

## Credits

Sydney Shead.....Creator/Director  
Kristin Zahra & Jasper Gray.....Cinematography/Editing  
Hailee Camacho.....Production Assistant

Cast     Justin Young  
          Shannon Teamer  
          Kris Kuhn  
          Garry Delano Clark Jr.

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**Special thank you to:** Tessa Wedberg, Timothy L. Christian & Mary Lawson

## Sydney Shead:

My name's Sydney Shead. I'm from Omaha, Nebraska, by way of St. Louis, Missouri. I'm the creator and director of the Unwavering Project. The Unwavering Project is a docuseries and a social movement highlighting resilience and positive community contributions from black men in America. The catalyst for this project is right here in Omaha, Nebraska. So we've captured stories from men in this community who we'll meet momentarily, that are going to set the tone for what this project hopes to capture across the country.

## Sydney Shead:

So tonight we're here with the purpose of introducing you to some of our participants here and to the project, and share the importance of this project in light of the recent events that have happened across America and in Omaha, Nebraska. After the discussion, we'll show you guys a short clip and let you know where you can learn more about our project.

## Sydney Shead:

So I have some gentlemen here with me tonight and I'll have them introduce themselves. You can just let us know your name, where you're from, kind of what you do.

## Marcey Yates:

I'm Marcey Yates. I'm a hip hop recording artist. I'm also founder of the Culture House. 34 years old. From Omaha, Nebraska.

## Kris Khun:

Word. I'm Kris Kuhn. I am 36 years old. I am from Omaha, Nebraska. I am the owner, manager, founder of Hoop Rink. And we are pretty much all inclusive, basketball development program from A to Z. We start at day care age and we go all the way through professional representation now. So really excited about that.

## Garry Delano Clark Jr.:

That's awesome. My name is Garry Clark. I'm the President/CEO of the Greater Fremont Development Council. From Washington, D.C., originally. And I'm just glad to be here.

**Sydney Shead:**

Fantastic. Thank you, gentlemen. So we're just going to jump right into it. I'll start with you, Garry. Your story's amazing. I like to call you our cycle breaker. You came from Washington, D.C., growing up in the 80's your parents were addicted to crack, so you were exposed to lots of trauma, violence, family disruption, and things like that. But you were able to escape that and basically escape generational drug addiction, and all kinds of things. And you've come here to the good life.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

Yeah.

**Sydney Shead:**

In Nebraska. So you determined kind of at a young age that you didn't want that for your life. You wanted more for yourself. You wanted more for your family, even though what you saw around you was painful, and oppressive, and dark. So can you tell us why your story's relevant for youth today in our community.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

Definitely. I think my story just gives the youth an opportunity to see that they can be resilient, that no matter how hard it gets what life you start out with doesn't have to be the one you end with. And so I think my story's about pushing for your goals and fighting on the other side of fear. That's how I would describe my story.

**Kris Kuhn:**

Word.

**Sydney Shead:**

Absolutely. And Kris, your story is one that, parts of it we've heard before. Basketball scholarship recipient, NBA hopeful, and at one point you played overseas for a while after college. And then after a while you kind of wake up from the dream, and you're back home in Nebraska raising up your family. You even shared about an encounter that you had with the police one time, with some friends, that was interesting. Have you guys had your own kind of interactions with the police that maybe where unfair or questioned, pulled over, then let go without any charges, type thing?

**Marcey Yates:**

I pretty much was taken in every time. I ain't going to lie. I pretty much was taken in every time. Whether it was just... it's not like they didn't have no reason, though. I probably had a warrant, of course. Just because when you're younger, you kind of let those things... you don't take care of it. You get the ticket, and then you end up with a warrant. Or you end up with a suspended license and a warrant. So that whole kind of thing, driving without a license. So it was always something like that, where they maybe could of let me off with a warning or something. But still take me in. So as far as that, then it's been some other instances that I'll probably not going to address on the camera. But naw, I didn't get no breaks.

**Sydney Shead:**

Yeah.

**Kris Kuhn:**

Yeah.

**Sydney Shead:**

So sometimes it can be profiling, sometimes it could be maybe valid.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

Yeah. I would say for me, you guys don't know, probably, that I lived in rural Nebraska. So I lived in West Point, Nebraska for almost six years. And we lived in a neighborhood where there was a local cop. And one incident that happened was my wife and I were going to meet her parents down the street for Runza. I just learned about Runza when I moved here. It's in Nebraska, but it's good. Anyway, so we're headed out, there's a stop sign here, and the cop's house is right in front of it. He happens to be outside, no shoes on, just cleaning up his yard. And I stopped, and then I go through the stop sign. He stops in front of the car, comes in front of the car, and yells at me because he said I rolled through the stop sign.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

Now this is a town of three thousand people. We all know each other. I was responding to him saying, "What I do?" And we went back and forth and then my wife was the one kind of a little bit more upset than me. So she was going in. I said, "You know what? Let it go. Let's just keep going." But weird things like that were as power and control and sometimes people take that control and expand it. So.

