

EPISODE 41

[INTRODUCTION]

[00:00:04.1] ANNOUNCER: Welcome to the Creative Empire Podcast. Each week, Reina Pomeroy, the life and biz success coach and Christina Scalera, the attorney for creatives are taking you up close and personal with successful influencers in the creative community and tackling your biggest business hurdles. Their mission is to help you, creative entrepreneurs, think beyond your daily biz so you can make the brave decisions that build your Creative Empire.

[INTERVIEW]

[00:00:35.3] CS: Welcome back for another episode of the Creative Empire Podcast. I'm Christina Scalera. I am joined today by Reina Pomeroy.

[00:00:41.6] RP: Hello there.

[00:00:43.5] CS: And our guest today is Jasmin Black Ortega.

[00:00:46.5] JBO: Yeah.

[00:00:47.2] CS: Jasmin hey, how's it going?

[00:00:49.1] JBO: Fine, I'm doing good.

[00:00:50.8] CS: Awesome, yeah I am super excited to talk to you today because you are a visual storyteller. You are so good at telling stories through your beautiful work, your creative endeavors. If you guys don't know Jasmin yet, she is the owner of Estudio Rojo at estudio-rojo.com and she's also an inspired speaker and by the time this episode comes out, it will be coming out on my favorite holiday, which is Halloween.

So that is super special, I'm really glad that we got to talk to you today and that this is your episode and I'm really excited as well because I feel like Halloween is like a storytelling holiday.

I think they're all storytelling holidays but how fitting. So what is your story today on this beautiful Halloween eve or day, I guess I should say now that this is out?

[00:01:39.2] JBO: My story is that I am here with you guys and I'm so stinking exciting, you have no idea.

[00:01:45.8] CS: That's awesome.

[00:01:46.5] RP: We're pumped to have you.

[00:01:48.3] JBO: I'm sweating over here and it's so great.

[00:01:51.3] RP: #reallife.

[00:01:53.2] CS: Yeah, secret guys, real life, this is actually July when we're recording so it's really hard to get in this Halloween vibe.

[00:02:00.8] JBO: Yes, #secretsout.

[00:02:05.8] CS: So Jasmin, why don't you give us a little bit of background because you have a very unique story and it's so cool. I would love to share it with the world.

[00:02:13.0] JBO: Well, let me try to wrap this up because boy do I like to talk. So this is how it goes, I am currently located in North Carolina in a small town that I consider small, Hickory, North Carolina. It's got a Target and a Panera so I'm good. I'm okay, I can live but we need to get a Trader Joe's in here, real quick, stat please. Else I'm going to go crazy but I am from Charlotte, North Carolina and I am a southern girl but I have some serious urban roots.

I love my sweet tea and mac and cheese but you give me public transportation, I'm [inaudible] all day long. I don't do farms nor tractors and I hate bugs and thank the Lord that I do not have a southern accent. Sorry but I have been blessed without one but I am trying to work on one with y'all trying to do that. Anyway, let's see. I, like Christina mentioned, I own Estudio Rojo and with that, as you can see with my little tongue roll of the R, I know how to speak Spanish and I do it

fluently. I actually speak it every single day, 24/7 with my husband who is from Columbia, South America not South Carolina. It commonly gets confused, spelled differently.

So yeah, I speak foreign languages and my background-background is that I am actually a nationally certified sign language interpreter. So four languages I speak, English, Spanish, American Sign Language and then if you didn't know, usually 99% of each country has their own sign language. So it's not one standard universal sign language. In Columbia, South America they have their own sign language and I am proficient in that as well.

[00:03:55.3] RP: That's so impressive.

[00:03:56.9] CS: I know, right? ASL is a goal of mine but I don't know that I'll ever get there. We can practice one day. How do you think all of that relates to what you do now? Because you do tell such beautiful stories as we're hearing today and can you tell us some of the stories that you are able to tell in your website? Because I know we've talked about this and it's not just through words.

[00:04:19.2] JBO: Yeah, I am a visual storyteller. I love — let me just tell you why I'm storyteller. Okay, so as you can see I must love languages and I think when you think of languages, you have to go back to the history of languages, right? You have Spanish but Spanish is a romanic language. So you've got Romania, you've got French, you've got Italian, all of that is wrapped up and a lot of these European languages and I love going back to the history of things.

Being from the South, as I mentioned, if you come to North Carolina, oh my goodness, if you drive any stinking interstate, all you will see is tractors and old farm buildings and barns and plantation houses. Why they don't demolish them I don't know but they have been sitting there since 1800's something, I don't know and I am always going past and going, "What is their story? What did they do? Who lived there? Who owned who? What did they do?" I don't know?

So that's what goes through my brain and I use that type of love of history and language and just the behind the scenes story in everything that I do and I'm always questioning, "Why?" So when I was building my empire, my creative empire, I was starting to think, okay I want to tell my

story about something and I don't want to just script it as a calligrapher. Because I do that, I am a calligrapher, and I love scripting and love stories.

