opportunities to unpack the secret sauce and make himself available for opportunities to unpack what happens at the intersection of pop culture and marketing and his work has impacted the lives of millions of people.

Now, during our interview, Bima and I break down the baby steps that he took in order to transition from his conventional life to what he now realizes is his calling, because of course it was not an overnight thing or an easy process, but through consistency of action, he made it happen. And now here we are on the podcast talking about it, which is really what I want for all of you. That's why I love having these types of interviews, especially with quotes, regular people, because I know that it inspires you to take the leap of faith in your own life.

And I know you're going to love being a story and how he followed his heart toward what he truly felt like he was here to do.

So without further ado, let's start from the beginning with Bima Williams.

[00:05:44] **LW:** So we're going to start off in childhood, man. I know you grew up in Louisiana, right?

[00:05:50] **BW:** Yeah. I grew up in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. It's about 45 minutes West of New Orleans.

[00:05:56] **LW:** And your parents worked at a chemical plant. Not sure what that means exactly, but I know they didn't want you to work at a chemical plant. They want you to have a different type of life. What was their philosophy or idea of success looked like as a young person?

[00:06:10] **BW:** Totally. So like, the chemical plant situation, picture walking through a building and they're like in the building or like these pipes and in these pipes are acids that if that pipe cracked and that chemical fell on someone, it would completely go and erode through their skin. It would dissolve their bone like you're talking about extremely dangerous materials that, that folks are working in and also potentially cancerous chemicals as well. My folks grew up in Louisiana and for them, especially my mom was more so like, I want a better opportunity, but more specifically, like you're going to go to school, you're going to go to college, you're going to get a degree and you're going to get a job where you don't have to work near these things.

And my father I think, don't get me wrong, my mother's very creative, but my father led with his creative as far as what he wanted to be and things he wanted to accomplish. And so his approach was more so like, I just want you to be happy. What can you do that's going to allow you to be happy?

They separated or divorced when I was nine. I just remember there wasn't so much space for like a serious pursuit from a creative standpoint. It was very like go down the traditional path, get these things done. But also for me, being protective of my mom, not wanting to disappoint my mom I felt like there was so much that I didn't embrace creatively or even experimenting wise, just because I didn't want to disappoint. A lot of my friends had still have parents that were together. And my kind of childhood felt, I was also an only child, and so there were a lot of aspects of my life that felt kind of lonely, if that makes sense.

[00:08:05] **LW:** What was your archetype in school? Were you the creative kid? Were you the athlete? Were you the nerd? Were you the ladies man?

[00:08:13] **BW:** I was the introverted athlete that was a distance runner. So when you think of athletes, you think like, yes, skinny, wasn't the basketball player, wasn't the football player. But I was this skinny introverted kid that always smiled a lot. But I also always loved sneakers. And so, people would always take notice of what sneakers or clothes or something that I had on. And then I always fell in love with the opportunities to run and be connected with my teammates.

And as a runner, I wasn't a sprinter, I was a distance runner. And that was also different because most of the black athletes and runners were sprinters. But what was unique for me and the team that I was on was so many of my teammates were black distance runners.

And so, we look like a team of Kenyans, which was a dope experience for me. And it's something I carry with me to this day, but I was pretty shy. I was a pretty shy kid.

[00:09:15] **LW:** Did you win anything? Any meets?

[00:09:18] **BW:** Yeah, I was pretty competitive. I would say I was in the top 10%. I didn't win state. I won regionals. When we got to state, there was this kid, I ran an 800 in track and there's just this kid that he was running 151 and I was running 159. Right? So it was like, it was great to like break two minutes in the 800 meter. But when you come across kids running, nine seconds faster in high school that is really fast. And now that event is a sprint, right? But I love relays.

One of the mindset that I've developed now that I didn't have then was I didn't really have a sense of urgency. Then I didn't really have so much of a competitive background or desire then I didn't have a why, I didn't have a purpose. And so I was resting more on my natural ability to run. I went to practice and all those things, but I wasn't necessarily pushing myself past the place of discomfort and all those things. And I wasn't also wasn't pushed in my household. The only place that it was pushed was coach. And he was just like, he continued to push me, but obviously he was like, you can only go as far as you want to go. But I would have moments where I would just show up. It was like, as if I blacked out.

There was an indoor track meet we had in Arkansas. And in these indoor tracks, they have kind of these banked. And they're sometimes really difficult to run on, but they also are designed for folks to run really fast times. And it was like my junior year and we ended up winning the 4X800 meter relay. And I'd ran the best time that I ran since I've been running that race. And it was like a breakthrough moment. And then, I had some stall out moments after that, but that moment in particular, my coaches were like, this is what we're talking about. We need to see this sense of urgency. And so it wasn't something I would really start to develop and cultivate till much later in my life.

[00:11:15] **LW:** I remember this James Dyson anecdote he was the guy that created the Dyson vacuum and all that billionaire in the UK. And he talked about on an interview, how he used to be a long distance runner. And he said, that's what taught him the key to success. He said that inevitably there would be a point where everybody would get tired and he had to be very intentional about training himself to accelerate at that point that he would look around. He knew everybody was tired. So he's like, when you're tired, everybody else is tired. That's when you have to accelerate. And as hard as it is, if you can do that and train yourself to do that, then you will then success is just around the corner.

[00:11:54] **BW:** That's running. I use that all the time when I'm speaking to creatives and I'm talking to other people. Running teaches you the most valuable lesson, in my opinion, one being that you don't get anything out of it that you don't put into it. I run half marathons and marathons to this day.

My last marathon was last September and you don't get anything out of that you don't put in. So if you don't go out and train and do your 20 mile run, when you know you got 26 to do you're not going to show up on race day and be able to do that without feeling a certain type of way. It requires that training. The other thing is that it's a mile at a time, right? And every mile, every step is going to approach you with a different challenge. There's going to be a different environment, something different that you might not expect. And then the other thing is that we're never 100% in life.

I don't believe we're able to be there's so many different things that are competing for our attention and our energy. And so to that point, you have to learn how to operate when you're "tired". And what does that mean to continue to push through when you're not 100% because 100% is ideal and we rarely are able to achieve that. And so you got to be able to say, okay, I can acknowledge that my body is not 100%, but I do believe I can continue to push on. How do I cultivate that? And that's the stuff I learned through running. I didn't learn that through anything else, which is also why I still run to this day because it serves for me personally as a reminder.

[00:13:24] **LW:** It's funny. I was at the gym yesterday and I was on the treadmill because I try to get like, 10,000 plus steps a day. And it's not always possible to do. So just walking around my neighborhood, although I'm in Mexico City, so this is probably one of the most ideal places for walking, but I also, I also have a commitment to posting on my social media a couple of times a day, at least. And I hadn't posted yet, so I sometimes challenge myself when I'm preoccupied with something else, let me post now, like literally, I'm going to create a post. I'm going to do the caption and everything from the treadmill, not because I necessarily had to do it at that time, but I'm training myself just kind of like that running anecdote. I'm training myself. I can do it here when there's a million other things going on around me and I'm a little bit winded and all this, then I can do it at any time, anywhere.

[00:14:20] **BW:** Anytime. Yeah.

[00:14:21] **LW:** So it's kind of like Navy SEAL training for just staying committed to the things you say you want to do.

