THE DECISION INTELLIGENCE · PRESS KIT

The Pause Before The Move

Nakel Nikiema

The Pause Before The Move is twenty songs about leadership, judgment, and the human side of intelligent systems. It opens in the quiet before a choice and moves through the table, the road home, the door you build yourself, the sacred no, the yes that holds, and the ethics of machines that have begun to decide.

ALBUM SNAPSHOT

Artist	Nakel Nikiema
Album	The Pause Before The Move
Label / catalog	The Decision Intelligence
Released	October 3, 2026
Tracks	20 (every track has lyrics)
Writer / producer	Nakel Nikiema (sole)
Production	No AI at any stage. African kora, Burkina Faso west African balafon and calabash drum percussions, and synthesizer, produced in GarageBand.
Distribution	DistroKid
Genre	Decision Intelligence music; Gospel-inflected soul and R&B-leaning cinematic atmospheres
Companion	Signal & Silence (6 long-form listening sessions), same catalog, released October 4, 2026
Based in	Austin, TX

VISION

The vision is a world where leaders treat the quiet between thought and action as sacred, especially as machines get faster, so judgment stays human. Nikiema imagines rooms that can hear the pattern under the noise, hold a pause without apology, and move only when the choice has been earned. The album stands for a future in which intelligence, human and machine, can be aligned, and no leader has to abdicate the decision that still belongs to a person.

> *The intelligence that moves the world is the intelligence that waits. Then it moves.*
>
> Nakel Nikiema, The Frame Before The Move

MISSION

The mission is to give executives and decision-makers music that can hold that pause: songs they can live with before they move. Drawing on more than thirty years beside founders and leaders, and on a body of work in leadership psychology and Decision Intelligence, Nikiema translated what he teaches in those rooms into twenty lyric records. The album is a companion for the hire, the crisis, the investment, the no that protects a yes, and the moment when the room is waiting and the right answer is not yet ready.

ARTIST BIO

Nakel Nikiema is an executive leadership coach, consultant, author, and musician, and the founder of Nakel & Associates. Born in Burkina Faso, he studied psychology at the University of Ouagadougou and earned a master's in psychology from the University of Roehampton, an MBA from the African Institute of Management Studies, and a postgraduate degree in Leading Innovation and Change from York St John University. That same drive for continuous improvement has him pursuing a DBA at Edgewood University while completing an Associate of Science in Engineering at Ohlone College. He is based in Austin, Texas.

He has spent more than thirty years beside founders and leaders, including more than twenty years in consulting and more than sixteen in management. He leads Nakel & Associates and also leads B.I.M. Corporation, focused on decision and business intelligence; B.I.I.M., a training practice; and Wiseside Financial. His signature method is five questions a team answers together (What? When? Where? Why? Who?) so hidden assumptions come to the surface before anyone decides.

His books include Psyche and Silicon, The Dark Side of BI, Beyond Authority, Steering the Storm, The Credit Conundrum, Build Your Own Door, and Sent Ahead. He was named a Marquis Who's Who in America Honored Listee in 2024. As a musician he writes and produces under The Decision Intelligence catalog; The Pause Before The Move is his twenty-track album, made without AI, with African kora, Burkina Faso west African balafon and calabash drum percussions, and synthesizer in GarageBand.

TRACK BY TRACK

What follows is not a plot summary of each song. It is what guided Nikiema to write it, drawn from his life and work, and from the charge already in the lyric.

01 The Frame Before The Move

This is the album's thesis, written from the method he has used for years with leadership teams: slow down long enough to tell a signal from noise. In rooms where dashboards multiply and every hour brings a thousand asks, he kept returning to those five questions, because the story is rarely in the numbers alone. He wanted listeners to enter the record the way he asks a team to enter a decision: find the frame first. The intelligence that moves the world, as he sings it, is the intelligence that waits, then moves.

02 Around The Table

Nikiema's coaching is built around a table, not a monologue. He wrote this after years of watching founders try to carry choices that were never theirs alone, and after learning himself that the loneliest decisions are the ones made in a room that holds just one person. The song is guided by the practice of pulling up chairs for the believer, the unsure, and the quiet one who sees what the group ignores, so a team can speak doubt and fire in the same circle, and no one has to walk out carrying the weight alone.

