



## **CG GARAGE PODCAST #269 LAUREN MAYER-BEUG CREATIVE DIRECTOR, CHAPEAU STUDIOS**

**She's created butterflies for the Apple Watch, Facebook Friendaversaries — and even graphics for Oscar night. Meet versatile creative director Lauren Mayer-Beug.**

Lauren Mayer-Beug (M-B) has come a long way since working at Sway Studio with Chris. This multi-talented artist cut her teeth in compositing and VFX supervision for movies and music videos before moving into motion graphics, animation and social media features. She's created pieces for Apple, Google, Facebook and Beats, and her clientele include Dr. Dre, Ron Howard, Barack Obama and George Lucas.

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Chris Nichols    Alright, Lauren, so are you stuck at home too?

Lauren M-B     I am.

Chris Nichols    Yeah. I have to admit, I played a little hooky today.

Lauren M-B     Nice.

Chris Nichols    I took advantage of the low traffic early in the morning and I went fishing in Malibu for a little bit.

Lauren M-B     You do that? That's a thing? I didn't even know that was a thing. That's awesome.

Chris Nichols    Yeah, I started picking up fly fishing and then I decided to fly fish in the surf. It's really hard and I don't catch any fish, but it's a lot of fun just to get away for a little bit. And I figured it's safe, right? There's no one on the beach.

Lauren M-B     And it's been raining so it's probably clean I think.

Chris Nichols    Yeah, yeah. Yeah, that was the thing that kind of scared me is the rain. But anyway, it's been what it has been. But let's give-

Lauren M-B     It's been enough.

Chris Nichols    Let's give people a little bit of a history here. You have I have known each other for a, whoa, long time, right?

Lauren M-B     Yeah.

Chris Nichols    Like looking at 12 years maybe? You were at Sway.

Lauren M-B     More.

Chris Nichols    Yeah, I guess it must be because Lily was a baby-baby.

Lauren M-B     Yeah, tiny.

Chris Nichols    And she is going to high school next year.

Lauren M-B     Ah, now I feel old! Oh my gosh.

Chris Nichols    So yeah, but you were, I believe, an intern at Sway when we started.

Lauren M-B I started as an intern, yeah. And yeah, I was fresh out of school and I had interned at DD, so that's how I met a lot of people and eventually ended up at Sway. But I was like, "I don't know. I still don't know what I want to do. But this whole VFX thing is really cool."

Chris Nichols Okay, so where did you go to school? How did that all start?

Lauren M-B I went to school at RISD.

Chris Nichols You went to RISD. Okay. Up in Rhode Island.

Lauren M-B Yeah, yep. Yeah, and it was very fun. And I originally went thinking I would go into illustration because that's what I did my whole life was drawing and painting and all that stuff. And then I discovered animation. I mean I had thought about it but it wasn't a thing until I got there. I was like, "Oh, this is awesome." And that kind of snowballed into what became digital media, so I became very experimental there.

Chris Nichols Right.

Lauren M-B But I really liked the idea of visual effects and it was all new. Yeah, so then when I came to DD as an intern, I got all facets of the industry, so I could just cherry-pick.

Chris Nichols Right. Nice.

Lauren M-B Yeah, yeah.

Chris Nichols Yeah, that's interesting, but when I met you, you were really focused on compositing. That was the thing that you were very good at, right?

Lauren M-B Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Chris Nichols Not so much 3D, but it was more of a 2D thing for you, right?

Lauren M-B Yeah, and that's always been my world I think. I feel like I was very lucky at that time because in deciding which way I wanted to go, like, producer, artist, but my heart was always in being an artist. I discovered compositing and there were all those great guys there at Sway who taught Nuke.

Chris Nichols Right.

Lauren M-B And I just picked apart their scripts, and it was all just there for me. So I remember that distinctly, that day that I told Mark. I said, "I just want to do this. Don't pay me, I just want to learn it. In three months I will learn it." And that's what I did, yeah, and the rest is history. Then we were really heavy in the CG compositing and all that stuff and all the cars and getting paint to look perfect. I was obsessed.

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Chris Nichols Yeah, I think it was my first job as a supervisor there was that car commercial that we did. It was a Nissan-

Lauren M-B Yeah.

Chris Nichols It was a way to track. Do you remember that?

Lauren M-B Yep.

Chris Nichols And we had first gone into that ... We were brand new in that building and it didn't even really have power in the building. They had all these big junction boxes of power that were like these big cables were coming together.

Lauren M-B That I electrocuted myself on.

Chris Nichols That's right. I remember that. And I was like, "Oh, this is not good. This is not good." But they did eventually build out the office. But I remember it was at the end, we were on the last modes of delivery and all the 3D guys had finished. And I think it was just you and I just trying to finish the show, just trying to just get it done.

Lauren M-B Yeah.

Chris Nichols And just so people know, back then, what basically we were doing, it was a slew of commercials that we were giving to the car dealerships. It was basically for car dealers to be able to say, "We're going to make a commercial based on every car possible." So we made like 10 commercials, essentially, out of one big set of commercials. It was amazing.

Lauren M-B Yeah. Oh, I totally forgot that that's what it was.

Chris Nichols Right.

Lauren M-B I remember being like blinders on and getting it done, but yeah, that was a different era I feel like, even then. It doesn't seem that long ago, but the fact that we were making all of that, even running footage as well, but just those packages for the dealerships.

Chris Nichols Right. And it did well for the company, and it was pretty interesting to get focused on cars for a long time. But I still remember you were really into compositing, and I've been told because I hadn't worked with you before, that was the first time I'd worked with you, that you were "an intern". I was like, "She is really talented for an intern." But I was like, "This is really good." So I was really blessed to have you on the team, especially considering it was my first gig and I had to impress Mark about my stuff. And it was like well, it's okay, I've got a good team.

Lauren M-B Yeah.

Chris Nichols It was a lot of fun. Okay, so you were compositing and you were at Sway for a long time. You and I were there together for a while, right?

Lauren M-B Yeah.

## **Freelance career moves post-Sway**

Chris Nichols And then you eventually started freelancing around. Is that what happened?

Lauren M-B Yeah, I found my footing. I think I was there for four years, something like that. And then I decided to go freelance just to try it. My first gig, it was after Digital Domain for a Verizon commercial, so that was my first. I mean we had done big productions at Sway, but that was just thrown into the raging waters and go have fun.

Chris Nichols Okay.