That's the most romantic thing you can do but I also want to tell a story visually. I want someone to be impacted and have an emotion like evoke a feeling out of something. So as a stylist and a creative art director, I like to get my hands on things and I love it when brands or wedding industry leaders they come to me and they're like, "Jasmin, I need you to style a photoshoot. Oh, I need you to tell this story about my brand." I'm like, "Of course you do, you came to me and we're going to tell the story, we're going to knock it out."

Because I want people to have a feeling. I want people to think, "Oh I want to be in that same environment." Or, "Wow that couple got married that looked like this and I can feel it. I can feel the hot air. I can feel that lovely blueberry pie that was served, I don't know, from the farm to table shoot." I want people to get involved and be transported somewhere. Just like I am transported when I am driving on, I don't know, the interstate seeing a barn and an old beat up shack. That's the same feeling I wanted people to get.

[00:06:47.8] RP: So can you walk us through? I'm like trying to visualize what exactly it is that you do because it sounds like you do so many things and so can you break it down into what does it mean to do visual storytelling? It sounds like styling is some of it, calligraphy is some of it, walk us through what that actually looks like?

[00:07:07.3] JBO: Sure, no problem. I'm sure it's going to be different for each person but me as what I do as a visual storyteller, I basically work as a stylist, a creative director first, working with like I mentioned earlier, wedding industry leaders, editorial publications. I also work with brands and they come to me for product styling, for prop styling, for, like I mentioned, styled shoots. They've got a brand that they want to sell. They want to talk about their story but they needed to be done visually. So they come to me and I put it together and I style it for them.

If you're in the wedding industry and you want to get on a cover of a magazine or you want to be in the magazine or you want to be in an online publication and you need some help styling that shoot, I come in and I tell your story. So basically that Pinterest board that you've got on the computer or stuck in your brain, I pull it out and I put it there in 3D for everybody to see.

Also, I work with brands just to help them with their storytelling. I feel that a lot of brands, they get lost in who they are because it's kind of complicated and it's a little complex sometimes as to, "What do I do, and who am I, and who am I trying to reach?" And a lot of people forget to go back to the beginning of their story, who are they and what is their why. What's their voice? It's yet to be defined clearly.

Sometimes it needs a little bit of refinement and then it needs to be conveyed accurately. That's where I step in and I sometimes switch my hat just a bit and I help them tell that story visually in online presence, maybe on their social media. People come to me and they're like, "Jasmin, can you look at my Instagram a little bit and tell me what needs focusing?" Or, "Hey, I think that this is what I meant as far as tone and style and aesthetic." I'm going, "Okay, maybe, maybe not, let's see if we can define your story a little bit more."

So that's how I consult with brands a little bit, just mentoring them and of course, like I mentioned, love stories are the best stories so I visually do that by addressing envelopes and putting that love story into someone's mail box so they can get it and attend someone's wedding.

[BREAK]

[00:09:18.3] ANNOUNCER: Are you enjoying the show? It would mean so much to Reina and Christina if you take two minutes and head to our iTunes and leave a review. It doesn't take much time but it helps them bring you more value packed content.

Back to the convo ladies.

[BACK TO INTERVIEW]

[00:09:33.5] RP: You're just super talented is basically what you're telling me, right?

[00:09:40.6] CS: Yeah. One of the things that I see, and we've had this discussion, is that you were so good at so many things and so one of the things that comes up and I have suffered with

this in the past and I know lots of other people who has suffered with this in the past is that when you're good with a lot of different things, it's hard to bring those together or to pick one and then let the other ones fall by the professional wayside. You might still do them but you don't do them professionally.

So I think you've done a good job at branding yourself as a visual storyteller and moving the direction away from "I just do calligraphy" or "I just do styling" or something like that and closer towards the actual storyteller part, which you remind me of a copywriter but I don't want to say for a photographers but you remind me of a copywriter for Instagram or for someone's website, right?

You are the one who curates those images and curates what they need or what they want even if they don't particularly know yet and so how are you able to do that? What are some of the questions that you ask your clients to help tell their visual story?

[00:10:48.2] RP: Yeah, that's a great question.

[00:10:49.2] JBO: Yeah, that's a great question. Oh man, you're good and I like this whole copywriter for photographers saying.

[00:10:55.7] RP: Visual copy?

[00:10:57.2] JBO: I know, man I am going to trademark some of this stuff, okay. Yeah well a lot of times when I'm working with clients, I like to just ask them, it's really simple and I hate to say it, that it's so simple, but I just ask, "What's the story? Okay, what's in your vision? What's in your mind? What were you thinking about?" A lot of times people come with very random, "Oh," — I'm going to take, for example, let's say it's a wedding styled shoot, okay?

