



Fearless Unscripted | Tiara Williams

Taylor Peters, Host: HEY GUYS, IT'S TAYLOR. AS A LISTENER OF FEARLESS, YOU'VE COME TO RECOGNIZE IT'S DISTINCT STYLE... LONG FORM STORYTELLING, FEATURING A LOT OF CHARACTERS AND STYLIZED WRITING AND MUSIC. NOTHING IS CHANGING, BUT WE'RE ADDING SOMETHING NEW. IN YOUR FEARLESS FEED, YOU'LL START SEEING EPISODES FOR FEARLESS UNSCRIPTED- IT'S A NEW SERIES WE'RE DOING ON OUR CHANNEL WHERE WE SIT DOWN AND HAVE CONVERSATIONS WITH DIFFERENT PEOPLE- FACULTY, ALUMNI, STUDENTS... ABOUT THEIR TEXAS TECH STORY. I HOPE YOU LISTEN AND LEARN SOMETHING!

IN OUR FIRST EPISODE OF FEARLESS UNSCRIPTED, WE'RE TALKING WITH TIARA WILLIAMS. SHE GRADUATED FROM TEXAS TECH IN 2020 AFTER COMPETING FOR TWO YEARS ON THE TRACK & FIELD TEAM. SINCE THEN, SHE HAS BECOME A POPULAR INFLUENCER AND SOCIAL MEDIA HOST FOR HER SHOW 'REAL TALK WITH TEE'. SHE INTERVIEWS ATHLETES OF ALL AGES AND SPORTS- TELLING THEIR STORIES, SHARING THEIR VICTORIES AND CHALLENGES. SHE'S INSPIRING, STRONG, DETERMINED AND PASSIONATE ABOUT WHAT SHE DOES.

THIS IS FEARLESS UNSCRIPTED.

Peters: Can I just say this is the first episode of Fearless Unscripted and I cannot think of a better person or somebody that I would want to do this first episode with than you. I am so just proud of you and who you are. And it's really a cool experience... for us to kind of merge our podcasting together here. So welcome to Fearless Unscripted, Tee.

Tiara Williams, Host of Real Talk with Tee: Thank you for having me TP. I'm so happy to be here with you, especially with you.

Peters: I know, I know. So, we go way back. We... let's let me think. I met you I think for the first time in like 2017, 2018.

Williams: I think it was 2018.

Peters: OK, so you're, you've recently transferred to Texas Tech from Bethune Cookman, right? A Track and Field athlete. You're a new up-and-comer for this program. Tell me what brought you to Tech in the first place?

Williams: Oh, good question. So I wanted to leave my school because it wasn't... it didn't have a lot of resources and my family was like, if you move, it was my second school by the time I went to Kansas and I went to Bethune and she was like, my family's like if you if you move back, if you change schools again, you have to go to Texas. Like you have to be in Texas or we're not going to support you. I'm like, oh my God, OK, fine, I'll move.

Peters: So, you're from Texas, San Antonio.

Williams: I'm from San Antonio. So, I'm like Texas Tech just called me because [Coach] Thomas reached out to me and I was one of the first athletes he got from the transfer portal. He reached out to me. We connected so well. We had a great relationship right off the bat and I was like, I want that to be my multi coach. And I came all the way to Lubbock from Florida...

Peters: ...and it was the best decision ever.

Williams: For sure, best decision ever. I figured out what I wanted to do with my life. I got more into my passions and of course I had the results on the tracks. It was the best of both worlds.

Peters: And so, I was asking you a little bit earlier, you know, what's the best way to describe you? You're a social media personality, you're a podcast host, you're an up-and-coming broadcaster. You're former, like we said, Texas Tech track and field athlete. You talk about coming to Texas Tech and discovering your passions and figuring out who you are... How would you kind of describe yourself and, and as you have established what those passions are, the way that you've been able to kind of create a name for yourself in that industry?

Williams: I would probably describe myself as genuine, just good energy, happy, smiling, just trying to bring good vibes and like. That's pretty much it. I don't know.

Peters: No, but I think that that's exactly right. And I feel like that's that personality that you have is it's something that people pick up on immediately, right? And I really think that that's part of the reason that you have become so successful in this sort of realm of interviewing, you know, track and field athletes at all levels. But when you watch these interviews with NCAA and professional athletes, there's just this like natural chemistry. What do you feel like that comes from? Because when these... when you watch these interviews, I'm like, they love Tee. They love to come to you and they love to come talk to you. Where does that chemistry start for you?