**Kris Kuhn:**

I know the exact ones that you're talking about, too. Right across the street from [inaudible 00:06:18].

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

That was [inaudible 00:06:20].

**Kris Kuhn:**

Is that the [crosstalk 00:06:22] GSCC?

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

Yep, yep. GACC is the Central cop.

**Kris Kuhn:**

Yeah, that's right.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

You've probably been out there and helped somebody out with their game.

**Kris Kuhn:**

Oh, I have. I [crosstalk 00:06:31]. I got a couple players at [inaudible 00:06:34], couple players in Westpoint. Yep.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

Yep, I coached at GACC as well. So.

**Kris Kuhn:**

Word! Oh my God. I think I might have saw you at the gym over there, man. That's crazy.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

I told Sydney, I thought it was a little bit like you might have been familiar to me-

**Kris Kuhn:**

Yes. I did a camp out there every single year for the girls and boys over there. The-

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

Yeah.

**Kris Kuhn:**

[inaudible 00:06:53].

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

Yeah. So yeah, you helped out some of those ballers. Yeah, yeah. They went to state, too.

**Kris Khun:**

They did. They won state.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

Yeah.

**Sydney Shead:**

So, these guys... they don't know your story. Why do you... I want you to tell me why do you think your wife was so angry about that?

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

Well I think because we've had all these experiences together. And you can help me if I'm not going in the direction that you want this to go. Partly, when I met her. We initially had those issues. When I proposed to her, and I was at [inaudible 00:07:31] basketball, I called her dad, and he said, "Yeah, we're going to have to talk about this. I don't know if you're going to be able to marry my daughter." And-

**Sydney Shead:**

Because?

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

Because I wasn't white. And they wanted grandkids that had blonde hair and blue eyes. And so I never got that approval to marry her. And so she's very defensive and protective of me, in that respect.

**Kris Kuhn:**

Word. That's what's up.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

So she was ready to pop off with [crosstalk 00:08:04]. And she probably would've been taken down to the Westpoint precinct. Yeah.

**Kris Kuhn:**

You think so, though? Do you really think that she would have been taken down to the Westpoint precinct had she popped off?

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

If she just... she kept it verbal, she could have been disrespectful to him, and probably not. I could, if I would have done that, it would have been a different story. So that's true. But I think, for her, she could get animated. And I couldn't. I had to be the one to de-escalate the situation.

**Kris Kuhn:**

Why do you think that is?

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

Because I knew-

**Kris Kuhn:**

Oh shoot, I'm sorry.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

But that's a good question.

**Kris Kuhn:**

I'm curious. I'm really curious. Yo, it's crazy. We were just having this conversation in the back. And I'm like, "[crosstalk 00:08:45] this out. Like, yo."

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

I don't think she was aware of how it could have changed really quickly, and turn into something bad for me.

**Sydney Shead:**

Okay.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

And I'm a prominent individual in that community. At that time I was the County Economic Development Director. The first African American they've ever had there. The highest paid employee in the county. And so, all eyes were on me. And everything's in the paper. Somebody's birthday is in the paper. You do something wrong, it's definitely in the paper.

**Sydney Shead:**

Okay.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

I had that in my mind. And I had the fact that she may not realize that it was going to come down on me, not her.

**Sydney Shead:**

Okay.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

So.

**Sydney Shead:**

Thank you for sharing that.

**Kris Kuhn:**

I think that's a real thing. Just to... kind of interject that. I think just as a whole, I do... and I know this is the unpopular vote. And you may hear this a lot from [inaudible 00:09:41]. We play the race card a little too easily. And I do believe that as a group. So this is what I was getting at. And this is the reason why I was asking the question. For your wife, her going through what if she did. The reality for her, and her experience just here, living in America are way different. She has never seen someone speak to a police officer in that way, and receive the type of treatment that we do.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

That's true.

**Kris Kuhn:**

So because of that, it doesn't make her not racist. Or it doesn't make her racist or anything like that. It just makes her oblivious. It just makes her unaware.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

Yep.

**Kris Kuhn:**

And I think that that's really the biggest disconnect that we have right now in this country. Is just that we are saying that there's a problem, and people that are acting like it's not. It's not that you're racist. It's not that you are racist. That's not what we're saying. It's that there's a problem, and you are trying to act

like there's not. And [inaudible 00:10:37] really just because of people's own experience. She would never know how police would look at-

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

Right.

**Kris Kuhn:**

... someone under those circumstances.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

Right.

