

# HIS THREE LOVES

**TOMMY OLIVER'S BUSY WORKDAY IS BOOKENDED BY PRICELESS TIME WITH FAMILY.**

INTRO BY SHAQUAN LAWSON

Three things Tommy Oliver can't live without: "My kids, my wife and books."

The founder and CEO of Confluent works to prioritize each alongside his workload. To this end, creativity and efficiency are prized resources, especially when things get complicated. "It's easy when things are easy. What are you doing when times aren't good?"

The Olivers created their *Black Love* docuseries to share accounts of people trying to balance family, relationships, and work, just as they do. It's a community that is rarely spotlighted or spoken to. "Going through life, you sometimes think that you're alone in something if you don't have the ability to see your experiences reflected back on you," says Tommy.

On the work side of things, Tommy employs a strategy of kindness and positivity in his producing and business management. "Be a good person, treat people well, and do things that you can be proud of," he says. "If you can't do it with a smile, if you can't do it without compromising your integrity, then there's a problem."

What about books? Tommy recently digested 640 pages of *The Will of the Many* (by James Islington) through a combination of reading the hardback and listening on Audible. "I'm all about finding the efficiencies from the time between when I drop off my kid to the ride into the office. I



Tommy and his kids enjoy a snack.  
Below: Tommy with Confluent's head of post Colt Hansen and postproduction manager Nick Daue.



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF TOMMY OLIVER

can listen if I'm not on calls."

Juggling all of that might look something like this:

### Mornings

I wake up around 6 a.m. by the kids or Codie. That morning time is just for kids and breakfast and the occasional email if there's something that has come in overnight.

I drop off our oldest, Brooks, at school four days a week. I drop off the youngest, Aristotle and Langston, one day a week. They're all going to the same school next year, and so Codie and I will just swap (dropping them off).

The idea of them going to school on the school bus came up, and I was like, no. I love my time in the morning. Even though it's not a quick drive, you could not pay me to not have my time together in the car where we just talk about stuff and hang out and goof off.

Then it's a mix of any number of things. Meeting with the team, a film meeting, a TV meeting, an operations meeting, meetings with writers and directors, meetings about things that we are developing or things that we produce. Reading emails and scripts. There'll be times when I'm writing, cutting or reviewing. I might have a photo shoot for my Father Noir photography series, which is all about Black fathers and kids. It's entirely different when we're in production. It's all over the place.

### Afternoons

Often, somebody will come to the office for a lunch meeting, and we'll just walk someplace. I don't care about the scene-y places. I don't do any of those things that are the ideal of Beverly Hills or whatnot. It's all about the company I'm with. My favorite lunch spot is someplace I can walk to.



**Above:** Tommy in his office.  
**Right:** Whiteboards in the Confluent office are essential for brainstorming by both kids and grown-ups.  
**Below:** Tommy looks in on a meeting with social media manager Kyle Del Fierro, Codie, talent relations & special projects coordinator Alyssa Steverson, COO Azella Perryman, and legal coordinator Avory Johnson.





## A DAY IN THE LIFE

After lunch, if I'm not on calls or in meetings, I'm figuring out how to make the most of all the time that I have. I'm learning, spending time with my kids, spending time with my wife, or moving something forward and being really intentional about what that looks like.