[00:14:27] **BW:** Yeah because there's no perfect conditions. Perfect doesn't exist. It's either you're going to do it or you're not going to do it. We could find an excuse for either one, right?

We can find a justification for why it makes sense to do it now. We can also find a justification for why it doesn't make sense to do it now. But, when you think about am I doing the things that I need to do to get to where I'm going? It's going to require you to do things when you

maybe not feel your best, or maybe you didn't get that much rest last night, or maybe like you said, you're at the gym and you're traveling and you're doing these things, but guess what, if you do that, it gets you closer to where you want to be. And so, it makes those decisions a little bit easier if you can put it in that context.

[00:15:13] **LW:** So going back to younger Bimma, I have another question. This is a little bit off topic, but not really your name, your parents, were they students of the Bhagavad Gita or how did they come up with Bimma?

[00:15:25] **BW:** Yeah. So my full name is Brandon Michael Williams. And so the story is that my mother was having an incredible career and she had come from this small city called Lake Charles that experiences a lot of poverty. And she had, seven other siblings. Two of her siblings have passed away and she was like, okay, I gotta make something myself. My mom has, she's got I call it expensive taste. She knew she wanted to go create a life for herself where she could indulge in that expensive taste that she has. So she created this career. She became a supervisor at this chemical plant called Honeywell. And she was about 34. And at that time it was, doctors are like, it's too much of a risk to have a kid after you're 35. And so she was at the place where she was deciding, is she going to have a kid? Or is she just going to continue to focus on her career and just be married? And my mom decided, she said, well, I want both. So I'm going to have a kid and his initials are going to be BMW.

And so as I said, he's a creative at heart and his creativity came to be to like antique cars, right? Classic cars. He was part of a car club. And so he started to nickname me Bimma after BMW. And so, he ended up passing away a little over a decade. As my way of honoring my father, I go by Bimma.

[00:17:04] **LW:** Interesting. That's a great story, man.

[00:17:06] **BW:** Thank you. Thank you. Okay. Funny one too.

[00:17:09] **LW:** So you meet Katelyn. I'm assuming you're still relatively young and your parents got divorced, but you decide to get married. Did people try to talk you out of that and say, hey man, you have all your whole life to get married, whatever you want to, you have all these aspirations. Talk a little bit about that decision and then you guys moving up to Boston.

[00:17:30] **BW:** Yeah. I would say one excellent job on your research too. I would say that because of where we grew up, marriage was not a question. It was more of like a societal push of when or do it now. And so for example, you need to get married early in our relationship, there were pressure from so many different places of y'all actually got to get married. Because it's also that Bible belt, that religious standpoint of like, if they all are going to be together, then yep. Sounds like you need to get married. And we met when I was 24, Katelyn was 21. She was finishing up college. And so that's what a lot of people did, they got married at like, 21, 22. We didn't end up getting married till three years later after we had moved to Boston.

But it's interesting when you think about it now, because you're like, oh, you could have had a lot of these mental hangups about it because both of our parents ended up getting divorced. And honestly, it was around the same age for both of us when she was nine, her parents got divorced when I was nine, my parents got divorced. But the thing that I think we both observed and why we ended up moving forward with it was one because of just like Southern values and background. I think we were just already predisposed to making that decision. But I think the other thing was that we also had other folks in our lives that have been married for a very long time and poured into us as well.

And so we felt that, it was something that was possible. I think everybody who has been married though, we'll say that you have no idea what you're getting into until you get into it. And especially when you're so young, because we all are going to grow. We're going to change. We're going to evolve and some days you're like, man, who this person is different. And some days they're like, ohh you're really annoying, but it's when I think about it, it's no different than what you go through with your friends. The only difference is you don't live with your friends. And so they can grow and you can all grow, but you also don't deal with that in like a day to day, every day experience is so, for us, it's been the greatest challenge of our lives.

I'd say our relationship to me is more challenging than being an entrepreneur. It's way more of a dynamic thing. So when I think about entrepreneurship, I was like, oh yeah that's easier.

[00:20:00] **LW:** It's like entrepreneurship, but you have to be concerned about what people are eating every day and how they slept last night and if you snored...

[00:20:07] **BW:** I mean, the emotional aspect.

[00:20:09] **LW:** Who's going to go to the bathroom first.

[00:20:12] **BW:** I mean, especially when we lived in Boston, we had like a like a 500 square foot apartment and one bathroom. You're living very intimate with each other. And I felt when COVID happened, I felt for a lot of people because like they're now like in these shrunken environments and they can't leave.

[00:20:29] **LW:** So you work in Saucony, you work at Adidas, you work at Nike which are all pretty, major brands, very impressive on the resume and all of that. Over the course of your professional career prior to going freelance, what was your unique skill that you became recognized for in that world?

When your name would come up via headhunter or in an interview what would make people say, hey, we want Bimma at the helm of our marketing.

[00:21:00] **BW:** Yeah. I mean, the thing that I've always consistently been is that I've always been at the edge of what's happening. And so, I've always been kind of viewed as a risk taker.

When it comes to marketing and it comes to business if there's something I see that's coming and I feel like we have enough evidence, I want to be able to test out the theory or test out what's happening because I know that if we can get it, right, it'd be such a huge opportunity.

And there were multiple instances of that. For example the way that even got into my career path was social media early on. You're talking 2011. It was so new, but I was building community when I was down in Louisiana and I was just having fun. This great running community.

I was leveraging Facebook blogs to build, to bring that together. And I was also just learning on the fly, right? Just, experimenting, breaking stuff, testing stuff but learning. And what I didn't recognize, because I'm green, I'm a kid. I'm 24. I'm not thinking about titles or brands or anything like that. I'm mostly trying to figure out how I'm going to feed myself. But what I recognized was that actually innovation that was at the front of the helm of what was happening in society. And then when it came to commerce and brands and marketing, and so I would start to get sought after for those things.

And when I got into these brands, I would always look to see how we can bring new ideas that weren't being championed yet to also grow business. And so that's what I truly started to be. Looked at and recruited for was my ability to, from a marketing standpoint, spot an opportunity. How can we commercialize this opportunity? And also then spread it across. If we had a bigger global business, spread it across the rest of the businesses. So I was just really really at the front end of like what was happening and bringing that into the system and trying to figure out how we can leverage it. So that's what folks started to come to me for was truly my Acumen and being at the edge of trying new things when it came to marketing.

[00:23:08] **LW:** What's a couple of examples for people who don't know your work, like that would come up maybe in an interview of something you did that helped, that was a foreshadowing of what was coming?

[00:23:17] **BW:** Yeah, absolutely. So one of the things that happened when I was over at Saucony was it was 2015 and the the sneaker industry was changing. And essentially what that meant was that brands were now going after these really big celebrities to create product with, and also do so in a lifestyle standpoint, previously, it was really all about athlete and then they would collaborate with some of these smaller niche brands.

But now you're taking that model and you're putting it on like celebrity creatives. And so Jordan had just signed Drake and we knew things were about to change in that regard. Adidas had signed Kanye and Puma had signed Rihanna. Now, Saucony was a much smaller brand. The total business at the time was around 300 million. And then the lifestyle business was around 37 million, growing towards 50 million. And just to give an example of like the size of these other brands, at the time, I think. Adidas was like 10 billion and think Nike was somewhere in like the 20 billion, 25 billion range.