Williams: It starts with the approach. That's what I've learned from the jump. Like, a lot of media don't know how to talk to them as a human, as just a regular person. So that's kind of, I think what separates me.... Like, for example, my first media opportunity came at Prefontaine 2021 and I had an interview with Sha'Carri after all of the madness that she experienced that year. And one of the things I said before I even talked, I was just like being a Black woman from Texas, like myself. She's like, oh, you're from Texas. And her guard immediately went down. So, like just finally one of those things where you relate to them and just approaching them as a human has been my best benefit.

Peters: Yeah, I agree. And I want to talk about one of the most recent experiences that you've had, the one that's probably the timeliest. You just got back from Paris. You, you know, you talk about that moment in 2021.... You're kind of like at the very beginning of your career. And now here we are, you know, three years later and you are at the pinnacle, right? You're at like the highest level. What is that moment like for you to be there and just be like, did you feel like you'd kind of like made it almost like an unreal moment, right?

Williams: No, it was super unreal. Like that was the best trip of my life, like hands down. But just like being going from the last Olympics, Tokyo, I was fresh out of college. I didn't even have no, I couldn't even watch it because I didn't have no subscriptions, no money, you know, you fresh out of college. So, from going to that last Olympics to this one and being in the stadium, it was just, it was mind blowing, like out of body experience. I will never forget like the moments I had in Paris for sure.

Williams: Tell me what you got to do there though, because you didn't just go. I mean, you, you went, and you participated as a spectator, but you also had an opportunity to do some other kind of cool unique things, tell me about that.

Williams: Yeah. So, you know, the interviews are the main thing. So, I got a golden opportunity from Puma to host their Paris house. So, they have a Puma house. They rented out a whole hotel and it was a stage. And I got to really host three different panels for Puma and just help their athletes be comfortable, have fun. And we had, we played games like it was a good time. And of course, I did like a few other interviews with medalists as they win, I would reach out to them and see if I can get some time with them. So, it was definitely, it was still working. But yeah, the Puma house experience was top tier. That brand is amazing.

Peters: I had a chance last week to talk to our girl Lana Jones. Shout out to Lana. Hey Lana. Texas Tech track and field. She's the director of operations and she's someone that we've obviously done a lot of work with, but she got a chance to be in Paris too. And she showed me all these videos and she's like, it just, it doesn't do it justice. Like she said that when she was there, she just had goosebumps the entire time. How do you describe like, just how vast those spaces are? And like, if you watch it on TV and there's no way that it can compare to what it feels like to actually be there and to be in it.

Williams: Definitely. I mean, I just try to take it one day at a time, be in a moment and just soak it all in, you know, 'cause like, it's, I'm living, I'm living in prayers that are, I'm living in answered prayers, you know, like this is where I've been wanting to get my whole life and like, I want to just soak it in and just be, live and be in a moment. But no, it's I go home at night. Every night I would go home and just be like, wow, like, what am I doing? Like, this is crazy. And then I wake up the next day and I'll just do it all over again.

Peters: Yeah, I know. You literally are living like this the best life ever. I mean, you that's, it's like hardly even a job, right? To be there to be able to do that. I can imagine that for you though, too. You know it maybe feels a bit like work, but it also feels like you're watching these people compete that are like your friends, right? We talk about how big of a stage this is this sort of iconic time, right the Olympics. How do you... how do you even talk about the pressure that comes with that from, from those athletes' standpoint? Like there's so much weight that they carry. How do you, how do you even, I mean, how do you even have a conversation with them about that?

Williams: You know, that's why I, it's all about the... that's why I approach them a certain way because I understand that this is the biggest meat of their life. Some of their first times representing their country. There are only a few of

them. So I mean, I think they, they just, you can't make it a bigger than what it is. It's a regular track meet. They have to keep it as a regular track of meat in their mind because track is 99% mental. So, I just approached them on like how are you doing? What'd you do today? Like how's the village? What's been your favorite part so far? I always start off with those lighthearted questions first and then I'll get into like you have a few days before you race and how are you prep? How you preparing, how are you getting things in order like, you know, and how are you managing the pressure? I'll get to that pressure question because it's obvious, like everybody knows there's a lot of pressure and a lot of them just kind of make it try to make the meet to be smaller like this is. I line up every week. I race these people all year round. It's literally the same thing, but just more eyes watching. Yeah.

Peters: I want to talk a little bit too about, you know, we talked about when we talked about the Olympics, let's talk about the Olympic trials because the way that you were able to kind of serve NBC in this like on camera sort of broadcast role. Was that maybe like the largest capacity that you had served as sort of a host up to this point? Or how would you kind of describe what that experience was like for you?