**Kris Kuhn:**

Had she not been sitting next to a black man. Because she would never see how [inaudible 00:10:48] that somebody under those circumstances.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

Yeah. There's no way... we've been pulled over several times. It's not the first time. When we were dating, I was driving her car. Same thing happened in Blair, Nebraska.

**Sydney Shead:**

Okay.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

Why are you guys in this car? You sure you driving this car? And then she's experienced everything with me. I bought a Range Rover, which was my first love. In college I had it on my wall. As soon as I had enough money to get one, I got one, right. And then all of a sudden, I go to get the oil changed for the first time in Omaha, at the Land Rover dealership, and I'm sitting there, I got a backpack. I'm dressed like you. I got a backpack on. And then they say, "Hey, we need you to go out to the finance office." Why do I need to go to the finance office? I already bought this car. And he says, "Well, I'm having trouble realizing that this is your car." I said, "Well it's my car. I bought it here today to get the oil changed."

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

And what it was was, it used to be an old lady who purchased it first. She only put like 15,000 miles on it. And then she sold it. And he was expecting her to walk in there, because he saw that car, the information. And he thought I had somehow taken someone's car, then took it to get the oil changed. It was crazy. So, my wife has experienced all of those things with me. And so, she has been learning through that process. But she's never formally experienced it. So I agree with you.

**Sydney Shead:**

That's good. That's really interesting. Thank you. So Kris back to you and your story. Would you say your story up way through college, is that a rare occurrence in the black community?

**Kris Kuhn:**

No, not at all. I think I am the... picture perfect of the what every black kid sees and does in our community. What's that... I always go back to that same rap lyric. You either slang crack rock or you got to make a jump shot.

**Sydney Shead:**

Okay.

**Kris Kuhn:**

Those were the only two ways to make it out the hood, or to make it out the circumstances. So when you look out your window, when that little eight year old, seven year old black boy looks out his window, he's going to see cars drive down... you got hub caps and missing windows, and things like that. And he's going to see this nice car drive down that has these 22 inch rims on it. And this fresh paint and fresh wash. And that is his version of success. Doesn't matter what that person did to get it, this is how I'll make it out of my circumstance.

**Kris Kuhn:**

Is by doing this. Or, you turn on the TV, and you see the Justin Patton's or the Terrance Crawford's or all these great examples of another way to make it out of the circumstances. But to someone who just looks out their window, in our community, it ain't no lawyers, there ain't no attorneys, there ain't no doctors. Those people don't stay right across the street. I don't see that car in the driveway.

**Kris Kuhn:**

So, this is my only scope of success. So, what do you get? You get people who want to become. Not people, you get kids. Who want to become drug dealers or basketball players, or football players or whatever. And then it's just because this is what I see out of my window. This is what success looks like. I don't know nothing else. I don't have the doctor that lives up the street like you do. I would love to be like him, but I don't know what that looks like.

**Kris Kuhn:**

So I am, definitely, here out of the circumstances, it was basketball. And that's kind of why I take it so dear. And that's kind of why I just pretty much put my whole entire program around basketball. Because had it not been for me, I definitely would have a whole entire different direction. No question about that. I've seen it happen to a bunch of my friends, I see it happen to kids now. That's just a way that I could be able to impact my own community from what I know.

**Sydney Shead:**

Okay. So then talk about just a little bit, what happens. I love your story, because you talk about how the principals and things that you learned as an athlete, you were able to transfer those into corporate success, and then now impacting the community working with young children, coaching them from a young age all the way through to professional, and doing some early childhood educating, having early childhood centers. So you're affecting families, athletes, and all of those things. So, talk about what happens when you wake up from the dream. Okay? You go to the high school, you get the scholarship, and then the dream dies. You have to come back home, okay. You were able to turn that around. Not everybody's able to. Can you talk about that a little bit?

**Kris Kuhn:**

I'm sure a lot of people will feel some type of way when I use this diagnosis to be able to describe it. But it's the closest thing to post traumatic stress syndrome that I've ever experienced. I don't know what that's like, I only could read about it in a book and kind of get a... some type of high level understanding of what that means. But that time in my life from when basketball ended, and life starts, was the epitome of post traumatic stress syndrome, for me.

**Kris Kuhn:**

My whole entire life, basketball wasn't what I played, it's who I was. That was my identity. You understand? So if I drop 30 on North tonight, I got all the friends in the world. My phone's blowing up, everybody wants to talk to Kris, everything like that. If I drop 6 on Lincoln Northeast tomorrow, we talk that L, nobody calling me. So again, what's-

**Sydney Shead:**

You're talking about points you made in a basketball game?

**Kris Kuhn:**

Yeah.

**Sydney Shead:**

Okay.

**Kris Kuhn:**

I'm sorry.

**Sydney Shead:**

I'm just making sure we knew what you're saying.