So significantly bigger, got way more money to spend. So I was like, hey, we can't compete in that regard. But what we can do is we can look for communities that are strong, united and foster those communities. And build a different way, right? You don't want to take the same playbook that someone else is using. You're not going to win with someone else's playbook. And so what we decided to do was we had identified that and this has been one of my strong suits still to this day is just digital approach. And what we realized there were creators and influencers that we're talking about Saucony at the time without Saucony having to do anything, they were just genuinely fans of it.

And at that point, no one had, from a brand standpoint, had directly engaged with the digital community and said, hey, can we collaborate with you? Can we collaborate with you on sneakers? Can we collaborate with you on content? Can we collaborate with you to build community and events? And because I didn't have a lot of really guardrails or boundaries, it was just me really like leading that front for the business. I started to put together this program where we would take 10 different creatives and influencers that were based on YouTube. They already had their own audiences and we would partner with them to create their own speakers and create their own campaigns and bring them to life. And then and then we would sell them on saucony.com with them. And that resulted in helping us grow our Instagram organically from 3,000 to 80,000 followers within a year. And then we sold out of all the product and within 10 minutes and then what you started to see was the rest of the industry started to do that.

The rest of the industry started to partner with different influencers and creatives in that way. But we were early on. The only thing that we didn't have was we didn't have the full marketing support to make sure it was known that we had done that. So it was known to those who knew, but it wasn't, I would say it wasn't widely known to the rest of the industry. And so that's one of the examples of how, I was able to do that. And then, another example was working with a team of incredible folks. When I was at Adidas I worked on this project where we brought in Donald Glover. And what we were working on this project with him and what was so great about Donald's, he's incredible storyteller. And so you knew that he was going to bring that into this partnership and this collaboration. And he told these stories with Monique and it was at a time where Monique, the comedian that a lot of folks didn't recognize like the genius of Monique, but Donald Glover definitely did. He's a student of culture, a student of his craft. And so these short films that came out are like him and Monique. And she's kind of like, if you remember the Jordan ads where Spike Lee was with Michael Jordan. Monique was the Spike to Donald's MJ and it was such a beautiful dynamic. But what was also really dope was we'd worked with this agency and the comms team, and they came up with this campaign where at Coachella, it was 2019, April Coachella, there was an airdrop, there's a airdrop feature. And so they would airdrop people like, hey, you just got a free pair of Donald Glover, Adidas sneakers, come pick them up here. And so, I just always love being a part of those fringe experiences that can then be taken by the brand and commercialize if they want to do it in bigger efforts. But those are some of the examples of some of the moments that I've been proud to be a part of and then, brought into my own freelance experience.

[00:27:58] **LW:** And you said you started to feel a bit of an emptiness inside. For people who may be in a similar situation, what does that feel like? Actually like coming to going to work, coming home from work, the way you relate to work, how does that actually feel?

[00:28:15] **BW:** Yeah. I mean, the first thing is I wasn't motivated or inspired is perhaps the word that I thought I would be. And it was because I couldn't really understand what was the point of what I was doing beyond the commerce? What was the humanity? Where was the humanity in what I was doing and how that related to society. And it came at a point where I would say it really was headed head on was in 2016, and that was the year that Trump got elected.

It was so much about that things in society became polarizing and divisive. And there were people that look like me that didn't have opportunities. You know what I mean? I was working in a space where I was the only person that looked like me out of 400 people. And I was like, oh, this is strange. Or you look outside in the entrepreneurial landscape and you're like, where are the diverse opportunity of businesses? I know we have these incredible ideas, but where are we in this landscape of things. And so I really started to feel like selling more sneakers, just selling more sneakers. I don't really understand how I'm helping push society forward. You know what I mean? I started to feel like I was doing meaningless work because I was getting, to a degree, I was getting compensation, but I would never get the compensation of the true value that I was bringing to the table just because of how it was set up.

And then, how can I then help my community if I can't even get any of these things to do so I started. And so I was at a place where I was just wow, this feels really low vibrations. Vibration was not high vibrations at all.

[00:30:13] **LW:** Did you watch a movie that kind of planted this seed of purpose around your work? Would you be listening to something? Did you have mentors that you would talk to about this? How did this sort of crystallize in your awareness?

[00:30:26] **BW:** Yes, I would say it started with conversations with just with other colleagues where we would kind of begin having conversations about ideas and things that we wanted to do and things that we weren't able to do. And so that was a part of the conversation, but there was really, and then just seeing other people do things. And so one of the things that I really had started to do was I continue to try to pour into myself. And so I would try to go to panels and events and just start just hearing people's stories that were successful from an entrepreneurial standpoint, but also connected back to that.

They were actually improving something in their community or society. And there were different folks that really kind of touched me at that point. There was this woman named Danielle Leslie, and she had created this this digital course where she was helping folks figure out how to unlock their skill sets and their experience and monetize them.

And what I thought was so dope about that was essentially, that's a book, but she's showing people how to turn into a course, and she's showing them how to create additional income for themselves and then you see how she's been able to impact her community. So I thought that was super dope.

There was a book I came across called Morning Mindset, and he spoke so much about getting clear clarity and taking time out for yourself and not just going into your day. And so I was starting to do some of those things. But the thing that really pushed me over the edge to really do something about what was happening with myself was I was largely inspired by how I built this and it was because I started to hear these stories from Guy Raz and from these entrepreneurs and I started to realize that I used to grow up thinking that, like if it wasn't a perfect scenario, then these things weren't able to be accomplished, right?

I used to just think like, oh, these folks must have come from this or this must have been the case. And there's a lot of that, but I didn't realize how many people that have become successful in society, some of them started really late or some of them started and they had 7 million in debt or they had disabilities. And I was like, oh, this is not impossible. This is actually a possible thing. And so through that, I experienced that.

But the push for me was adidas had gone through this moment where this article came out and essentially it said that they were stifling, intentionally stifling the careers of black professionals like me. And I was like, whoa. And I felt resistance, but I didn't know it was like systemic. And lo and behold, all this information will come out and that would be the case. And it inspired me to say, hey, maybe this is an opportunity for me to just try something that's for me and my community because I'd spent so much time. And I think you find a lot of creatives that work within a corporate organizations, right? We're like, oh, how can I lead the brand to this way to to help this community? But it also will help its business. And you spend so much time trying to convince people that aren't from that community, that this is good for business. You know what I mean?

And so this feels like I'm just smashing my head against the wall, but what happens if I just try to try it? Outside of this system and that's what I started to do. And it started to gain traction, but it came from all of those things and all those feelings and all those experiences, but it was hard because I didn't know a lot of people that were doing entrepreneurial things.

[00:33:57] **LW:** And before you saw that David Letterman Show, Obama and Jay Z, had you fancied yourself as an interviewer or did something about that show ignite that desire within you?

[00:34:10] **BW:** I like to visualize, I would say I'm a visionary in that regard. And so I'll see everything here. And I can envision myself in it and I can envision other people in it. And that was my strength as a marketer is like, I could build the play, as I say, like I could build the heck out of the play. I just wasn't accustomed to being in front of the play. Didn't want to be front facing of the thing. And that's where my imposter syndrome lied the most. There is this identity

that I had connected to, which was that oh no, I can't do that, right? Like, that's not what I'm meant to do. And I would start to have instances where I would be proven wrong about that thing, that identity that I built up so much in myself, but I never for a long time when I was building, I built the idea to start interviewing and the concept around this podcast called Claima Stories. I had an idea that someone else would be the host and I would be a producer. I would just be the marketer behind the scenes. And what you realize is that when you build something, I don't care if you're like, you have plans to build a dog house outside, or you have plans to cook a meal. You realize that if you're the one who took the time to really come up with this idea, no one else is going to really know what to do with it as much as you will. You will know the creative things that you need to adjust to really get it right. And so you have to be actively involved. And so when I thought about that from the interview standpoint, this is where childhood things started to creep in that I started to realize. I was telling myself that wasn't true.