So someone, they're saying, "Oh well you know I want plum and then I want a neutral color and then it's just going to be just a little simple wedding and then this." It's random things, just spurts of ideas. "Okay, that's a nice start," but then I'd like to start to go into, "But what's the storyline?" And when I get to that question, a lot of times people just stop and they go, "Oh I don't — I mean I don't really know," because they haven't thought of the story yet.

And to me, you can't do anything without a story. You've got to have a cohesive storyline. You have to have a beginning, middle, and an end and so I ask them, "What's the story? Okay, what in your mind, where are you envisioning this going? What's the outcome? What do you feel that you want someone to take away from this?" I ask them a lot of questions about what feeling do they get from it.

"Oh, I want it to be moody." Well moody means what? Do you want this to be dark and for someone to be intimidated by this, "Oh this is a dark and gloomy type of shoot or are you trying for it to be exhilarating and nice and airy with it? Give me the voice behind it, give me the emotions," and a lot of times, I pick up on those nuances of, if I am talking to them over the phone, I pick up on their nuances of the inflection of their voice because it lets me know how exciting.

Is this going to be really, "Oh this is going to be great, it's going to be this and it's going to have this pack and it's going to be this much of an impact on the audience and the person is going to look at it this way." I pick up on those things and I know exactly where to take it or if we're going to go really dark and gloomy and you're talking like this with it, even in the way that you write the script for your shoots. I look at that and I basically just over analyze to get some juice out of it to see where it's going.

[00:13:22.3] CS: What's a script for a shoot?

[00:13:24.2] JBO: Oh, I don't know.

[00:13:26.2] CS: Like planning out your styled shoot, is that what you're talking about?

[00:13:29.0] JBO: Yeah, yeah.

[00:13:29.2] CS: Oh cool.

[00:13:30.2] JBO: I was working with a photographer, well I am but in the beginning when we were working together, she came to me and she said, "So you're in charge of styling. I'm going

to be the photographer, I can handle the click, click shoot but you're going to handle the placement and the styling and the creative direction." I was like, "Ooh I love this, let's do it," and then I asked, "So what's the story?" And there were crickets. I'm thinking, "Oh okay, well let's figure this out together and see how we're going to make this work," and so she told me a little bit about — at the beginning it was just random couples.

We've finalized some of the details now but at the beginning, it was just a random couple and I said, "Okay, where are they taking place?" "On a farm." "Okay, well how about this," and after she gave me some of the ideas and visuals, I said, "All right, she grew up on a farm, very southern family and they're a little traditional but they're very casual laid back at the same time. The groom she's known since he was younger, he lived down the street, they're getting married on the farm just to bring it back home." I started writing out a literal script for everything.

[00:14:37.1] RP: It's like a movie.

[00:14:38.8] JBO: Yeah.

[00:14:38.9] RP: You're like creating characters in a movie. I'm wondering — I'm sorry for interjecting, but I'm wondering what is the benefit of writing a script or having this elaborate storyline when you could just pick a model, pick two people that look good together and then pick pretty flowers that look good together, right? And that's how a lot of styled shoots go. I believe in your storytelling and so I'm wondering what do you think is the benefit?

[00:15:04.9] JBO: I think the benefit of it is it basically works with our brain. I mean even though we spit fire stuff out sometimes, or as I say, we vomit things. We just start coming out with, "Oh this, this, this," and it gets out there and it's like, "Okay." It comes out that way but in our brain, we actually are very fluid in our thoughts. When you look at a — you know, when you see a movie that doesn't make sense like, "Okay, well who's doing what and what happened with whom?" And then at the end, you're like, "What did it begin or did it finish? I'm not sure." You can tell when something is not working.

So that's the same way I think and I think the styled shoots should be. When you look at the biggest, baddest, online wedding blog and you go through the visuals, if you see, "Okay, the two

got together then now they're on a boat but then there wasn't a boat because they said they were in a farm. So wait, so then they're now — wait, so there are people there but I thought there weren't people there before so why is there a crowd?" You get lost, right? It's disorganized in the shuffle and I don't want that because that's not how we think. That's not how we process information.

So if you make a movie out in your mind, I'm going to bring that to life. I'm going to visually give you the beginning, middle and end and I'm going to make sure that the natural poses that the couple does looks natural and looks like something you would do. I mean why would I have a couple stand somewhere that doesn't look right, that doesn't look natural, that doesn't look comfortable?

Because in my mind, when I look at them I'm going to go, "Why are they standing there looking out into a sunset but makes no sense, why would they be over there?" People don't do that. I mean they look out in sunsets yes but they're not standing in some odd place. So I try to just basically interpret what our natural flow of thought is.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[00:21:37] ANNOUNCER: Are you ready to build your own empire? For more information, show notes, downloads and tips on how to do it, head to www.creativeempire.co where you can find out more about this week's episode and the two lovely ladies behind it all, encouraging you to build your own creative empire.

If you enjoyed this week's show, it would mean so much to Reina and Christina if you could take two minutes to go to iTunes and leave a review. It's a little thing that makes a big difference for the show.

[END]