**Kris Kuhn:**

For the [crosstalk 00:17:04] ball players out there. [crosstalk 00:17:10]. So no, but just as a whole, it becomes your identity. In every sense of it, definitely. I was a popular kid in high school. I was a popular kid growing up. I was a popular kid. I had colleges flying out to come see me practice, colleges coming out to see me play, and all these other things. And it's nice, it's awesome. And you think that that is because people are becoming to see Kris Kuhn. People like Kris Kuhn. But people like the way you play basketball. And that is the reality of it. And so when all that stops spinning, when this popular kid that made his name, and made his own image, and made his identity off of basketball comes to a stop.

**Kris Kuhn:**

And then you're phone's not ringing, and people aren't calling you at hang out, and all your friends who you thought were your friends and so on and so forth, and just all these opportunities, and just all these people who just was begging you for just a little bit of time and attention yesterday aren't around today. And you just in this room by yourself, it's difficult. It really is difficult. I really don't even know a better way to explain it, other than that was who I was. And you take that away, and I feel like nothing. I feel like nobody.

**Kris Kuhn:**

So it was difficult. To answer your question, I had to rewrite myself. I had to rewrite who Kris Kuhn was. Kris Kuhn is no longer a basketball player. Kris Kuhn is no longer a player. I will never play another meaningful game of basketball in my life. There's not more championships that I will never win. This is the reality of it. So now, do I let that define me, or do I find another trophy to get? What's my next goal? What's my next trophy?

**Kris Kuhn:**

And so I really try to set my sights on something different. And that's where all the intangibles of basketball came in. When everybody else came in to work late when I was over at Union Pacific, it was a thing. When I come into work late, I used to run laps. When everyone else is... when the boss is talking and everyone else is doing something else, if I'm not looking at my coach, my coach is probably going to be down my throat in the next five seconds. And this 30 minutes in this huddle, or 30 seconds in this huddle [inaudible 00:19:22] time out. The 30 seconds left to go in this game, I have to be able to follow instructions to the T, and go exactly where my coach tells me to go.

**Kris Kuhn:**

So all these, if I say intangible skills that I learned through basketball, I'm punctual. I'm a hard worker, I could follow instructions. I work well with the team. I'm a leader. All these intangible skills that I've developed in basketball, I was able to pretty much put all that energy towards now putting these intangible skills and basketball skills into the next coming group. And that's been my motivation. That's been my motivation.

**Sydney Shead:**

Okay. All right, I was going to have to stop you, because you kept [crosstalk 00:20:03].

**Kris Kuhn:**

My bad, my bad.

**Sydney Shead:**

No, it's all good. It's all good. So Marcey, we talk about your journey as an artist in the film, your contributions to the community, all of you guys are fathers. We touch on all of that. So tell me a little bit about... so after graduating high school you took your gap year, as some of the kids say now. You declined to go directly to college, and learned you were going to become a father around the age of 19, correct?

**Marcey Yates:**

I was 18 when I found out.

**Sydney Shead:**

18?

**Marcey Yates:**

Yeah. I was 19 when I had my first child.

**Sydney Shead:**

Okay. So can you tell us about kind of the drive that you had to attain your dreams and kind of handle your responsibilities that kind of rose up in you when you found out you were going to be a father. And how that kind of relates to the black community, black fatherhood.

**Marcey Yates:**

When you're young and when you're having your first child, it's different emotions. For one, naturally you're just kind of like all right, cool, I'm going to have a boy. But that's not thinking about actually living it. It's just a thought. But when you actually do have it, there's certain pressures that you have. You have your family pressures, you have society pressures. For me, when I found out, I was like, "What to do?" I wasn't thinking like abortion or anything like that. I was more like how my mom going to react, how my dad. You think about them, because your dad always, he'll tell you how you supposed to do things. Respect the women. But also, you're supposed to practice safe sex. And I think often, a lot of times when we have these kids young is because we didn't, obviously.

**Marcey Yates:**

But the pressures is like this: all right, I'm this age, now I got a kid on the way. Everybody thinks well, first off your supposed to either stay with this woman, get married, go get a job. That's what you got to do. That's the societal pressure. You have to actually fight for being able to still keep a piece of yourself. Because having kids, you have to become unselfish. And we are selfish. So it's a fight even when you got kids. You're selfish because a piece of you want to do what you want to do. But part of that, it's your passion. You want to... you want to still do your passion, because dang I had my kid this early, but I still want to do this. So you got to fight that. Because people going to look at you like, "Man, what are you doing? You should be doing this, you should be doing that." Because of your situation.