Lauren M-B So I did that, and then I went to Zoic for a bit. And that was kind of a change because they do a lot of episodic work, even then they did. And I was compositing CG there for cinematics, a lot of cinematics. They were just rolling through. And then they needed help for an intro one day, and so I just made up an intro that was motion graphics. And they were like, "Oh, wow! Wait, what?"

Chris Nichols Okay.

Lauren M-B And that kind of steered the path. I mean I still did CG compositing. I loved Nuke. But once I got into the motion graphics world, that kind of clicked for me. I was like, "Wow, I like this. This is really fun."

Chris Nichols So that sort of steered you into going back to your design ideas, right?

Lauren M-B Yeah. And it was-

Chris Nichols What was the intro for?

Lauren M-B It was a massive action game. I am not a gamer so I was like, "I'm going to make what makes sense to me and just go for it." But it was inside the world of, I don't know, some chart where if you were a gamer you would be plotting, I don't know, your teams or something like that. So I just used it as a representative format to

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make my graphics. They used it for a while. They really liked it. And that was just something on a whim that I did and that snowballed also.

Chris Nichols What opportunities came from that?

Lauren M-B Oh, man, where did I go from there? Oh, okay, I stayed there for a while, and then I ended up ... You remember Nathan?

Chris Nichols Yes, of course.

Lauren M-B Nathan Boldman. We ended up teaming up together and forming our own company, but that was around the election. So then we went to New York and did this Obama campaign video, which was fun.

Chris Nichols Really?

Lauren M-B Yeah. So that was further enforcing the whole motion graphics thing. And that started our company for another good four years. And we had another partner. It was really fun. We did a bunch of stuff for Comcast. What else? More car commercials, a Red Bull spot which is still used today. It was super fun, a Shaun White thing.

Chris Nichols Oh, nice.

Lauren M-B A lot of people liked that.

Chris Nichols Okay.

Lauren M-B Yeah, I'll have to send you my reel sometime. I am the worst self-promoter ever. Yeah, we just did a bunch of those brands. It was then that ... Why am I blanking on the name? Which became Public. Do you remember them?

Chris Nichols Who, the company?

Lauren M-B Yeah, the company, Public VFX.

Chris Nichols Oh, I don't remember who became Public VFX.

Lauren M-B Yeah, anyway.

Chris Nichols But you started your own company you said, right?

Lauren M-B Yeah, so we rented space in there from them.

Chris Nichols Oh, right. This was the space-

Lauren M-B Yeah, it was on Market Street.

Chris Nichols It was on Market Street. They had a bunch of motorcycles in the lobby, right? Was that the place?

Lauren M-B That was Arsenal.

Chris Nichols That's Arsenal, okay.

Lauren M-B That's later.

Chris Nichols Yeah, that was later. Okay.

Lauren M-B Yeah.

Chris Nichols But what was the name of your company so people know that?

Lauren M-B Well, then it was Carosall, but it became De Motu. There were a lot of iterations of it, so it was De Motu, but then we teamed up with Shade VFX and we were on Rose Avenue. And we moved to the old Method building. Anyway, it was a great space. It was like a series of these architectural significant spaces that was nice and like "Oh, I feel so fancy!"

Chris Nichols Oh, nice.

Lauren M-B And I had some big pictures on the wall.

Chris Nichols So you were in the old Method building, the big metal one with yellow stuff?

Lauren M-B Yep.

Chris Nichols Oh, that's a nice building actually.

Lauren M-B It was. It was really nice, next to Michael Bay, our neighbor.

Chris Nichols Oh, right. Yeah, Bay Films is right next door.

Lauren M-B Yeah.

Chris Nichols That's right.

Lauren M-B Just like a hop over the roof there, as he would do. So what else? Yeah, and we did a bunch of stuff there. And it's weird because I look back and I was still really young then. I didn't know what I was doing.

Chris Nichols Right.

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Lauren M-B I feel like I did, but who knows? It was a lot of learning and just kind of going for it and trying to convince clients, building teams, that you can do this. We did the then Western Mutual commercials, a lot of stuff for Nat Geo. What else? The list goes on. It was a lot of stuff. It was a lot of stuff. We also worked with Shira again, so she was great.

Chris Nichols Yeah?

Lauren M-B Yeah, she was very-

Chris Nichols Yeah, yeah, Shira was our EP at Sway back when we first started there, so she's pretty interesting.

Lauren M-B Yeah, yeah. So anyway, all of that timing just coincided with the financial crisis of 2009, '10, and it was just too hard to maintain. So we decided to call it quits, and that's when we teamed up with Arsenal.

Chris Nichols Okay. And so you guys ended up in their office and made your own department, right? Did you guys kind of do that?

Lauren M-B Yeah, it was just kind of an instant department. We gave them all of our equipment and we just started rolling from there, which was really cool because-

Chris Nichols Was it kind of like a merger of sorts?

Lauren M-B Yeah, yeah.

Chris Nichols Okay.

Lauren M-B They got an instant VFX graphics team and we got everything else.

Chris Nichols Right. They were mostly known as, I guess, more of a Flame place, right?

Lauren M-B Yeah. Oh, yeah. Yeah, we hired ... Or maybe Jason was already there. Anyway, they had a CG guy there that we just kind of took under our arms or wings and trained him. And he's booming, he's awesome, successful.

Chris Nichols Nice.

Lauren M-B And yeah, there were clients then too. I remember it being really intense, but we had a lot of stuff with HSI and Doctor Dre. My favorite piece there is still the Dr. Dre video. Yeah, "I Need a Doctor."

Chris Nichols Tell us about that.

Lauren M-B Yeah, I suped that.



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Chris Nichols Okay.

Lauren M-B So we put, I don't even remember the actress' name, but we shot downtown at the Edison.

Chris Nichols Oh, right, nice, nice place.

Lauren M-B Yep, put the model in a giant water tank and had to turn her into this ethereal oracle angel thing. And that was really fun. It was hard because man, I mean you can't put a human in a tank without bubbles and all of that stuff looking a little weird. So it required a lot of cleanup, a lot of Flame time.

Chris Nichols Right.

Lauren M-B But I composited her and did the conform and all of that. It's a really long piece. It's like seven minutes or something like that.

Chris Nichols Seven minutes? What was it for? It was a music video I'm assuming, or ...