And so what wasn't true was that I can't communicate. I can't speak in front of other people. I can't. But I spent my whole life observing my dad being the most social person in my entire life. And he just easily struck up conversations with other humans. That's something I observed my whole life that he was around. And so, of course, I didn't realize that was something that was sitting very naturally for me. And so my first interviews were on a live stage in front of my peers and I never interviewed anyone before, but this is where what you observed and your talent comes into play. It felt very natural to me because that's what I've been doing my whole life. I was so used to being an introvert, asking people questions, getting them to talk fostering the conversation. I didn't even think twice about what I was doing. And then I realized, this is a thing I can do this. I could do this at a very high level and I could do it at a level without feeling like I'm expensing a lot of energy. You know what I mean? Like it just felt like, oh, this was meant for me. And I realized like what it unlocked for other people and how I was able to disarm other people to open up to me in ways that a lot of times they don't even open up to their family. And I didn't know that was something that I was capable of until I sat down that day to do that thing.

And only until then did I then have the thought of like, oh yeah, that David Letterman style show. I would love to experience something like that someday. Just more so me now being at a place where I just want to push myself as far as I can go. I want to know how far I can go, kind of like when I run, like the first time I did a marathon, I was like, oh, I can run 26 miles. So that's where it came from for me.

[00:37:48] **LW:** Okay. And so I want you to just give us a montage of those next couple of years. You're now dedicating Saturdays to interviewing, make that post on LinkedIn. You connect with Trevor. Just talk about the transition process because now you're in this relationship with your work, where you're basically checked out in terms of your heart. But you're still showing up and you have a plan. I'm going to run away from this thing to the North to follow the North star. I'm going to follow my heart. How did you prepare? What did you feel like you needed in place in terms of, because you have a wife, you can't just be out here, playing Lucy Goosey with the finances. You know what I mean?

[00:38:31] **BW:** Facts. I think, one of the things I would say is that everyone is going to think everyone in your current circle is going to take it with a grain of salt. And because it's not common for people to actually be in a career, being a career that is a desirable considered dream job to say, actually, I'm going to leave this, I'm going to start this thing that I don't know if it's going to work. And so all your cautionary tales...

[00:38:55] **LW:** My friend did that. He had to go back and work at the gas station.

[00:38:59] **BW:** He had to go back with his head down, his family was out in the street, like all the stories. And and so first thing was for me first, I had to check in with me first and I had to really get clear on why am I doing this?

And the reason I had to get clear on that why is because I knew that it was going to get hard. It was going to be stuff I was going to encounter that I didn't know. And if I didn't have a good, why it was going to fall apart. It wasn't something I was going to be able to stick with because it was something I hadn't identified was bigger than me, but I had now identified that this is bigger than me.

And so some of those first steps was like, I remember telling my. One of my closest friends at work and one of my very best friends now my friend said, and he, I was like, Hey, I got this idea. It's called claimer. And he was like, oh yeah, that's fire, bro. And it was, but that's, was everybody because everybody's dreamer.

Everybody has concepts. And then from there, I started to do the work, right? And so I still have my nine to five. I'm not crazy. Like I got a mortgage that I got to pay for. I got a partner. She's also an entrepreneur. And so like, I had to be like, not only had I had to make money while I was building the thing.

And so most people, when you say it starts, most people are like, oh, I would never do that. But when you're basically possessed about building something, you do whatever you have to. So I'm up at 6. I do some work on claimer before then I would go to work lunchtime. I would do some work on claimer. I would finish out my work day and then evening I would do work on claimer. And so I would not go to certain things. I wouldn't be going out during the week. There were social activations that I would miss. There was limited amounts of sleep that I was getting because I was just trying to figure out and really build this thing because I didn't want to feel like I'd felt When I was working at adidas at that point, I was like, this cannot be how my corporate experience and my life is going to go.

And so then, from there I would partner with different folks. I would have like, I would have focus groups where I bring together different creatives and I start sharing them the ideas that I was working on just to get responses just to get feedback. I got to a place where I was like, if this is going to work, I got to get past my ego. I cannot have a fragile ego folks. I've got to be able to share different perspectives and I've got to be able to absorb that information and figure out how to put it to use. And so I would do that. And I do that on Saturdays. A lot of my

Saturdays became like also work days. And then from there, the idea was like, okay, let's see if we can pilot this.

And so from there, I said, I got this idea, have this concept. I need to find a place to get a working example of like showing me doing this. And so other people can be like, okay, we like this concept. Here's where we change it to adjust it.

[00:41:46] **LW:** I have one question before we get to this next part. You're in a marriage, so Saturdays, your wife is like, hey, you worked all week. Now it's our time together. Did you all have to have a commitment? Did you have to get her on the same page? Did she sign off? I know she's an entrepreneur too, so she had her own thing. Maybe she was busy doing her own thing, but just talk a little bit about that for those people who are in a relationship who may want to present a different paradigm to their partner, how do you enroll them in that?

[00:42:17] **BW:** Yeah. So that's a conversation. And if you're an entrepreneur, your house is entrepreneurs too. It's you can't do it without the support of your household, but also then your friends are also entrepreneurs too. You cannot do it by yourself and you can't do it in secret. It's going to crush you because you need the help. And so one of the first conversations when I was doing this was, well, I had a little bit of a better conversation because Katelyn was an entrepreneur. So she understood the basics of like wanting to chase this thing that you're passionate about

[00:42:53] **LW:** And no work life balance for a little while.

[00:42:55] **BW:** No work life balance. And we actually don't believe in work life balance. We believe in harmony, right? You got to design it in order to work for you. And so for us, we have like days and times where we do certain things. And it's like, okay, we're going to go run together at 7am or we're going to pull up to have lunch together on Thursday or date night is going to be on, Friday or something like that. And that's how we're going to spend our time. And then like, every quarter, this is our weekend, no phones, no business talk, like let's go enjoy ourselves. So we got to a place and our conversation where it's like every day, we won't have certain time, but we will make sure we have things and time blocks blocked off where it is about us. It's not about business or those things. And so she was really a great partner in that regard of like, hey, yeah, as long as we figure out how to pay the bills. Figure it out. And, I would go support her when she was, doing farmers markets. Now she's got shops and vice versa when I was doing interviews, she was coming there, bringing lunch. She was helping set up. She was helping build desk when we got her office, all this stuff. So you have to be a part of each other's ecosystem, because if you're off building something and they're not a part of it, you also can start to grow because you got this whole world that is just like, well, how am I a part of that world? How do I integrate into that world? And that's work you have to constantly do. You have to figure out how to make space for other people, especially important people in your life to be a part of that work. And that's just something I'm very passionate about, but that's what we do, right?

We just have to have those open dialogues about what that looks like. And sometimes again, like some folks really value a certain way that they live, but for us, we do too. And we were able to plan opportunities where we still go on vacations and, but we use them as like celebratory moments where like, we hit this goal, we're going on this trip, we're going to Mexico City.