**Marcey Yates:**

So for me, it was like that. It was like well, what do you do. All right. First things first. Let me secure my future, for sure, which is going to secure theirs. You got to start with yourself. Or you can't help nobody. So like you said, I did take that gap year. But I always had intentions on enrolling in school. It was just so hard for me to get out. So I was just like, "I'm going to chill." Because I went to Vincent High, man. And my senior year, we had the lowest graduation rate. I think we graduated like 90 people, man. Yep. I'm not playing. [crosstalk 00:23:43].

**Kris Kuhn:**

I don't mean to laugh, but I [crosstalk 00:23:45]

**Sydney Shead:**

We was Eagles. We don't even...

**Marcey Yates:**

But you know though, because this is the period where Vince had to drop down to class B. They couldn't get nobody enrolled there. Because it was like that. So I barely got out of there.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

Are they still the Bunnies?

**Marcey Yates:**

Yeah, they still the Bunnies. [crosstalk 00:24:03]

**Kris Kuhn:**

The Mighty Bunnies. It's not your regular bunny. That bunny got some muscles in that gym.

**Marcey Yates:**

Yeah, down at sports season. And in basketball, they run rabbits. [crosstalk 00:24:18]

**Kris Kuhn:**

I ain't say it, I didn't say it. But hey, I ain't going to disagree.

**Marcey Yates:**

Yeah, but for sure. So for me, the first thing I did was make sure I was enrolled in school. Because for one thing, I know that this, and I tell people this, too. That are kind of like confused. They maybe got a child. And they haven't even tried going to school yet. It's like school is a tool, also. It gets you on your feet. Don't be scared to take loans. Be confident that you're going to pay that off. When you going to be successful enough, you're going to right that check one day.

**Kris Kuhn:**

It's an investment.

**Marcey Yates:**

It's an investment. But why not take that risk on this. So it's like those refund checks helped me out a lot. They covered rent, they [inaudible 00:25:05].

**Kris Kuhn:**

Yeah.

**Marcey Yates:**

You feel me? In college, you survive off that. That's better than working a job, to be honest. Because working a job will take all your time. Then you don't feel like doing classwork. You don't feel like working on your passion. It's too much.

**Kris Kuhn:**

How old were you when you had a baby?

**Marcey Yates:**

I was 19 when I had it.

**Kris Kuhn:**

19. So that grant, that's a lot of how you were able to even provide.

**Marcey Yates:**

Yeah. Yeah. Also his mom, at the time, she was going to school, too. So it was one of those things where she would [crosstalk 00:25:39] go to class, we go to class. We making sure we both finish. And that's what you got to do. If you lay down and you have a kid with this woman, make sure that you push her to be the best that she can be, as well, too. It ain't just about you. Because you want your child in the best situation. And that's how I felt. And so I had to fight to keep my passion, my creativity through just staying with it and not letting nobody push the societal views on me.

**Sydney Shead:**

So explain to me, if you guys think it's unique to the black community, if you have a obstacle that comes up, maybe you're becoming a parent at a teen year, or you are injured while playing ball on scholarship, or you're a first generation college student. Is that a unique obstacle to the black community, or why would that make it that much harder for someone to, like you said, and maybe if you had just gotten a job instead of going to school because you had to provide for your child. Why would it be maybe more likely for a black person to that instead of... is this making sense? Instead of pushing through or-

**Marcey Yates:**

I think support, also. Your family barely got through with you, than you having your kid, too. So you're going to be responsible for that more than these other families where their parents can take care of their kids as well as still take care of you, too. If you know what I'm talking about.

**Kris Kuhn:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Marcey Yates:**

You got grandma, that grandpa, and then generational wealth helps a lot. That's the difference between black people and other races. So-

**Sydney Shead:**

So we're less likely to have that generational wealth.

**Marcey Yates:**

That support! Yeah.

**Sydney Shead:**

That generational-

**Marcey Yates:**

Yeah. So you got to go make that money now.

**Sydney Shead:**

Okay.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

I think he's right. Because for me, it was a level of fear there. I know if I don't do this, I'm going back to something that I don't want to. And I don't want to be that. And that was pushing me, motivating me in school. And I started out with really poor grades in high school. And I went my Montgomery Blair, in Silver Spring right outside of D.C. And it was a gift and a talent at school, but I was struggling. I was doing enough to go play basketball and run track. So when I got to college, though, and I realize what my parents have been through, and that was my alternative, oh I'm doing all of this work. And because like he said, it's an investment in you. And so I was focused on that. I'm going to get a 3.9 this first semester, because they not sending me back. And that's what I thought. That's how I focused on it.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

So outside of having someone to lean on in the family, and say well how do I do this. It was just like that dogged focus. This is mine, and I'm not letting anybody take it away.

**Sydney Shead:**

Yeah. And I love that because in your story, you shared... you've never been on a flight, you'd never been to Nebraska. You almost missed the flight. You only had a backpack for the first semester, is that right?