Lauren M-B Yeah, it was a music video. I mean Dr. Dre and Eminem teamed up. I don't want to speak out of turn, but they teamed up again for that one. So it seemed, at the time, like a big deal because Dr. Dre had been MIA for a while and so this was him coming back. And it had a lot of his history at the beginning of the video, so it's worth a look. Yeah, it's very stylized and they have this whole ... Skylar Gray's career started then, her whole hook became very famous.

Chris Nichols He's a really smart guy. I really like Dre. He's got good vision as well, which is also pretty interesting. I didn't work on the Tupac hologram thing, but I was at DD when it happened. I remember just hearing stories about how good he was at collaborating with people and communicating his ideas. And considering how talented he is, he also seems very humble at the same time.

Lauren M-B Huh, yeah, I mean for the three seconds I met him twice, he was very nice and like you said, very humble and just ready to go like whatever you guys need. It was nice.

Chris Nichols That's cool. That's cool.

Lauren M-B Yeah.

Chris Nichols So around what time did you do that commercial?

Lauren M-B That was 2011, '12. It was before we moved.

Chris Nichols Okay.

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- Lauren M-B So it was around '11, '12 whenever that came out, and that piece went into the GRAMMYs for their performance then, so we had that whole side of it and organizing their stage graphics for that.
- Chris Nichols Right, wow. That's so cool.
- Lauren M-B Yeah, yeah. It was fun.
- Chris Nichols Yeah.
- Lauren M-B Yeah, and while we were there, that whole time was kind of, I don't know, I look back and I get a little nostalgic about it because we also did all of the *Imagination Projects*, the Ron Howard little films.
- Chris Nichols Okay, yes.
- Lauren M-B And they're kind of quirky, but it was part of the same group of people and suping all of those that we worked on. It was neat meeting Ron Howard and just seeing how he interprets stuff like "Oh, that's a neat trick." And you're like, "Yeah. Yeah, I guess it's a trick, I don't know."
- Chris Nichols Yeah. Ron Howard is also super nice. I actually very literally ran into him at DD. I came around the corner too fast and I smacked right into him.
- Lauren M-B Oh my gosh. I did that once with Jimmy Iovine. I was very embarrassed.
- Chris Nichols Did you really?
- Lauren M-B Yes. He was not amused, not amused.
- Chris Nichols It's happened, it's funny. You've done that, my wife has actually ran into Will Smith. Same thing, she just ran into him and he's like towering over her.
- Lauren M-B Oh my gosh. She was like ah.
- Chris Nichols Yeah. But yeah, Ron Howard is also another guy who is super, super kind and humble and very collaborative as well, right?
- Lauren M-B Yeah, very, very, and he's a good listener too and willing to just be open. And when we were at that first round table. It's a lot of those moments, at least for me, I just remember this moment. This is me, this is me.
- Chris Nichols Yeah, yeah, yeah, absolutely.
- Lauren M-B We had fun. Yeah.

Chris Nichols That's so cool.

Lauren M-B And then where'd we go from there? It's weird. It's always weird going over my life story very quickly, I miss a lot of chunks and jump around.

Chris Nichols Don't worry. You can jump around, that's fine. You can do that.

Lauren M-B Yeah.

Chris Nichols Okay, so you were still at Arsenal, but you guys had moved, you said to a new place? You outgrew the space or something.

Lauren M-B Yep.

Chris Nichols Okay.

Lauren M-B We outgrew it. It got kind of annoying. I actually liked the space. It's always weird as you know when you're in a company and then it moves. It really changes the dynamic of the company.

Chris Nichols Oh, big time.

Lauren M-B And it spread, the new place spread everybody out, so it was a nice space but it was weird. So we moved and it was nice for me. I got my own office.

Chris Nichols Okay.

Lauren M-B It was one of those like okay, it's fine, whatever. But we did-

Chris Nichols But you were still focused on motion graphics now, right? You were still looking at that area. Well, more of a creative director at this point I guess, right?

Lauren M-B I was, oh, definitely. No, by then, definitely creative director.

Chris Nichols Right.

Lauren M-B And it was a nice jumping point because I kind of got the best of both worlds for me because I don't want to have to decide even though I'm so inclined to the design and being a typophile and all of that stuff.

Chris Nichols Mm-hmm (affirmative), typophile.

Lauren M-B Yeah. And I still love the VFX part of stuff. I like being able to change things convincingly.

Chris Nichols Right.

## VFX supervision for “The Call”

Lauren M-B We got to do that and Arsenal still held onto its Flame side of things. We did a lot of spec spots just for fun to see what we could do. We did a Lexus spot, a couple of them. And what else did we do there? Yeah, a Nike spec. What else was there? I should just open the website. But anyway, yeah, we had a CG team. We kept building it out. We got more episodic work. And then, I did my first and I think only movie, *The Call*.

Chris Nichols Really?

Lauren M-B Yeah.

Chris Nichols Okay.

Lauren M-B Yeah, that was fun. Halle Berry is cool. I liked her.

Chris Nichols Okay. Nice, nice.

Lauren M-B It's one of those situations I've found often like people get, directors too, get to this point where they're not hurried, but they need a solution quickly. They've realized they got to a point where they didn't have a VFX sup. "Oh, one of these would be super handy. Why don't we find someone?" And then there's me who typically does not look like whatever people think in their head as a VFX sup. They think I'm wardrobe. "Oh, go that way."

Chris Nichols Really?

Lauren M-B Yeah. It's happened so many times.

Chris Nichols Really?

Lauren M-B Yeah, yeah. But you win them over and you gain their trust. And they're like, "Oh, yeah, you know what you're doing."

Chris Nichols Do you think that is a persona you've been struggling with as a woman in visual effects, that women leadership stuff?

Lauren M-B Oh, definitely, 100%.

Chris Nichols Yeah?

Lauren M-B I mean the worst was with ... What did we do? It was an HP spot that we did, jumping back to De Motu, it was a holiday HP spot. It was a big one. And the

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director refused to acknowledge me. I did everything. I'm giving you the answers. It's so weird. And then there was another one on Oroweat. We had a lot of things, clean up, all that stuff, CG sims of exploding oats everywhere. And they don't remember. They just don't remember. They're like, "Oh, wait. So where are you supposed to go? Oh, you're supposed to go over there." You're like, "No, I'm not. I am the VFX sup right here." It's weird.

Chris Nichols Wow, it's almost like you have to wear a hat that said "I am the VFX sup."

Lauren M-B Oh, I've been tempted. You start thinking about your outfit. You're like, "What looks more VFXy? I don't know."