[00:44:54] **LW:** I like that. Alright. So you were telling me about the preparation to take the leap of faith.

[00:44:59] **BW:** Yes. So then, we started doing the interviews. The interview caught. And from there we started to get feedback from people and they were like, are you going to do a podcast? Where can I get more of these conversations, et cetera. And so what I needed to figure out because one of the things a friend had always said to me is like, don't leave before you got something to pay the bills. I was like, you gotta have some runway. And it's the way I kind of I coach people today.

I spend a lot of time coaching creatives on their freelance experience. And what I say is like, have a 9 to 5, so you don't have to stress as you're creating this new thing. And that's exactly what we did. And so we took our example, and I went to a client that had a need and I said, hey, we do this. Do you think you could be a sponsor? I think this is these are the ways that's going to benefit what it is that you do. It was Portland State University. They we're trying to get more of their students into the sneaker industry. I said, hey, we can actually bring this sneaker industry to you. We can educate and we also facilitate relationships, super simple, and that's what we did.

So we bring interview folks in there. We'd interview them and they would have time with the students can ask questions, et cetera. It's like one of the best case studies, I think, for the university. So that also allowed us to get our first bucket of content out into the world. And little did I know we were about to go through one of the biggest global crisis in the world that 2019. We started filming, but 2020, we all know we got stuck inside and that's when podcasting and content really just exploded beyond what it already was.

Our podcast got featured on different sneaker platforms. It got featured on Apple platforms and other media outlets. And this little independent podcast went from this passion project to the number one careers podcast globally. And so it was through that it attracted the right types of clients where I could then make the decision that oh, I think I'm going to step away now.

And that was a bigger conversation I had to have with my partner, with Katelyn, because that was income, when I was working Nike, that was income that we knew was coming in the door. And now you're heading towards a place where, yes, you got contracts in place, but it is a bit more like, this is your own business. You got to figure out how to bring the money in the door and that's working in ambiguity. Every entrepreneur has to get comfortable working with the unknown. It is the I would say it's the top skillset that you're going to need to have, because you got to hustle, especially when you don't know, like you're flying the plane and you're

building a plane all at the same time. That's entrepreneurship. And that's essentially what I was deciding to do.

But 2020 June in the middle of this pandemic, in the middle of civil unrest, I decided to resign from my dream job because. I was at Nike at that point and I decided I was going to become full time freelance creative building my podcast and building my career as a personality.

[00:48:12] **LW:** You asked for help on LinkedIn. And I feel like there are people who ask for help in this crickets and there are people who ask for help. And then people are like clamoring to help. What's the difference? How do you actually generate, genuine interest in someone who wants to help you. And then how did you develop that patience? Because it took a couple of years for that help to really come through in the way that, that you want it.

[00:48:37] **BW:** Yeah, it has to be something that people were passionate about, right? If it's not something that they're passionate about, typically it's going to be very hard to get folks to show up and to help one of the things that I find that. Folks who really start to show up to help you is one after there's traction that starts to exist and they see like, Oh, this is actually something real.

But two, they see that you're committed to it because a lot of times people start something and then they just, it goes away. So people don't really want to go out their way to help when they, if in the back of their mind, they think it's just a phase that you're going through.

The other thing that I would say is when they also see okay beyond just consistency. They also see your level of commitment. The reason that I believe that LinkedIn posts got so much response was because during a global pandemic, during civil unrest, folks saw that I had left something that I was clearly very passionate about to go pursue something that I felt was bigger than me. Folks were like, I want to help you figure this out because I also was very honest and transparent in that. I got the vision for this. I don't know all the things that I need to do to figure this out. I'm going to need some help. And it was at a place of time in society where I think we were all just like realizing, like damn, I thought we were way further along. I thought we were better than where we actually are. And we came to realize like, we're not. And so I think other folks were just like, well, I'm not going to make the same decision that you made Bimma, but I want to help you. I want to make sure that you can. You can have an impact and you can get where you're going.

So I think it was a lot of those things that contributed to why folks, but then the other thing is how it's structured. I'm also very, I'm very big on how you communicate things in a way that connects with people immediately and then also invites them to help. And so typically if there's something like that I would post or I would share, I always start with the big thing that's going to get someone's attention. And at the time, what I knew was going to get some folks attention

was that this dude quit his job to help black and brown creatives. That's going to get your attention in 2020.

And then from there, I started to explain exactly what the problem was, what I was trying to solve, and then how I wanted folks to help. A lot of times we're not specific enough to say what we need help with, or we're also shy about asking what we need help with. And I had to get to a place with myself because, a lot of creatives will say it feels salesy, or I feel like a slimy salesperson.

And what I have to say is like, if you're trying to get over the mountain, right, and the thing that's going to stop you from getting over the mountain is asking that question, but you got to get over the mountain to survive. Are you willing to die because you're not willing to ask the question to get over the mountain. And that's the way I started to approach myself. I said, dude, if you don't ask this thing, I don't care how you're feeling about it. You have to solve that with yourself, but regardless of how you're feeling, where you're feeling good, bad.

If you don't ask this question, you're not going to be able to accomplish this thing that you said that you set out to do. So you have to get not get comfortable. You have to just acknowledge how you feel and move forward anyway. And that's what I started to do. And I started to realize that I'm all, it always goes back to running.

I'm never going to always feel great or comfortable with some of the things I have to do. It's going to push me outside of my comfort zone. And usually when I'm outside of my comfort zone, not usually always when I'm outside of my comfort zone is where I encounter success or growth.

[00:52:26] **LW:** Yeah. It's interesting, man, the juxtaposition of wanting to really step into this new identity or role. And obviously there's some imposter syndrome that comes with that, but then also trying to sort of weave in some humility and some vulnerability, which I think in today's culture is what can move the needle is what can get traction is what can inspire people more so than maybe in our parents era or our grandparents era, where you had to kind of, have this more stoic approach to just sort of forcing your way up that mountain. Come hell or high water.

So you mentioned civil unrest a couple of times, and I think this is something that a lot of creators struggle with, and I'm speaking about my own experience as well. We live in a society where shit happens. And you're like, oh man, I thought we were past this. And I'm like thinking about, okay, what's my next meditation related post going to be, but now I have to weave in police brutality with meditation and it's like, well, how much of this do I want to do? Is this going to distract from my main message? I don't really, like I'm concerned, but I'm not willing to die on this. I don't want to dedicate my whole feed to this issue that's come up.

So what was that conversation like with you talking about marketing and helping black and brown people in that way and civil unrest? And obviously it applies to other things, like maybe

it applies to what's happening in the Middle East right now. How do you know how much of your feed to devote to those kinds of issues, if any?

[00:54:01] **BW:** So here's the first thing that I decided a long time ago. I decided a long time ago that I recognize that the moment I decided to step into the world that I was going to step into, that I was going to be a public figure and that I wasn't going to become a public figure that was going to dance around what I believed in.

And I thought from day one, I said, I don't want to be one of those people that, people carry pitchforks behind because they found out that they were something different than what they had presented themselves with because they wanted to ride the middle line because they were afraid of like losing folks and losing audience, losing followers. And I just made the decision that I'm going to serve one audience, and I'm going to serve that audience as best as I can and I'm totally okay with that.