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

Yep.

**Sydney Shead:**

Okay.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

The first half of the semester, I didn't have enough-

**Kris Kuhn:**

That's dope man.

**Sydney Shead:**

Yeah.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

... borrowed someone else's bed sheets.

**Sydney Shead:**

Yeah.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

My parents couldn't afford to send me anything.

**Sydney Shead:**

That's dope.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

I wore the same stuff over and over. I figured out how to do that and look cool a little bit. But [crosstalk 00:29:14].

**Sydney Shead:**

Did you have a comment, Kris?

**Kris Kuhn:**

Naw.

**Sydney Shead:**

Okay.

**Kris Kuhn:**

I was listening to his story.

**Sydney Shead:**

Okay.

**Kris Kuhn:**

That's dope. Yeah, that's dope.

**Sydney Shead:**

[crosstalk 00:29:25] Yeah.

**Kris Kuhn:**

That's what make us stronger, man. And when I say us, I don't-

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

Yeah.

**Kris Kuhn:**

I mean people. People who come from our backgrounds, and so on and so forth. Is it, hey listen, if I give you everything you need when you're born, when you first come here, there's no growth in that. There's no strength. There's no testament.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

Yeah.

**Kris Kuhn:**

If I give you nothing when you get here, and then you end up with everything, it's a whole different... that defines you. It's a whole different... I say, and I like to tell people, and Marcey know. We talked about this back there. I know I'm getting off tangent, but going into the whole... Marcey said something

that was just dope to me. I'll never let anybody impress me. Period. Period. So that being said, that's how I look at the way that the system is set up.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

Yeah.

**Kris Kuhn:**

I had to fight hard. In order for me to be standing right here and everything I have, I had to work a little bit harder than some other people her.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

Yeah.

**Kris Kuhn:**

And that's okay. I don't have no problem with the hard work. But understand you made somebody who will not fail.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

Don't you feel like it's important... because you work with kids, to teach them about the hardships? Not the success?

**Kris Kuhn:**

I do.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

That's where it is. Because you're not going to [inaudible 00:30:40] success just because things go well. So you tell them... so how would you respond to that?

**Kris Kuhn:**

It's a process. And I like to think about it as easy as this: if I said that I wanted to get up right now and go take that, go hold that paper that Syd's on right there. There's a process to that. And because it's sitting right here in front of me, I'm able to kind of organize those process and those steps really easily in my head. But if I said I wanted to be President, or if I wanted to be a astronaut or something. It literally is the same exact process. It's just not something that you're able to see. If I said I wanted to be an astronaut, look up, Google, requisites or whatever to get into astrology or whatever the case. Go follow that. Maybe... this may be 15 years, 20 years down the line. But the steps are still the same.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

Yeah.

**Kris Kuhn:**

For what I got to do. It doesn't get done unless I do it. So basically, to answer your question, you don't get... you can't get, I don't get to D.C. unless I take a plane, unless I work. You got to put the steps in here, there's still a process in between these two locations. And this is the process. If you want to be

successful, these are the things you're going to endure, these things you got to go through, these things you got to do. And that's all depending upon your version of success. I can't write success for you. Whatever you want to do, these are the steps that you got to take to get there. But like you said, the journey, that process is what makes that goal so much sweeter. That's what defines success.

**Kris Kuhn:**

If I say, "Get that paper." If I say, "Hey, can you grab this mask?" Ain't no success in that. Because the journey wasn't difficult. If I say, "10 years do this. Another five years, you got to do this. Then you got to take a class, and so on and so forth." The process is what defines the success, if that makes sense.

**Sydney Shead:**

Absolutely.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

I like that.

**Sydney Shead:**

I like that a lot, too. And what I really like about that is because that's not just unique to black people.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

Yeah.

**Sydney Shead:**

That's just the process and the journey that we're going to take if we're going to make goals or if we want to achieve something. IF we want to break a cycle, if we want to attain something more. That's the process for all of us. And that's what being unwavering is all about. So, to tie this up a little bit, when we got the idea to do this conversation, it was after the evens surrounding Ahmaud Arbery and the unfortunate death that happened with him. Up until that time, which was just a few weeks ago, we've had...

**Kris Kuhn:**

James Scurlock.

**Sydney Shead:**

James. We've had other incidents that happened. George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and now James Scurlock even here in Omaha, Nebraska. Would any of you like to share how hearing of those stories in the news over and over, getting closer together, and even just closer to home, how does that resonate to you? What is the first response when you hear something like that? Another person killed that was unarmed. Or there's not been justice.