Williams: Yes, I agree. I think that is the largest capacity, especially with the Olympics, it's the Olympic trials. So, there were a lot of more eyes of people wanting to know who's going to make the team, who's going to do what. So that was definitely a dream come true.

Peters: That was the like pinnacle.

Williams: It was definitely another pinnacle of my year, just working with them. They were so smooth to work with and so caring and supportive. And that's what all I look for is somebody to be supportive. So, that was definitely, it was like NBA All Star and then Olympic Trials. So those are my top two of the year so far.

Peters: And I think about too, how did they even... isn't it crazy to think that they even found you like that? You're just doing this thing. You're just doing this thing that you love and it takes off in such a huge way that NBC comes to you and they're like, we want for you to do this on our social media platforms. Like that's a really big deal.

Williams: Definitely. And they have... they're women strong. Like the older ladies that I've been talking to from NBC are women and they love to support women on her turf. It's a great platform where I shared a lot of content with as well. And just all together, I like women just love and women like I got my first time working with them was last year in November for a Team USA shoot. They flew me to LA for one day. I got to be you don't get content with the athletes that were doing like a little Team USA tour and photo shoot and stuff like that. And that's our first time working together. So, it's kind of just that building on that on a relationship that we already had established. But yeah, top Tier 10 out of 10 for sure.

Peters: What's the most important thing to you about just that idea of women serving women? Like, empowered women are empowering others to like know their place to take their place, like not only in a broadcast realm, but just like as professionals too.

Williams: Super important. Like I always I always get messages from girls like Tee How do we do this? I want to do this and I'll take every call because to give the game is free and women we need to support women. I'm a girls girl. I love women. I love girls. Like it's, it's just, it's just in me. It's just a part of who I am. So yeah, it's, it's very important. We need each other. Like the, the gender roles are real. Like I've learned that in being a young professional that it is real. So, I do my best to support women in any way that I can. Cause like we need each other. We gotta stick together.

Peters: It's that idea of like giving back, right?

Williams: Yes, yes, yeah.

Peters: And knowing that like there are people who have helped create opportunities for you and, and maybe not even helped create opportunities to like have helped get you into a place, whether it's like with your mentality or whether it's with your skill set or with job opportunities. Like, yeah, I love that.

Williams: Just like you. Just to let y'all know guys, this is full circle. While I was at Texas Tech, I got the chance to shadow Taylor and she really gave me the kick start about this whole broadcasting, sideline reporting and just being a journalist. Like you gave me my kick start. So, like it's just it's always, life always comes around full circle, you know, like I just remember, I just remember doing stand ups on the football sideline and you like, OK, see, that was

good. But like, you know, and I, I will never forget those moments, girl. Like you really fed into me as a young athlete and like I will never forget that. So I want to give you your flowers real quick. Taylor, I love you. Thank you so much for letting me. Thank you, all of us for letting me tag along.

Peters: Oh my gosh, I love it. And I, I appreciate that. And I'm humbled by that because it's cool to think about, you know, the people that helped me along my way and, and helped me get to where I am. And to think that like I was able to pass that on, like that's what is most important. I have this like, I have this image of you literally like we would do media availabilities with the with our coach Wes Kittley, who's like the best in the entire world. But we would do those at the indoor track. And I remember like you would, you would ever so often come and you would just kind of like shadow and watch us ask questions and like being in the lobby at the hotel when I would edit and you would just like sit with me. And we would I would, you know, show you stuff. And it just like, yeah, it really does it. Like it's so worth it. Yes, it's so worth it to like give of give of yourself in that way and to give of your time.

Williams: And I just, you never know how you're going impact somebody. How it impacted me, we didn't know at the time. But like, I was just soaking it all in, just listening to you, getting all your tips, your tricks and your notes. And like, now it's I'm just using it as I'm going on my journey, you know? So yeah.

Peters: And I think at the time, like it wasn't, it was like your effort that you gave is what made you worthy. You know what I mean? Like, yeah, you saw, you saw the hunger.

Williams: Yes.

Peters: And I just it's so cool now to be here, you know, however many 5-6 years later and I still see that, you know, like it's still who you are. And I think that that's part of the reason that you will like go on to be really successful in this is because you just have this desire to like move and to bring people along with you. And that is like so real.

Williams: Definitely. Thank you, my girl. Oh my gosh.

Peters: Can we talk a little bit more about... speaking of strong women... I want to talk about to a couple of people in particular that you competed with. Well, there's more than two that you competed with when you were here. We talked about Lay Lay, we talked about Monae.