And what it did for me, it gave me a sense of relief because I watch brands do this all day. They try to talk to everybody and that's how everybody gets caught up because when you try to talk to everybody, we don't know what you stand for. Therefore you don't stand for anything. And so I knew that from day one, I was going to stand for something.

The other reason the other thing that I knew was that I'm a black man living in America. I know what that experience like, I know what that experience like is for other black men and other folks that are in the black community. And I know that oftentimes we are only viewed a certain way. And so I said, I'm going to double down on that. And the main thing though, that I'm here to solve is that I'm here to help creatives figure out how to accomplish their dreams, whether they want to become creative entrepreneurs, or they just want to get a project off the ground.

So I always said that my main topic day one is going to be that, but there are times where there are things that happen that my community looks to me as a voice for things they might not be able to share because they may work in an environment where if they shared that, they would get, they would get blackball behind the scenes. And so I recognize that they look for me to share some of these sentiments that they might not be at a space where they can share those things. And so if there's something happening and I'm like, I have to speak on it. I've cultivated my brand in that way, where that's what I'm going to do because the community that I'm here to serve, they need that information. They need that to be shared. And so they don't expect me to be a political activist, but they do expect me to be aware of what's happening. And also to share it when they're voicing it to me, when they're lighting me up in my DMs, and they're saying like, yo, this is going on. Can you please, bring a conversation to this? And then I'm like, yeah, absolutely. But there's also circumstances where I'm like, because I know that my main thing is to talk about the marketing with creators from a cultural sense. I can't talk about every day, everything that's happening. And so for me, I do a balance of like, this is the main thing, but if like something crazy starts to happen, like I will make sure that I'm speaking to it.

And it's a bit more artful, right? It's like I don't have like a scientific of like, I do seven posts a week and one of them is going to be about this, right? No it's more of an artful approach for me.

[00:57:05] **LW:** Alright. So, speaking of artful approaches, you had this podcast. Is Claima podcast still happening?

[00:57:12] **BW:** Yeah. So we have four seasons and the fourth season is actually going to be the last season of the podcast we wrapped it up with amazing conversations with Ravey B and Christian, Chris and Beffy Gibbs, so many amazing conversations. But due to I had a post in December about this and I actually, I haven't said this publicly yet, but brands had committed to working with black and brown creatives, a billion in commitments to invest in this work. And so when we built the show, it was a built around those commitments that would come in. And so once those things started to not materialize we decided to pivot. And so there were some opportunities on the table to bring it to different different media platforms and organizations.

But at this point in time, we've decided that season four is going to be the end. It could potentially, I don't know, come back years from now. But for now I think we're gonna, we're gonna hold off and we're going to focus efforts on different places, but there's over a hundred episodes of really incredible conversations there.

[00:58:19] **LW:** When you say we've decided, are you talking about you?

[00:58:23] **BW:** No, like I have a co founder that I work with on that project and I had a team of seven people that worked on that show with me because we would travel to record I would have an editorial team where we're going back and forth on, the shape of the conversations had a producer and operations manager. And so it was, when I say we, it was like, it was a lot of folks, but obviously I'm the biggest guarantee. I'm the guarantee. It's on me financially. And so, that's why, but I say we in that regard.

[00:58:54] **LW:** And when you're interviewing people about their careers versus interviewing celebrities like Tyler, the Creator, or like John Batiste. Are there any differences in the preparation or the approach?

[00:59:06] **BW:** Yeah, when you're interviewing someone personally that's not a celebrity, they're not as guarded. And but also there's not as much information about them that's out there. And so there's a lot more work that we do to try to get information. But the thing that we get to do that I love is like, we get to do a proper pre interview, where we get to just get an understanding of where they are and talk to some other people that are in their life about, what's going on in their world and what's important whereas when I'm speaking to celebrities, we don't really have the ability to always do a pre interview. A lot of times it's us meeting for the first time on camera and I have to do a lot of work to get them to trust me.

[00:59:49] **LW:** Your go to technique for that, to open them up, and get them to like play along with your interview style.

[00:59:56] **BW:** Southern charm, Southern hospitality. What I realized is that you don't realize how often people don't encounter kindness in their day to day in their business. And a lot of times what they encounter is just business, not personal. And so I make it a point to be personal with folks. I make it a point to to actually be a student of what it is that they do.

It's kind of like what you did with me earlier on, you asked me about personal aspects of where I'm at today. And what I find is when you take the time to try to get the person, get to know the person beyond what you've seen on social media, they feel like, oh, I can rest. I don't have to necessarily be the thing right now. I can just be me the human right now. And with media in general, every folks have a different, a bit of a mistrust with it. Or folks feel like they go on certain platforms and the edit doesn't represent them in a way that they feel like they're represented.

And so I'm also very transparent. I also tell people from the very beginning, I was like, this is what I'm trying to accomplish with this, and this is, I usually tell folks. If I'm doing that career kind of oriented story, I'm like, we're talking to your 16 year old self and with your 16 year old self, I want you to be very honest about the different things that you navigated, because I don't know, I'm 16. I don't know that yet. So if you could take the time to break that down for me so that I'm still going to mess up, still going to fuck some stuff up, but if you could still like give me like a purview to what I might encounter, right? That interview is going to be way more impactful to me, right? It's going to give you more back for the time that we just spent together versus you just coming on, giving surface level information. So that's one of the ways that I tend to try to approach it and in different ways. But everyone I do try to tell them about they if I remember, because sometimes I get just so hyped up.

I do try to remember to tell them like, hey, can you approach this as after if you're speaking to your 16 year old self because I remember when I was 16, I didn't know anything, lack the confidence and lack the belief in myself, and I would carry that through for years. And I think all of us experienced it at another point in time where it's not just, we don't completely overcome it, but we manage it. Right? Because there's some days where you feel like I got it. And then there's some days you feel like what is happening.

[01:02:24] **LW:** I love that. I love that framework. I'm actually going to use that moving forward because it's just very specific.

[01:02:31] **BW:** It is.

[01:02:34] **LW:** We've all been at that place where you're dreaming, but you're not quite sure how that dream is going to come together and what roadblocks you're going to have to face. But you don't want to be that person who's bringing all the cautionary tales to the story. You want to be that because the world is full of those people. You don't have to do that when

you're saying, oh, be careful and it's going to be hard. There's a thousand people saying that you want to be a person. I saw this clip of Andre 3000, talking about how one of his best friends tried to convince him not to release Hey Ya, you know, back in the day. He's like, man, if you release this is going to kill your career. And he's telling that story in anticipation of the flute album coming out. Yes, and he still remembers that conversation, and so you don't want to be that person remembered for that reason. You're the one that tried to talk me out of doing the biggest thing that I've ever experienced in my life.

[01:03:34] **BW:** Well, that's one of the things that you learn and I'm sure you learn this as well. You're the only one that knows what's best for you. Other people are going to give you advice and guidance and some of that advice will be good. The best advice is not projected advice, right? You have to be able to decide to decipher between what is someone projecting fear on you and what is just like to empower you to navigate what you're going to encounter or what you could possibly encounter, but you know, nine times out of 10 people don't know what's best for you. They're not you. They don't have all of the insights and details that you have. And so you gotta go out, you gotta go put your hand on the stove on that hot stove, you gotta burn it, you gotta know what to do after you burn it. That's the only way we learn. We learn by doing, we do not learn by people telling us what to avoid. And some people figure it out for themselves and they push harder and further, that the story about what was it?