**Kris Kuhn:**

Its infuriating, it's frustrating, and all that stuff. And it's sad to say that it's become the status quo, like you said, it's another one. It's not hey, somebody died today. Another one died today. And so it's become the status quo. And so it's infuriating, it's frustrating, and all that stuff. But I, personally, will not

let it distract me from my personal goal and my personal mission and that is to love everybody. So whether that's what I see on TV, yeah it makes me upset. Well I'll turn that TV off to be not upset, I'm going to turn that TV off. Whatever it is, I'm not going to let that distract me from what I know my personal purpose is just to love everybody. And that's me.

**Kris Kuhn:**

I realize that's not for everybody. Some people are put here to fight. Some people are put here to fight. If that is your mission, if that is your calling, and that is what is in you, then fight. But for me, I'm standing on that 50 yard line, and I want to love everybody that is here regardless of what you look like or anything like that. So like I said, it's all unfortunate, but I'm not going to let any of that fuel me into not liking or assuming anything about any broad group of people. I'm not going to generalize police, I'm not going to generalize white people, I'm not going to generalize black people. That person who killed George Floyd needs to be prosecuted for murder. The person who killed [inaudible 00:35:25] needs to be prosecuted for murder.

**Kris Kuhn:**

These... forget black and white. Murder is murder. And there is a charge in the United States for that and I would like to see convictions.

**Sydney Shead:**

You mentioned... did you have something?

**Marcey Yates:**

I was just going to piggy off of what he said. And just about not letting certain things get to you. You got to be mindful of what you let in. So things that you're watching and you're listening to. So like he was saying, I try not to. I don't watch... this is probably the most I've watched the news since the George Floyd. I've been caught trying not to just be consumed by it. Because to me, I feel like politics is a sport. I feel like music is a sport. I feel like sports is sports. I feel like it's a game to all of it. So me, I'm a huge conspiracist, so I look at the way that information's been delivered to us. When is it delivered to us. How it's delivered. Then I'm like, "Oh, this is supposed to make us feel a certain way."

**Marcey Yates:**

I got oppressed triggers, man. I know when they trying to do it. When they dropped the movies- 12 Years a Slave, the Butler, all that stuff. I don't watch it.

**Sydney Shead:**

Oppressed triggers.

**Marcey Yates:**

Yeah. It's oppressed triggers. That's how I feel. And so with this situation and-

**Kris Kuhn:**

It makes you feel some type of way so you got to...

**Marcey Yates:**

And then you got... we used to watching it in another state. And then the riots developed, the protesting, things and that. Last Friday we had it happen by accident. Where in incident happened in the city. And just in the midst of while we're already fighting for George Floyd, but still just fighting for the justice and just being treated-

**Sydney Shead:**

The fight our grandparents fought.

**Marcey Yates:**

Yeah. Still having to do that.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

I kind of... I don't mean to cut you off.

**Marcey Yates:**

Right. You good, brother.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

All right. I kind of feel... I had a different visceral response to Ahmaud, and what happened to him. Because I'm a runner. You guys filmed me running at Zorinsky. I run in all white neighborhoods.

**Sydney Shead:**

And you're a state record holder here in Nebraska, correct?

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

Right. I've broke 11 records at Dana and had a chance... I don't want to dive into all that stuff. But so, I got a lot of calls from my black family in D.C. My parents always call me when they see something happening out here. You okay? Y'all okay? And they said, "Be careful out there running. Be careful out there running." So I'm an artist, too. I write poetry, I do spoken work. And so that's the first thing that I did. I woke up the next morning, and I wrote a poem about him, and posted it, and posted his picture next to it. And lots of white folks who are on my feed, they shared it and had questions and thoughts.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

And so for me, it was a watershed moment, because you had that. And then you had George Floyd and now you have all... I think there's 10 or 11 people who've died just protesting. Since that time. We're just talking about weeks time.

**Sydney Shead:**

Yes.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

Everybody's life is important, right? But right now, it's critical that everyone focuses on black lives, in my opinion. And so it's a watershed moment, not because we don't continue to do our work, and we haven't already been doing it. But everyone else needs to look at themselves and say what have I been

doing during this time? And a lot of people, America's been asleep. So that's why if you have white friends, you got a lot of people that are contacting you saying what should I do? How do I get in? Which is fine. But you also have-

**Sydney Shead:**

Is that true? Do you have people contacting you?

**Kris Kuhn:**

Yeah.

**Sydney Shead:**

I do. I do. [crosstalk 00:39:19]

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

What book should I read?

**Sydney Shead:**

Yeah, yeah.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

There's racism and slavery? This happened? Some people actually asked me that.