Chris Nichols Oh my God, yeah. I can't imagine. I mean, I've never had that issue. I've been on set a whole bunch myself, but I can't imagine. That is just really a shame that people think that way.

Lauren M-B Yeah.

Chris Nichols Yeah, I know I talked to Janelle Croshaw and she had a hard time too with some of that stuff. Do you know Janelle?

Lauren M-B I've met her many times. I wouldn't say that I know her, but yeah, we've met.

Chris Nichols Okay. Yeah, and she also had ... It was interesting, especially where she was a supervisor and I'm curious about this on your side. But she had a hard time sometimes with telling people what to do in posts. People just wouldn't take her advice very well. Or they say just because you said something was wrong, they'll be very upset at you because you said something is wrong.

Lauren M-B Yeah, yeah. And I never really talk about it because I never want to harp on that point because I think well, I can get past it, it's not a thing. But then it does become a thing, and I've found it time and time again. And sometimes it's really easy to get over that hump. I did another project for Spring's Preserve, this sanctuary place in Las Vegas, and it was another one of those you've got to think really fast. We're getting in place. It's a combo of animation and the CG, so let's shoot this, this, and this, and the backups or whatever. And it was a big team or bigger team, and they just look at you sideways. But by the end, I was so proud of it because I had just won them over. And they were like, "VFX queen!"

Chris Nichols Oh, oh. Alright.

Lauren M-B Yeah. And you're like, "Well, whatever."

Chris Nichols What do you have to do to win them over? Is there something that you could tell people like okay, if you want to win over someone and realize that you're an authority, especially as a woman in visual effects, what do you have to do to make that happen besides just being really aggressive? Because some people

feel like you just have to be very aggressive, I don't think that's the right way to go either. You know?

Lauren M-B Nope. No, and I've learned that. It's deep down, and this is going to sound super cheese ball, deep down knowing that you're right, being open, but knowing that you're right. And if somebody doesn't listen to you, you just repeat it, and you repeat it, and you repeat it because if you're right, that's the outcome. And sometimes people have to prove themselves wrong, and I've done that too. And I don't want to say I told you so, but I told you so.

Chris Nichols Right.

Lauren M-B And sometimes you just need to go through that to make people respect you. And there are times when you just have to deliver a project and show that you can do darn good work. You've got the chops and people have to see it. I don't know, it's weird. It's very weird.

Chris Nichols Yeah, it's not fair. I think it's not fair. It's a subject I've covered a few times on the podcast about how those types of cliques happen, especially in visual effects because visual effects tends to be very male-oriented in a lot of ways. It's gotten much better, but it's definitely more male-oriented. Also, I realized most of the very talented people in terms of compositing or motion graphics, et cetera, that tends to be much more female-centric in some ways.

Lauren M-B Yeah.

Chris Nichols And women are better in a lot of cases, and I actually think it's physiological because I think women are better attuned to detecting color than men can.

Lauren M-B I think that's scientifically proven too.

Chris Nichols Yeah. But that's what I mean, they can tune color much better than men can. Men can do pretty good with contrast, but women are much better at color. And I think that that's a good advantage that you have in that field, and I think it's really good.

Lauren M-B Yeah, yeah. No, it's definitely proven itself. And that's maybe why I gravitated initially so much towards compositing.

Chris Nichols Right.

Lauren M-B Because to me, it's like what I've always done like painting and organizing the colors. And so much of it is obviously color composition. So, natural, natural.

Chris Nichols Yeah, actually. Alright, so where were? We were at *The Call*, you said the movie was called?

Lauren M-B *The Call*, yeah.

Chris Nichols Right, yeah.

Lauren M-B In the giant call center walking in there and being like, "I know it's movie magic, but this looks horrible right now." I whispered that purposely.

Chris Nichols Right, right, right.

Lauren M-B But we got it done and it worked out. There was a big sponsor being some phone company, a lot of makeup fixing because they couldn't get it to work when ... What's the girl's name? She got punched and thrown in a trunk. And so okay. I don't think I ever went to theaters to see the movie, but it was fun. It was a fun process, and the people were very cool. But I just remember walking in that first day and thinking, "Oh my gosh, we have a lot of work to do."

Chris Nichols Right, yeah. How long was the project for?

Lauren M-B It was fast. It was a couple of months, and then we had trailing shots for what seemed like forever. I don't even remember now.

Chris Nichols Right, yeah. Well, that's cool.

Lauren M-B Yeah.

Chris Nichols Alright, so that was your first feature film.

Lauren M-B Yep. And then what did we do? I'm trying to think of anything else that was actually in that time span. But anyways, I'll move forward from there. If I remember something, I'll go back.

Chris Nichols Okay.

Lauren M-B Time warp. Eventually, I realized it was time to move on, and I decided to go back to freelance and just seeing what I could do. And my first job was on an Apple project, of course, like everybody else. It was for the launch of the watch, and we did all of the little butterflies, so those little screens.

Chris Nichols Oh, nice.

Lauren M-B Yeah. Yeah, we animated a ton of butterflies. And that was also another, for me, a click moment because it was design in utility and tech. And for me, that was really fun. I still love commercials and movies and all that, of course, but it was a different venue. And I thought, "Oh, this is cool." There's a lot you can make for this other world.

Chris Nichols Right, right, right.

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Lauren M-B So we animated all of these butterflies and they started at 10K, but really, they were supposed to be the size of a watch.

Chris Nichols Right, yep.

Lauren M-B I have a lot of effort to shove into a tiny little watch.

Chris Nichols 10K, really? You had to make them 10K?

Lauren M-B Yeah. We eventually sliced them down to 1080 square.

Chris Nichols Okay. Right. Wow, that's pretty cool. So this was at the keynote I'm assuming, and it was shown at the keynote for the whole launch, right?

Lauren M-B Mm-hmm (affirmative), yeah, it was in the keynote, and they put them in billboards everywhere. And you'd see them on commercials and you're like, "oh, there's my ..." I knew all the names. It was so weird.

Chris Nichols Oh, you had names for all the butterflies, of course?

Lauren M-B Oh, yeah, it was like, "Oh look there's Aluna today. Huh." There, I don't know, Diameetris or something hanging out on Wilshire. Cool. Yeah. So then where did we go from there? And that was Chapeau, an early iteration of Chapeau.

Chris Nichols Okay. So this was a different company, right?