Williams: Yes, yes.

Peters: Tell me what it's like to get to watch them compete at the Olympics.

Williams: Oh my gosh, it is like so I'm so inspired by them constantly, constantly. Like especially Lay Lay, with no sponsorship and she's literally running with women who have so much more support than she does.

Peters: Like she's sewing her own outfits.

Williams: Like for real.

Williams: But I'm constantly inspired by all of the all of our Texas Tech athletes. Like people don't know, but I am ride or die Texas Tech. Like I go to I go to NCAA's, even athletes I don't know, I just go meet them like, hey girl, I'm Texas Tech, I'm alum and just know I'm going to be your biggest fan every time because like I want to support all of my Texas Tech people. I know how it feels to be in that, in that facility dying in practice. You know, I'm constantly inspired by all of the Texas Tech athletes, all of the women, Monae, Rosemary, Ruth, everybody like I'm just, I just want I'm just our biggest fan. I just pack them up, root for them and I just want to see them do the best they could do every time.

Peters: But I love I love those ladies and you, you kind of paint this like really sweet picture of Ruth. By the way, Ruth Usoro is one of the most pure and precious people that I've ever known, right? And she is wonderful and she you told

this story and I want you to tell it again here about when you guys were competing together. You're both Texas Tech track athletes. She's obviously a big deal, but she showed up for her teammates in like the best way. And you described her earlier... you said she's the best teammate that I have ever had. Why?

Williams: For sure, Ruth is the best team I've ever had because her ability to motivate and speak life into you is like better than anyone I've ever met. Like that is one special lady. She would come to watch cheer us on in the multi in the morning when she has to do her competition in the evening. A lot of people didn't show up because they got to work. They got to do their job later on, which we understand, but that's not the case for Ruth. Ruth is going to come cheer, clap, do whatever she got to do to support her teammates. And that's what makes her just, that's another attribute because she has so many that makes her just a special woman I would always love Ruth, like top tier, top tier woman. Yeah.

Peters: And it's so it's so cool to see such good things come for her because she works so hard and she is just, she's just such a wonderful, wonderful person.

Williams: Yeah, she is.

Peters: I think that, you know, I think about sort of where you're at in your professional career. And what's really unique and powerful to me is the fact that you're doing this thing that you love, but you're not doing it just because you love it. It's like you are serving in a place where you that you like want to see better. Tell me what you want, as you sort of grow in your platform and as Real Talk with Tee continues to kind of like get bigger and bigger, where do you want it to go? What do you want it to do? Like what are your goals for this platform just holistically?

Williams: It's such a good question. And I always struggle with it because the trajectory has been wild. Like this is my third year of putting my all into my platform and like, look where I am, you know what I'm saying? So, it's definitely hard for me to like pinpoint exactly where I'll be because like I'm a big believer in God and I know that he got a plan that I'm bigger than anything I could think of. But I definitely want to be on TV sideline reporting, getting them fresh off the track. I feel like I can bring a lot of more entertainment to the track space on TV. So that's kind of what I'm leaning more towards. And I also want to have my own talk show, do a couple seasons, couple episodes, just have special guests come on and we do fun activities, we play games, we do competitions, like all that type of stuff. I'm just real entertaining. I want to be entertaining, but I also want to get their story across as well. I'm so invested into people's story because everybody has one of how you got to where you are. So those are my two main goals at the top of my head that I really am passionate about and I really want to get to.

Peters: We talk about you wanting to give and like give back to the next sort of generation of young women.

Williams: Yes.

Peters: What is the thing that you wish you could tell a young tee if you could go back?

Williams: Oh, that's a good question. I will tell her... Keep going. Don't be caught up in what your situation is because I've come from a tough background. Don't be caught up in what you see that you don't forget about your future. You know, so I will tell her just girl, you're doing it. You don't even know it, but you're doing it.

Peters: I love it. You're just a joy and if anybody's listening to this and you haven't had an opportunity to go and learn more about real talk with T there's links to Instagram and YouTube here in the show notes. Tee, I just love you and I am just so proud of who you are and what you've done and not necessarily the success that you have had, but the person that you are. And I'm just really looking forward to all the ways that you're going to grow your brand and more importantly, the people that you're going to help along the way.

Williams: Thank you so much. It means so much coming from you because you were my first ever mentor. So, I love you so much.

Peters:

Love you too. That makes me so happy. Yes, I love you down and thank you so much.

Williams: Girl. This is only the beginning, only the beginning.