**Kris Kuhn:**

Which we appreciate, which we appreciate.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

Yeah. And that's not a bad thing. I think it's educational, but it is a watershed moment, because it's not what we do, it's what all of America does. And if anything's going to change, they have to realize, look at themselves in the mirror. Everyone else who is the majority, and not the marginalized, or mistreated, or have all of these issues of injustice, they have a different life. And so it's important for them to speak up. And so while I agree that we continue to do what we want to do, our goals and our dreams, it is important that we make sure they look themselves in them mirror, the rest of America, and say yeah, we treated you bad.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

And so for me, this George Floyd thing, when he died, and the way that it happened, I think it impressed upon everyone else in American that they have been making a mistake. That they have forgotten how it was for us to be here. That they asked us to be here. They grabbed us and brought us here. And so to forget what we've done for America, that we've let America slap us in the face, over and over again, and you know what we've done? We've loved them. We've said we still want to be Americans. And so what happened this last few weeks, is for them to say we've made a mistake. And those people that are marching and protesting, they feel that. And I think, so it's important that it happened, although I don't want anyone to lose their life. I think it's important that there's action after that. And so that's how I feel. I'm sorry to go on.

**Kris Kuhn:**

Oh, no. I feel you, but-

**Sydney Shead:**

That's it. Absolutely.

**Kris Kuhn:**

It's unfortunate. It's all unfortunate. But to me it's the right amount on it. I guess there is really no balance, but it's necessary. As bad as it sounds, it really is all necessary. I was explaining to Marcey just in the back a second ago, as long as things are going good, you stay on this path. So if everything's going fine, we stay straight. The minute something bad happens, then we turn. So with that saying, is if change doesn't happen, change does not happen, you stay on this path until something bad happens. And so people like to say that the riots, and the protests, and all that type of stuff is unproductive, and whatnot. But it is just the way the growth works. Nothing changes when things are going right, so people have to tear some stuff down and mess some things up in order for change to happen.

**Kris Kuhn:**

Do I agree with that? No. Because I don't want that to happen. But do I understand that is the process of change and change needs to occur? Yes I do.

**Sydney Shead:**

And I agree with that, and I like what you said about balance. It almost feels like this might be some of the shaking that's going to start balancing some things out.

**Kris Kuhn:**

Yeah.

**Sydney Shead:**

That have been going on for a long time. You guys have covered a lot of really great things. I just want to get some final thoughts about everything we've talked about. You talked about, Garry, as being brought here. And in my mind, when I saw George Floyd, and I'm similar, I don't watch a lot of the news, I don't want to see a lot of the videos. It's horrible. We've been seeing videos since we grew up. I saw Rodney King before I was probably six years old.

**Kris Kuhn:**

Before social media-

**Sydney Shead:**

Yeah. Before social media. And we drove from Omaha to St. Louis. It was on TV at home, it was on TV at my grandma's when we got there. So anyway... I lost my train of thought there. So this has been a long time coming. And when I saw that video, it looked like a modern day lynching, to me. Because of what we saw. And the whole world saw it. And I think it's a beautiful time for some reconciliation, some information, and moving forward. So with all of that said, talking about what's happened here, what's happened in our history, what's happening right now. Why is it important for us to keep moving

forward? And you guys have kind of mentioned this. But why is that important for us to move forward as black people, as Americans? While we're grieving and honoring what has happened, but why is it important to keep moving forward?

**Marcey Yates:**

What would we look like stopping? What would we look like stopping? Like me and Kris was talking about before, it starts with the young ones. So we got to show them the way. Teach them, encourage them in them areas where they could create change because that's what will happen, eventually. But it has to be through the systems, and you have to do the work. Take the little steps. We have to teach our people to be... to continue to be persistent on the way to success. And that's the way we beat it.

**Garry Delano Clark Jr.:**

I feel the same way. I think that in everything that I've been through in my life, it's always been stepping stones to a goal. And regardless of how many steps you take back, you continue to push forward if that's what you really want. And so I think this is a microcosm of that. We said we want an America, where everybody has an opportunity. And that everybody feels like they can have that American dream. And it's not realized yet. So we've taken some steps back. And so now, it's time for us to try to keep moving forward.

**Kris Kuhn:**

We have to keep moving forward for the youth. For our future, for our future as a generation, for your future as a... I'm not even going to say as a race. I'm going to say a future as a species. We have to continue to move forward. I got a son. And I got two daughters. And one day they're going to have kids. And I don't want them to have to go through the same bullshit that I had to, and that my dad had to, and that my grandfather, and so on and so forth. So in order for me to ensure that there has to be change. It can't keep going the same way that it has. And that's the motivation. That is the plan. We can't stop. We cannot stop. [inaudible 00:46:00] our kids. If I can't stop, [crosstalk 00:46:02] I want something better for them. They not going through this.

**Sydney Shead:**

Yeah. Absolutely. Well thank you guys so much for sharing with us. We have a clip of the film that everybody's going to see. And then our... if you guys stick around for some acknowledgements after that, you can get some more information on where you can find out more about our project, find out more about the gentlemen here and others involved and thank you very much.