Lauren M-B Yeah, that was a different company who I then, from there, started a long relationship with and I'm there now.

Chris Nichols You are currently there at Chapeau.

Lauren M-B I am currently there. So it's like a roundabout story to end up there. So that was my first job with them. And then I ended up going to Tool for a while, and again, more online visual weird storytelling for Land Rover. And they did a lot of online content and things like that. So they're like, "Hey, just make these scenarios and a Land Rover on a cliff." And it was this narrated story that coincided with an actual book. So I was making the scenes that coincided with the book. And that was fun, it was just making up a world in Scotland, following these little maps. And you're like, "Oh, here's one scene, and there's another." But it was me and the same thing, they looked at me like, "Oh, you can do all those things. Okay, so let's-"

Chris Nichols And you're going back to your roots of cars.

Lauren M-B I know, going back to the car roots.



## **Creating Facebook Friendversaries**

Lauren M-B Yeah, yeah. And that plus a bunch of other stuff. And then it pulled me back. There was a Facebook project that came up. And that's what got me back. I mean it was between Tool and Chapeau at the time, but everybody has seen them, these Facebook videos that are like Friendversary, birthday. You get them in your Facebook profile.

Chris Nichols Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Lauren M-B Yeah. So this is another evolution of my, I don't know, my career, whatever you call it, my thinking. So what they needed was they, being Facebook, needed a video composited in one layer that they could then send to millions of people.

Chris Nichols Okay. Right.

Lauren M-B And they were like, "How do we do that?"

Chris Nichols Right.

Lauren M-B And I said, "Oh, okay. So how do we do this?" And that was my compositing background and, on hyperdrive, my brain. And so what ended up happening was we made the video, tracked all the things, and the first iteration was this mobile that nobody ever saw because they only aired it in the UK as a test and it broke the servers.

Chris Nichols Okay.

Lauren M-B Yeah. UK Facebook servers went down.

Chris Nichols Okay.

Lauren M-B But it was really neat because I learned a lot in that moment that we spend so much time making things perfect, or at least for me because I am definitely that perfectionist type, but then seeing all of these photos that had to be completely modular, this mobile of all these photos that could change on a whim. Anybody's photos could go in there. So how do you make it all look good? And it becomes this game of averages, which was really interesting to me. And you give them the base layer, a photo layer, and then the lighting layer. So it was like three layers, not one. But the fun part was sitting with Facebook and then all of a sudden working with their engineers to figure out how you composite that in one layer. Where do the photos go? And so I gave them projects that then they turned into script and actually went up there and sat with them to make sure that the stuff worked.

Chris Nichols Okay.

Lauren M-B Yeah.

Chris Nichols Yeah, because I guess you've got to take whatever pictures out of someone's Facebook feed and then place it, and then transform it into place. Right? Because that's basically what it is, how you composite it, right?

Lauren M-B Yeah.

Chris Nichols So you created a script to composite on the web I guess, right?

Lauren M-B Yeah, basically. It goes through this renderer that then composites everything together and aggregates the photos for whomever, which isn't always correct because you get people who are either deceased or divorced and they're like, "Why would I want to see that person on my mobile?"

Chris Nichols Oh, wow.

Lauren M-B Yeah, so then you work with it and limit it and all that stuff. It was such a strange process, but that was fun. It was using another part of my brain that I just never thought I would be pursuing.

Chris Nichols Yeah.

Lauren M-B So we did three more of those, yeah.

Chris Nichols Okay. And I'm sure those are still around right now, right? People still get those.

Lauren M-B Yep, yeah. Yeah. they sure do. And you kind of only need to see it once and you're like, "Okay, cool. I get it."

Chris Nichols But it is kind of amazing how much of your work, now that you're just playing it out there, how much of your work has been seen by so many people.

Lauren M-B Yeah, yeah. And I feel like I'm not a flashy person, but it's a lot of work that's been out there. I think what have I done, and then I see yeah, I guess it has been seen.

Chris Nichols Millions, millions of people. Millions.

Lauren M-B Yeah. And the engineer that I worked with at Facebook, and again, I haven't been there for a while now, but what I'm told is ... We set up that way of working there and now with that script and all that, they've developed a department out of it.

Chris Nichols Oh, right.

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Lauren M-B Now they have this whole thing. And it's like oh, that's cool.

Chris Nichols Right.

Lauren M-B I mean I'm not there-

Chris Nichols But you were the first-

Lauren M-B ... but it set a precedent for them.

Chris Nichols Yeah, you set a precedent and there's enough of that going around now that people are making a ton of that content. Right?

Lauren M-B Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

Chris Nichols Which is really cool, yeah.

Lauren M-B Yeah, it's fun. It was a new genre for me that I think it pulled me away from doing the traditional commercials and things like that. I really saw this as an opportunity to do just other things. People want content elsewhere. A lot of it is on social media, of course. And people are eating constantly, visually eating rather.

Chris Nichols Right.

Lauren M-B There's a lot of junk, but you can make some really cool stuff if you think hard enough I guess.

Chris Nichols Well, it's true because I think when you and I were back at Sway, commercials were still a really big deal. People were spending a lot of money in commercials, right?

Lauren M-B Yeah.

Chris Nichols And Superbowl time was huge. And today, we're in the era of cord cutting, and very few people are watching TV-TV anymore, so the only way you're getting content is through, like you say, social media and stuff like that. So we've got shorter commercials, but there's still a ton of content that needs to be made. It's just not traditional commercials, right?

Lauren M-B Yeah, it's not the same. I remember the first version of that, it was with Tool because I did a lot of work with Tool after that Facebook thing as well. And Google was doing their, which is now defunct, but these feed spots when they had Google Feed.

Chris Nichols Oh, okay.

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Lauren M-B And I don't know if anybody saw them. I mean I saw them online. They became online ads. But the first notion on these spots is we want something that's raw. We want something that's lo-fi.

Chris Nichols Okay.

Lauren M-B And to me, I think lo-fi, but then refined lo-fi like designed lo-fi. Yeah, just really lo-fi. It's not lo-fi enough and so we did all of these *Stranger Things* animations. And it was all these mixtures of your favorite things. You pick three and then much it together and see what you get visually.

Chris Nichols Okay.

Lauren M-B One was astronauts, *Stranger Things*, and I forget what the third was. Well, waffles was already part of *Stranger Things*.

Chris Nichols Right.