Was it Henry Ford and the horses and people are like, if we had to listen to people, we just had faster horses. But that's one of those things people always say it's not possible, but it was probably not possible for them. But it doesn't mean it's not possible for you. Things have changed. Technology has changed. Who knows what's possible now? You don't know until you try.

[01:04:46] **LW:** Yeah. The question that I go to when someone comes to me and asks for advice. It's just what is your heart telling you to do? I could give them technically proficient advice if that's what they're looking for. Do this first, do this second, et cetera, et cetera. But at the end of the day, if your heart's telling you to do this certain thing or to go in this direction, you have to do it because it's not going to go away. You can try to drown it out with alcohol, with weed, with distractions, but it's not going to go away in your quietest moments in the darkest hours of the night. It's not going to go away until you take a step in that direction.

[01:05:22] **BW:** It's going to follow you. You have to address it. You have to address it somehow, some way it doesn't everything that we don't deal with. It just follows us. And it keeps showing up.

[01:05:31] **LW:** So, finally, I want to talk about your appearance. I'm watching you and there's this art behind you and you're very much on brand. Like you got the purple, you got the neutral tones, the browns, the creams, how deliberate of a decision has that been for you? Or did it, has it just developed organically? Did you sit down and do a Pinterest board about what I want my appearance, my aesthetic to be with the purple beanie and the whole, because you have that in all your posts and your interviews. So talk a little bit about that capsule wardrobe.

[01:06:06] **BW:** Yeah. So I would say the idea behind it was deliberate. How it happened was more organic, but the idea behind it was deliberate. And what I recognized was that we're in a competitive world. And what I recognize in this world is that typically, especially in my space, folks change constantly changing appearances, what they wear, how they do it. And I realized that in a sea of competition, Waldo always stands out. You know what I mean? Waldo is always going to stand out.

It also speaks to my introvert nature, right? How can I draw the attention versus like me having to go out and do it the opposite way. I also thought about it from a logo standpoint, right? Every brand has a logo, has an identity to it. And I said, a personal brand should have that as well should work for a personal brand. And so a part of it is also how I could have the ability to storytell too. So purple was always an important color to me for, for me. I went, I grew up in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. I went to LSU purple was a big color there.

I also grew up and spent a lot of time in New Orleans. Purple's big color there. Mardi gras in different schools and such. And so it means so much to my community. And so when I left home. And then I then years later started Claima, I wanted to make sure that the people from where I'm from knew that they were being represented by a citizen of their community.

The other thing was that color has been divisive in ways. We look at red and blue in political sense, especially today. We are more divided than we've ever been. When we think about the streets, we think about gangs, red and blue. We're more divided than we've ever been. And I was, I always wanted to feel like I could figure out how to bring folks together.

Red and blue, purple. That's really the story behind why purple is so important to me. The brown is also a statement. I when I was working in corporate environments I would always see that senior leadership, Would have black tops and bottoms and they would have white shoes and it would always typically be folks that didn't look like me.

And a lot of times it was white males. And I said, okay, bet I'm wearing brown. This is my protest against this. I'm not falling into this archetype. I'm going to wear brown. I'm going to wear cream shoes slightly just off from what they do. And then where I'm from, we always say when you started at the bottom and you've come from nothing our phrase from where I'm from is you got it out the mud.

So brown to me is also the reminder of that. I came from so far far behind or however you want to think about it to get to where I am today. It keeps me humble. And so now that I have this ensemble and I'm literally dressed in the reminder of who I am, I can't go into a single room and fake the funk. I gotta be who I am. When I'm in those rooms, I have to be honest. I have to be transparent because I'm not just here representing me. I'm here representing folks from my community and folks from the creative community. And this just helps me. It also helps me feel comfortable in my own skin. Like even when I'm in these other rooms and folks may not be comfortable with themselves. They're like, so you wear this everywhere. And I'm like everywhere. Seven of seven laundry day is easy for me. If

[01:09:25] **LW:** I look in your closet, would I just see a bunch of browns?

[01:09:28] **BW:** You got brown t-shirts, brown hoodies, brown crew necks. brown fleece shout out to my friend Sett. Brown suit.

[01:09:36] **LW:** So your wife will go out and then come back home with some brown shit saying...

[01:09:41] **BW:** I mean my workout, my running outfit is brown.

[01:09:45] **LW:** You post some amazing content on marketing and I'm really curious about your creative process. If you could just kind of walk us through, like, I see you're sitting in the place where you normally shoot your content. Is there a camera in front of you? Is it a 3 camera set up?

[01:10:00] **BW:** Yeah. So it's a one camera set up in front of me. And I also use a teleprompter with the iPad. So I can have notes when I'm recording.

[01:10:11] **LW:** So you write it out yourself?

[01:10:13] **BW:** Yeah. So I'll write it out myself. And it's more so far just a comfort part, but I rarely do I stick to it. It's just like, is there. And then I'm like, okay, I'm just going to ad lib this part. But it's there so that I could just collect my thoughts because I also am a over analytical type. And so when I find that I don't have a little bit of that there I overthink it and I trip over my words. So sometimes it's just having it there.

And then so I can riff in my own way, there's a confidence monitor I have here. So I can like, see what I look like on camera. Otherwise I'm just recording and not knowing I got this soft light. Here to the left of me, and I use like this Zoom H6 thing. And then I also work out of here. And so, like, I have my my screen here too, for when I just working on consulting or marketing stuff And then from a creation standpoint, I create over days.

And so what I mean is like, oh, there's a day like Monday, especially, I just take in a lot of insights because so much stuff comes in on Mondays. And so I would just take in a lot of information. And then from there, I'll start creating ideas the next day. And then from there, and I'm working on multiple at once.

And so they'll have buckets for them and then I'll start writing them. And then the next day I'll start editing them. And then when I feel good about it is when I'll record typically. And so I try to stretch mine out. And then I typically either record like early morning, like 5, 6 a. m. Or late at night, just because I got so much stuff going on. I wish I had a better like flow, but I don't at this point.

[01:11:45] **LW:** Are you a one man show when you're recording?

[01:11:48] **BW:** Yeah. Yeah. Just for social content. It's just me creating, writing, editing, posting. It's just me.

[01:11:55] **LW:** So when 2020, I was posting a video a day and I didn't, it wasn't a kind of sophisticated studio like you have set up, but I used to have a teleprompter and just as you said, for confidence.

But I would go off script a lot. I would sit down and write. The video, it would take me about two, two and a half hours a day to get the video out with titles and all that stuff. Captions. Sometimes record it. No shit. 30 times just to get it the way I wanted it to be because I was just, I had that standard for myself. What about you? Are you a stickler for it's got to look a certain way or are you I'll just deal with it in editing later?

[01:12:34] **BW:** I believe you got to get it right in the shot to save yourself the pain and the edit. And so I'm very much like making sure I get it right up front. I record as many times as I need to, till it feels right. And sometimes that could be a painful morning. I just spent this much time doing this. And so that's why I do try to do a lot before I sit down and record. I try to make sure I have as much as baked as possible because I know if I don't, if I'm sitting down and I'm still editing, it's going to be a very long morning. And that's what I don't want. So, by the time I sit down, I'm at a place now where. I'm like one or two takes now where I'm getting it to, to where I want it to be.