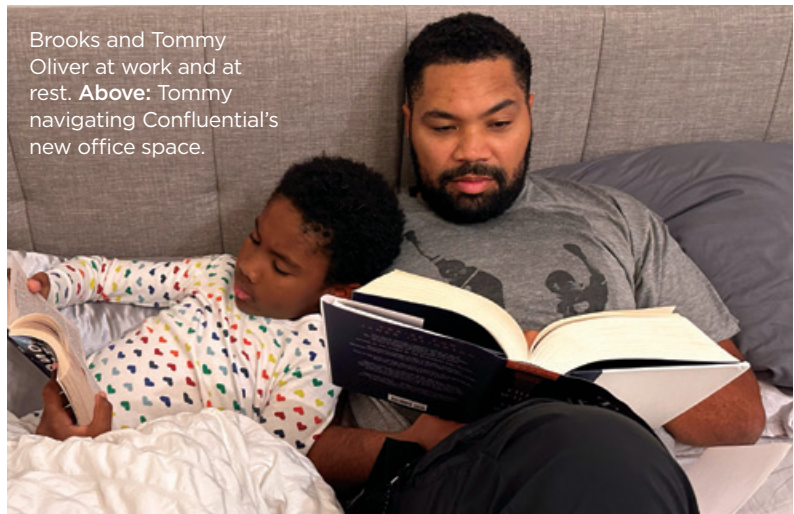
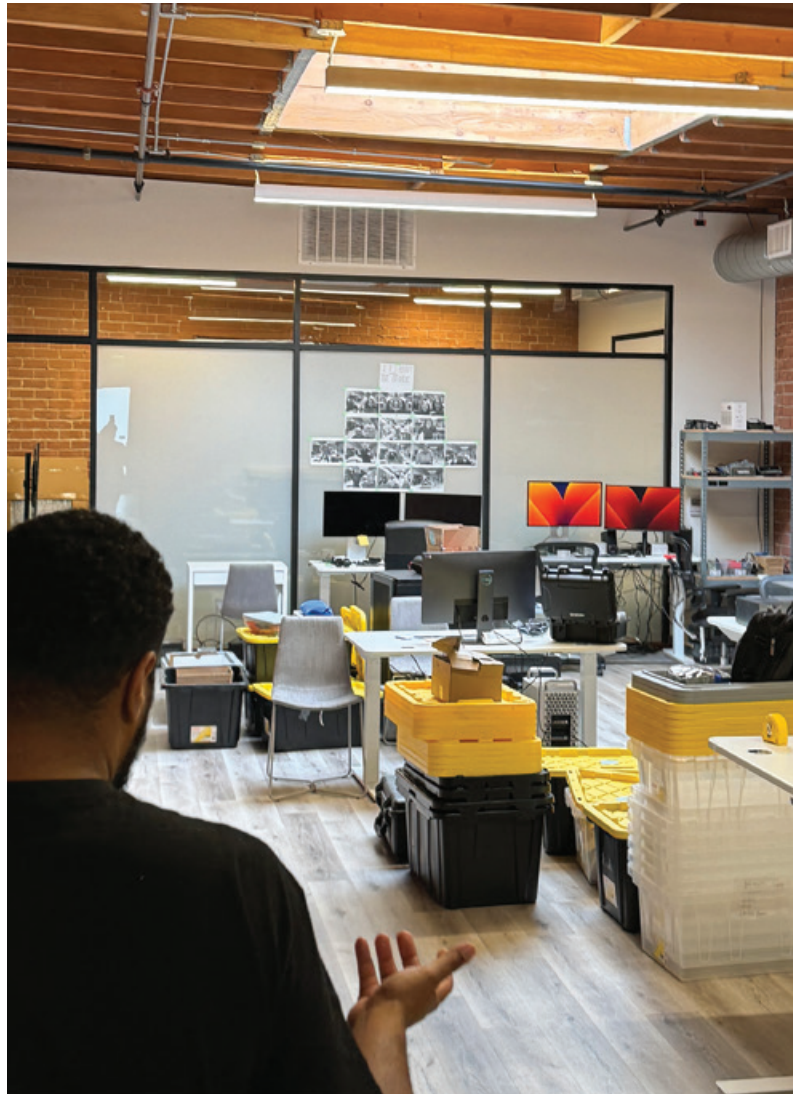
The other thing that I'll do is take calls or Zooms while walking. It's a fun neighborhood, so I'll just go outside. I don't have a lot of time to go to the gym. So if I can take two calls while walking, that's an hour that I've been walking instead of sitting.

### Evenings

I cook a lot for my family, and that's one of the reasons my wife married me. She loves my cooking. My kids love my cooking.

Yesterday I went home a little bit early because my wife texted me that one of our kids asked me to come home early and cook. I thought, OK, there's stuff that's not going to happen, so I went home and cooked. Then I started a script I had to read, went upstairs to put kids to bed, and went back to the script after.

What I look forward to most every day is the way my kids look at me when I come home. It's wonderful every time. It's a big old hug and kiss, and they're just fun little buggers. ■



Brooks and Tommy Oliver at work and at rest. Above: Tommy navigating Confluent's new office space.