Lauren M-B Anyway, so I find myself having to do something really fast, but then just make it crappy. I don't know. But you have to do it in a funny way. That was my first time I remember having to just really let go of making it perfect because you kind of just have to let the visuals succumb to the process a little bit. Yeah, it was great.

Chris Nichols It's not just putting the filter on top to make it look like it was a TV ad, right?

Lauren M-B Nope, or a glitch. There were a lot of things.

Chris Nichols Yeah, yeah.

Lauren M-B Yeah.

Chris Nichols Well, that was interesting. So Feed, I don't think I remember those spots.

Lauren M-B Yeah.

Chris Nichols Yeah, okay.

Lauren M-B It wouldn't be on your radar I think. I don't think you need Google Feed.

Chris Nichols Yeah. Okay, so what happened after that?

Lauren M-B So then I jumped around a little bit more. I went to Logan. And then there was Tool. I started doing a lot of remote work because Nathan and I still had our company, so we were doing that on the side, but I really just liked the experiences of different companies. And you always learn.

Chris Nichols Sure.

Lauren M-B And I decided to go to Beats, Beats by Dre, which is weird because Beats, previously we had done a lot of work with them as well at Arsenal, a lot of headphones and a lot of just ads and things like that, beauty work, like product beauty.

Chris Nichols So you were working directly for them?

Lauren M-B Mm-hmm (affirmative), yeah.

Chris Nichols Okay. Was it in Culver City?

Lauren M-B Yeah. Yep, right by you.

Chris Nichols They're right next door to me. They're literally-

Lauren M-B Oh, they're next door?

Chris Nichols Yeah, yeah. So it's literally the building next door is the Beats building.

Lauren M-B Oh my gosh. I was there for a couple of years. I was so close to you.

Chris Nichols Right.

Lauren M-B Go figure.

Chris Nichols Yeah, that's funny. What year was this?

Lauren M-B I started, and it's on and off because I went away for a couple of different projects and then came back. So it was 2016 to the end of 2018.

Chris Nichols Yeah, so I was definitely here.

Lauren M-B Yeah, yeah, crazy.

Chris Nichols On Stellar Avenue, right?

Lauren M-B Yep.

Chris Nichols Yep, there you go.

Lauren M-B Yeah.

Chris Nichols That's funny. So you were working with them. You were doing Beats commercials and stuff like that. And I guess well Dre wasn't really involved I guess, at that point.

Lauren M-B No, I mean he would come in every once in a while or something, but yeah, I would never see him.

Chris Nichols Right, right.

Lauren M-B And I think by the time I got there, they had a leadership change a little bit, so I had worked for them before that, of course, as a vendor. But then being in-house, it was nice. It was nice. The changes were good, and it was pretty chill.

Chris Nichols Yeah, what is it like to do in-house stuff as opposed to being a client or working for a client? It must be different, right? You have a little bit more direct line to who you need to talk to, right?

Lauren M-B Yeah, yeah. It was interesting because it's definitely an agency mentality in sense with a chunk of post-production because obviously, they farm out all the production. So that was interesting. And I would do, of course, a lot of the graphics and the type design and all that, so there's so many deliverables delivering all the time.

Chris Nichols Right.

Lauren M-B You get a campaign and you kind of internally pitch what might be used. So you'd have this overarching theme or a couple, and you're like, "Oh. Well, we have this footage. We could turn this into a commercial, or it could be an online thing. Or we can make posters. Or it could be an 'oh, wait' situation." You could put it on a stadium.

Chris Nichols Okay.

Lauren M-B So I'd do a lot of those. My first go there was summer, no, no, it was October, so then I started with the Christmas campaigns. It was fun. You just do all sorts of different stuff. And then the nice thing is that you get to sketch your own ideas out. If you see something that might work, then you just kind of go for it. So we took footage from ... It was one of the fighters or something. You know, just did tests, and they either get picked up or they don't. So they might have used it for some stuff. I went on vacation, so I never knew, but I kept the pieces. Then when I came back, we did a full-on campaign. And that was fun because I did a lot of art direction there and then you're the one farming it out to Method or whatever.

Chris Nichols Yeah.

Lauren M-B Yeah, it was a lot of work, but it was a great experience. I got, to be quite honest, a bit burnt out by the end. Yeah, so it was nice to see something from literally start to finish though. It was from inception to execution. And we did a bunch of stuff for the World Cup at the time and pieces that I actually really like, so yeah, it was fun.

Chris Nichols Okay. That is fun.

Lauren M-B Yeah, yeah. And again, it is a situation where you're moving very quickly. You have the editorial, you're dealing with CG, old assets, new assets, evergreen assets. You know? Which one is which? Do you like this one? Is the logo right on this one? I don't know.

Chris Nichols Right, right right.

Lauren M-B You have to stay super-organized. And then you finally deliver the US version, but as we all know, they have to be localized. So then 22 languages later, you're like ah.

Chris Nichols Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I know-

Lauren M-B Just dealing with a lot of teams.

Chris Nichols Yeah, deliverables is ridiculous. Did you work with me when we did the intro, the beginning of 21, when we were at Sway?

Lauren M-B Yes, yeah.

Chris Nichols So you remember Gray Marshall who was the sup on it?

Lauren M-B Yeah.

Chris Nichols Yeah.

Lauren M-B Oh, I totally forgot about that.

Chris Nichols Yeah. So he's been on this podcast. I've had him on. And he was talking about ... Because he's now a big shot colorist, right? And he's done the color for nearly every Marvel film. And so he was talking about-

Lauren M-B That's awesome.

Chris Nichols Yeah. He was talking about how many deliverables you have for a Marvel spot, every language, every format, DVD, Blu-ray, 3D, 3D laser, 3D HDR, every kind of combination. It's unbelievable how much deliverables you had.

Lauren M-B Oh my gosh.

Chris Nichols Yeah.

Lauren M-B I feel so lucky now because I remember back in the day when you had to deliver stuff nowhere near the number that he is doing. And one of those was on a Beats spot at Arsenal, but the day we could upload a commercial to whatever that service was called, I was like, "Ah, we don't have to put it on a beta. We don't have to do anything."

Chris Nichols That's right, that's right. It's just there.

Lauren M-B It was such a novelty. And I remember it paused in the middle of the upload and we were like ... and we had like five minutes!

Chris Nichols Yeah.

Lauren M-B It was a big day.

Chris Nichols You can do that with a movie now, you can just literally FTP the movie up and then all of the theater, they literally just play it off the server. That's the way it works. It's crazy.