And it's quicker just because I know what it is. I know how my formula for that is I just try to take it easy. The hardest part is the part that still takes more time is the edit because I'm bringing in like photos into it and you roll it out sections. I do all the B roll.

[01:13:32] **LW:** Do you edit on your phone or you edit on computer or?

[01:13:35] **BW:** both? So friends of mine want me to use Premiere. I'm using Premier Rush. But they're like, you could do all these things. And I was like, yeah, it's just I just need the simple one. And so I'll go through and I'll chop out the sections and I'll add the B roll.

And then I still like using captions for some of the other edits, but I also recognize I'm like, I could just use Premiere and do all of the things in one place, but I'm just being hard headed.

[01:14:01] **LW:** Do you have a sense of which ones are going to get the most traction or is it surprise you when it happens?

[01:14:08] **BW:** Some surprise me, but there are ones that I always know are going to go. If there's any time for rails doing something, it's going to go. Tyler's doing something it's going to go. If there's anything happening at the intersection of culture that folks are talking about, like,

if I did a video today, I'm talking about the J Cole Kendrick thing, it would go because it's of conversation right now. The ones that surprise me are what I call middle of the funnel for me, which is just like helpful information occasionally which is right. It's not like a popular pop culture topic, but it's more so like, hey, did you know, if you pin these three posts, it'll make it easier for somebody to identify what it is that you're trying to solve, what it is that you do and how they might be able to be a part of that or benefit from it. Occasionally something might happen and all of a sudden that video might go from 20,000 views to 50,000 views and then be on the explore page. And I don't know how or what the algorithm is doing, but occasionally that will happen. But for the most part, I'm pretty clear on what's going to go for me just based on what I know, my audience is constantly talking to me about, I'm like, okay, this is what they're going to respond to. And, I spend a lot of time talking about different types of marketing approaches, but right now we're in that era of outrage and anytime someone does anything outrageous is it's just going to go.

[01:15:28] **LW:** Cool, man. So for my audience who's heard this and they're inspired and they want to get into that Bimma Williams ecosystem, what are some of the ways that you recommend them starting down the rabbit hole? Is there one interview that you recommend they check out? I know you have an amazing newsletter. They should sign up for that, but just give us the step by step so that we can get the biggest bang for the buck moving into your world.

[01:15:54] **BW:** Yeah. So, first thing I would tell them is to check out the interview with Tyler the Creator. We did two, but I think the first one is the first one was the...

[01:16:02] **LW:** NFT one, right?

[01:16:03] **BW:** Yes. The first one was the NFT one. And that was just really incredible conversation. So I would say, start with that one. And then next I would say the newsletter, if you're a freelance creative, and you're trying to figure out how to build your own world and create something sustainable. It is specifically tailored to that. I don't spam you. The reads are five minutes. They're Monday, 4 AM Eastern Standard Time. And so those are always there. And then Instagram particularly the reels is where I try to break down cultural marketing moments and distill them. It's a ways that you could tangibly understand.

And then I always provide you with this 4 step just framework of a reminder these are the things that you need to focus on as a new or even existing experience creative. Don't forget these things because this is what helps you continue to unlock and move forward. So those would be the three areas that I would say.

[01:16:55] **LW:** And that's for anybody with a brand, or even if it's a personal brand who wants to scale that or just come across more authentically.

[01:17:02] **BW:** Absolutely. Absolutely. Beautiful, man.

[01:17:04] **LW:** Well, thank you so much, man. That was awesome. It was, exceeded all expectations and aspirations.

[01:17:12] **BW:** And thank you for inviting me to the platform. I think you're super intentional about your work and obviously I keep track of who you're bringing on your platform. And so thank you for allowing me to come contribute to what you're building and how you continue to pour into people.

[01:17:26] **LW:** Absolutely, man. Thank you so much. I look forward to connecting with you in person. One of these days. So you're mainly in Portland, right?

[01:17:31] **BW:** I'm mainly in Portland, but now I know you're, I was in two years ago. We did New Year's in Mexico City and we're like, we're coming back because it was such a remarkable experience. Just the city and the culture is so big we didn't get to touch everything. And so we're absolutely got to get back.

[01:17:48] **LW:** Let's give Katelyn a shout out to the ice cream.

[01:17:52] **BW:** Yeah. So my partner, Katelyn, my wife started making ice cream 10 years ago. She started making it in Boston. It's plant based ice cream. The thing that she does different is, she's Southern gal at heart. And she was like, I'm making this for folks that have lactose issues, but it's still ice cream. It's a dessert. It's going to be creamy. It's going to have sugar in it. It's going to have great flavors. And so she also brings in a lot of nostalgic flavors. This week, they're bringing back the Choco Taco their version of it, where it's plant based and gluten free, but it's so creamy. A lot of folks come in the shop who aren't plant based and they don't even realize it's plant based ice cream. She just celebrated the second anniversary of her first shop in Portland and now she's under construction for her second location on the West side of Portland. So if you come visit the area, she's got a shop on North Mississippi. And by the summertime, she'll have one on Northwest 23rd called Kate's ice cream.

[01:18:43] **LW:** Awesome. And then last question, is she a natural marketer or do you help each other? Or do you guys guys have a rule? Like we don't give each other business advice because it could go South?

[01:18:52] **BW:** Katelyn is her business and operational acumen, I would say are her strong suit. She runs a business better than so, so many people. She just, her ice cream shop is, and business is in the top percent of profitable ice cream businesses in the country and where I come in is I support from just marketing standpoint. She'll ask me brand and marketing advice. And that's where I share. And then she also does the same for me. There's also ideas that she comes up with that I implement, but also she comes in with the business acumen if she's like, nah, you don't need to spend money on that yet. Nope. Don't do that yet. She keeps me in check because I do lean more on the creative side and I get, I can get caught up in like, I want to do this big campaign and I want to shoot it with these cameras. And she's like, but then you

just do that video with the cameras and got 400,000 views. Why are we going to spend money on this? She keeps me honest.

[01:19:46] **LW:** I love it, man. Well, I'm going to end with this one quote that I've heard you say, which is the world doesn't want you to be perfect. The world wants you to be unique and you've definitely embodied that in your work and in your contribution to marketing. So thank you very much for that.

[01:20:01] **BW:** Wow. Thank you so much. I really appreciate the time. This has been great.

Thank you for tuning into my interview with Bimma Williams. You can follow Bima on the socials @bimmawilliams, which is spelled B I M M A Williams. And I'll put links to his podcast and his newsletter and everything else that he and I discussed in the show notes, which you can always find at lightwatkins.com/podcast.

If you enjoy our conversation and you found that inspiring and you're now thinking to yourself, wow, I want like to interview this other person that I know of, shoot me an email with that guest suggestion. My email is light@lightwatkins.com. And in addition to that, one very simple and easy way that you can directly help me get that guest on my show is to leave a review on my apple podcast page. That's one of the reasons why you always hear podcast hosts like me asking their listeners to rate and review the show is because that's how a lot of especially bigger guests will gauge whether or not a podcast is going to be worth their time based on how many reviews they get and how much engagement they're getting in the comments.

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All right. I look forward to hopefully seeing you back here next week with another story about someone just like me, just like you taking a leap of faith in the direction of their purpose. And

until then, Keep trusting your intuition, keep following your heart, keep taking those leaps of faith. And if no one's told you recently that they believe in you, I believe in you. Thank you so much and have a great day.