Lauren M-B That's nuts. We just worked on a cute documentary, *The Donut King*.

Chris Nichols Oh, okay.

Lauren M-B And I learned a bit about that with the whole DCP process and all that stuff. And I was like, "Oh, this a thing." I never gave it much thought. And then a lot of QC and who's going to do it. Is it here? Is it at the theater? Yeah. But that was fun, a lot lower stakes. It's not a Marvel movie, but we had fun.

Chris Nichols Yeah, but just the idea of deliverables, it's a lot because it's like alright, we finished the shot. It's like yeah, but you have to deliver it 25 times or whatever it is.

Lauren M-B Yes, 25 times. It's the most anticlimactic process ever.

Chris Nichols Yep.

Lauren M-B It's like actually, you didn't deliver a thing, you delivered one thing.

Chris Nichols You delivered one thing.

Lauren M-B You have 24 more to go.



## Documentaries and The Oscars

Chris Nichols Yeah, exactly, exactly. Well, cool, so where do you go from there? You mentioned just recently you must have done that documentary, right?

Lauren M-B Yeah, that was just recently. And that was animation motion graphics stuff, a little bit of cleanup and VFX, but I've done a couple of documentaries. I also did some of *Selma: The Bridge to the Ballot*. That was just my own thing, independently.

Chris Nichols Yeah.

Lauren M-B I really liked that title sequence. It was fun. And what else? Yeah, well, the current iteration of Chapeau is its own thing. That's been a whole different work world for me, just learning a lot there in terms of pitching and even newer ideas, thinking ahead.

Chris Nichols Well, tell people a little bit about Chapeau. Tell them a little bit what that is.

Lauren M-B Yeah. How do you say it so people understand? It's a little bit of a think tank with VFX roots.

Chris Nichols Okay.

Lauren M-B And we kind of function as an agency mentality. That's my goal. I'm trying to get them to think in a more creative fashion, smart-creative. And so we often function as an agency's think tank as seems to be the case nowadays for some reason.

Chris Nichols Okay.

Lauren M-B So agencies have ideas or they want to pitch or something like that, which a lot of people do, but it's something that they've either never done before, they need to learn how to do it, or just what are your ideas, let us know.

Chris Nichols Okay.

Lauren M-B And that could be a pitch for the Lucas Museum website, which we did.

Chris Nichols Okay. Oh, right.

Lauren M-B Yeah. And that was really interesting because I had never personally built a website to that scale, but obviously my colleagues had. But thinking about what people really need and as an avid museum person and lover of films, where's the

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happy medium? So it's another conundrum that you have to solve. And then the whole, just pivoting, another world is UGCs, user-generated content. And a lot of companies are starting to get into that world, car companies. Everybody wants a version of it, especially in retail. We had pitched to Nike and just a lot of think tank stuff, which is really fun for me.

Chris Nichols It sounds more like an agency, actually,

Lauren M-B Yeah. Yeah, definitely. It's definitely an agency. I'm trying to think. We still do commercials though. We've done a Hitachi commercial. What else is there? A lot of T-Mobile stuff, you know, bread and butter things.

Chris Nichols Sure.

Lauren M-B But my favorite thing is just the forward-thinking stuff because I like just literally problem-solving. I think that goes through all of my work, but this is problems we don't see yet.

Chris Nichols Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, I bet.

Lauren M-B Yeah.

Chris Nichols Well, that's really amazing.

Lauren M-B It's down to-

Chris Nichols That's really cool. How long is Chapeau ... I mean you said this is your second stint at Chapeau, right?

Lauren M-B Yeah. I was at Beats like I said, until 2018, the end of 2018, and then I decided to go back. They said, "Hey, we need a proper creative director." And I said, "Why not? Let's do this."

Chris Nichols Okay. Alright.

Lauren M-B So that's what we've been working at ever since, just trying to stretch the Chapeau portfolio in different ways and again, really getting back to that agency mentality. It's been nice for me because it's a way I like to work personally. I had stepped far away from the VFX, so it's been a lot more work in the whole motion graphics design, all of that, which I've strangely found has been a request from a lot of people. Once they find out that you know type in a sense, font and line and all that, they're like ... It's something, I guess, that's very needed, as I found myself looking for teams. It's a whole other genre.

Chris Nichols Right. But I think it's really cool to be a creative person and have a strong knowledge of both motion graphics and visual effects because when you come

up with an idea, you're also coming up with how you're going to pull it off. You know?

Lauren M-B Yeah.

Chris Nichols Right?

Lauren M-B Constantly.

Chris Nichols Do you think that's actually a limitation? Do you think sometimes, "Well, I don't know how I'm going to do that, so I won't do that?" Do you know what I mean?

Lauren M-B It's funny because I think about that a lot. If you get an idea or the request to make an idea, I just had to do this, we did some New Yorker pitches, and it was kind of a free-for-all moment. And you're like, "Okay, so what do I do and how do I not hinder myself?" I totally ask myself that question. And I think, at the end of the day, what I had to do was just, "What do I want to see and be happy with? What would I watch?" And I know it's such a fundamental question or basic question, but it's just, "Why am I doing this otherwise? I want to see what I want to see." With respect to the client, of course. You have to be respectful of everyone's point of view, but it's a huge question. Otherwise, you'll get stuck in that hamster wheel of well, I can't do this if I don't have that, and I can't do that if I don't have that.

Chris Nichols Exactly. Right?

Lauren M-B Yeah.

Chris Nichols And then you become that person who's like, "Well, I don't know how we're going to do that, so we won't do that."

Lauren M-B Yeah.

Chris Nichols But someone else may have an idea, and you should let that person decide that. You know?

Lauren M-B Yeah.

Chris Nichols Yeah, I can imagine.

Lauren M-B And it's funny too that you mentioned that because I used to be that person. I used to be the policeman of, well, we're just going to end up in that rabbit hole if we do that, so let's just not. But at the end of the day, within reason, you have to know: Don't limit it. Find that out later. Because you don't want to kill the job before you start it.

Chris Nichols Right.

Lauren M-B And as people who are, I guess, technically, and it's changing, but we're in a service industry as I've found from artists when I've talked to them like, "Do what you think at this point. Because either I have a lack of time or resources and we need to move quickly." And you're like, "Well, but how can we do that? The boards I saw don't have that line in it or whatever."

Chris Nichols Right, right, right.

Lauren M-B It's not about what the client wants right now, we just have to do what's smart, so it's okay. Don't let your hands be tied literally. And I'll get the question again, "But ... the client." No! Just go for it. It's okay. Just go for it. You know?

Chris Nichols Yeah.

Lauren M-B But I've found that experience a lot, and I catch myself doing that.

Chris Nichols Yeah, yeah, yeah. But I think sometimes the client could ask for something, but you give them something that's a little bit different and it's like, "Oh. Well, that's an even better version of what I was thinking." You know? And if you just-

Lauren M-B That's exactly it though.

Chris Nichols Yeah. I keep using this Henry Ford saying. It's like, "If I gave people what they wanted, they would ask for a faster horse." Right?

Lauren M-B Yeah, that's exactly it.

Chris Nichols It's like, "What if we did something completely different?" It's like, "Oh, I didn't even know that's possible. Exactly."

Lauren M-B Yeah, it's a fine balance of how you can do it better.

Chris Nichols Right.

Lauren M-B Better is subjective, of course, but how do you get the best version of that idea without hindering yourself? And if you don't know what that is, then it's okay that you have a really awesome horse. You don't have to have the Model T yet.

Chris Nichols Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Exactly, exactly.

Lauren M-B Yeah, expecting that.

Chris Nichols Well, cool. So we're all caught up with you now at this point, right? This is what you're doing is you're constantly creating and doing stuff.

Lauren M-B Yeah.

Chris Nichols That's awesome.

Lauren M-B Yeah.

Chris Nichols Well, your work is really incredible. The fact that it's been out there and seen by so many people is really cool. And obviously, you're still very passionate about it. Do you still paint?

Lauren M-B I do.

Chris Nichols Good.

Lauren M-B I do, I do. Oh, and I did skip over a big section of the past four years too.

Chris Nichols Oh, okay. Well, go ahead.

Lauren M-B I'm just shoving it all in there. I felt fancy last year for like all of four hours. Nathan and I have done the Oscars broadcast, which was fun.

Chris Nichols Nice.

Lauren M-B So we finally got to go last year.

Chris Nichols Oh, nice.

Lauren M-B Yeah. So I could send you a funny picture, but I only bring it up because that is another exercise in a ton of deliverables. But design-wise, they're very strict. People are afraid to go out, yet they want something new every time. And that, for me, was a very interesting experience because, especially last year, it was how do we get this farther? I just want to do something different and so does everybody else. But yeah, we had a lot of fun just getting it done and all the things they put up on the screen and seeing your work big, and going there and that kind of coordination with the proscenium and your work.

Chris Nichols Right. Yeah, that's a monster project for sure.

Lauren M-B Yeah, yeah. This is the first year we didn't do it in a few years.

Chris Nichols Oh, really? How long have you been doing them?

Lauren M-B We've done three or four of them. When we first started though, we were just doing part of it. We didn't have the whole thing. And so then we did three of them.

Chris Nichols Oh, okay.

Lauren M-B Yeah, skipping one year.

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Chris Nichols Wow, that's a big thing, yeah. That's pretty cool.

Lauren M-B Yeah. And then going, and you're like, "Wow, I have nothing to do with any of these people, but it looks fun." Wear some fancy shoes.

Chris Nichols Nice. Nice shoes, that's good.

Lauren M-B Yeah.

Chris Nichols Well, that is amazing. That is amazing. Well, believe it or not as you can tell, we're just about an hour, which is perfect.

Lauren M-B Oh my gosh. Wow. Yeah, totally.

Chris Nichols It went quickly, didn't it?

Lauren M-B It did. I have so much to catch up on. It's one thing I have to say, I'm not one to talk about myself, so it's very hard to get it out.

Chris Nichols It's alright. I think everyone has a hard time doing that. But I think it's really cool to let people know about your experiences and how you got to where you are and keep creating things, and learning from everything you've done in the past and bringing that all together. So it's a really cool thing for sure.

Lauren M-B Yeah, it's fun, and getting back to my roots. You asked about painting, do I still paint, and I didn't for so long, just straight up painting, and doing that has taught me so many more lessons about myself because you think ... To me, I didn't do it because I felt like painting was such a selfish thing if I was just sitting there taking time to go do it. But you problem solve a lot faster when you take the time to do that.

Chris Nichols Right, yeah. Yeah, that's awesome.

Lauren M-B Man, yeah.

Chris Nichols Well, cool. Thank you, Lauren, so much for doing this, being my inaugural remote podcast. I don't normally do them this way, but we're in difficult times right now. Unfortunately, we're not able to see each other in person, but we definitely need to catch up. Where is Chapeau located, by the way? Is it in the Santa Monica area, somewhere around there?

Lauren M-B It's in Mar Vista.

Chris Nichols Oh, Mar Vista, okay. Alright.

Lauren M-B Yep.

Chris Nichols So that's not that far.

Lauren M-B Yeah.

Chris Nichols So yeah, hopefully, someday we'll be able to see each other in person because it's been way too long, way too long.

Lauren M-B I know. It's been so long. It's cool that you do this though. How long have you had the podcast for?

Chris Nichols Five and a half years.

Lauren M-B Oh my gosh! That's hardcore.

Chris Nichols Yeah, almost 300 episodes.

Lauren M-B Whoa!

Chris Nichols Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's been going on for a while, and it's pretty cool. It's popular. I didn't know this was a skill that I had, interviewing people. I was like, "I'm just going to try this. It'll be fun." And then it turns out that no, it's a big deal now. I was like, "Oh, okay." So now I've got to keep doing it. And so then when the whole self-quarantining started to come out, I was like, "Well, how am I going to do it?" Because I always do them in person, so I had to come up with a different solution.

Lauren M-B It worked.

Chris Nichols This seems to be working, so it's good and I'll keep it up.

Lauren M-B It does. I was so impressed. Sometimes I'm better off not knowing anything about anything or anybody, but I did look at the podcast, of course. The caliber of people that you have up here, I'm just honored to be on this list. I was like, "Oh, wow, this is hardcore." This is real-

Chris Nichols No, no, no, I was very, very happy to have you on. I mean I was looking and I was like, "I've got to have Lauren on." I've been wanting to have you on for a while, but it's just been hard to catch up with people. But now I can finally do it.

Lauren M-B Yeah, and this way.

Chris Nichols And it sounds good. It sounds good.

Lauren M-B Awesome.

Chris Nichols Alright. Well, Lauren, thank you so much.