03 The Long Way Home

He was young when he stood beside people who had no voice in the rooms that mattered, and he learned that justice can feel like a long-distance call you keep placing. After years of NGO and international work, a quieter reckoning arrived: success had piled up, yet he could not point to one life he had changed with his own hands. That pause turned him toward building businesses where impact could be seen. The song follows the road from protest to platform, from the megaphone to the open door (the same fire, a longer road) and the companies he later built from that flame.

04 The Invisible Advantage

This one grew out of his work at the center of business intelligence: the edge is not speed, it is seeing the pattern before it shows. In consulting rooms he watched teams chase the latest signal and stay one step behind, while the real advantage stayed quiet: designed, not displayed. He wrote it as a portrait of Decision Intelligence as he practices it through B.I.M. Corporation: turn data into time, and refuse to play only in the moment.

05 Build Your Own Door

The song comes from a push that started in his weekly certificate classes in Burkina Faso. Working professionals who loved those courses urged him to form a graduate school at home, and in the same breath asked him to help them earn American degrees so they could compete in their job market and excel at work. He built that graduate school and tried to partner with American universities to deliver those degrees through his tertiary education entity back home. His students already spoke English as a second language and were aiming for excellence, yet the university rooms stayed polite and closed. That stretch of closed doors, and the book that shares this title, guided him to stop waiting on permission and to form Business Intelligence Institute of Management, LLC (B.I.I.M.) in the U.S. in February 2018, so the credentials could come from him. Nakel & Associates came later, in 2021, as the last of the four companies (after B.I.M. Corporation in October 2017, B.I.I.M. in February 2018, and Wiseside Financial in August 2020).

06 Sent Ahead

Written from fatherhood: a hallway at three in the morning, a child asleep, and the quiet math of what can be put in motion for a road he will not walk. He cannot buy back an hour, but he can send something ahead, not only a document, but the mornings he got up and the hours he gave. The song shares its name and its charge with his book Sent Ahead: love that keeps going where his hands cannot follow.

07 The Algorithm Of Yes

He spends his working life with people who have to choose while a board, a market, and lives they will never meet lean on the pause. He wrote this from that chair: the morning brief, a room full of facts that are not yet the truth, and the difference between sounding confident and actually having conviction. The algorithm of yes is not a machine. It is the human moment when signal meets soul, and the person who must weigh the cost of action against the cost of fear finally knows.

08 The Architecture Remains

He has built three companies from one flame, and he wanted a song about what those rooms should leave behind. Not the empire and not the title, but the discipline: how a mind learns to weigh, how a team learns to listen, how children inherit a way of deciding. The lyric reaches toward his father and the path before that, and toward an inheritance quieter than any headline: the architecture that remains after the title is gone.

09 The Clearing

After the noise of a life spent answering every ask, he learned that clarity is not a gift you wait to receive. The song is guided by the same pause that redirected his work: the decision to stop chasing every voice at once and let a steadier thing appear. It is also what he offers leaders who have weathered a storm and mistaken themselves for it: step into the clearing, and let knowing become motion.

10 The Sacred No

He learned that a life can be emptied by yeses that look like kindness. The sacred no is not bitterness; it is the boundary that protects the yes that actually matters. He wrote it from that recognition in his own days (every meeting, every favor, until there was no room left for him) and from watching executives who had never taken a stand because they could not bear to close a door.

11 The One Who Built The Milk

Drawn from his own experience, this song is an homage to the leaders who are always misunderstood by the people around them. It holds the sleepless nights they spend weighing decisions that touch other lives: the one who sees that end-of-week pays may not clear, cannot tell the team until a way out is found, and never has to; the rooms that learn a leader′s name before they learn a leader′s mind, then realize a leader is always for the team in every decision. Steel beneath the silk is how he understands that composure: not a self-portrait alone, but a tribute to the ones who carry the chair so the team never feels its weight.

12 **The Pause is The Depth**

This is the album's inner title track: the space between the question and the yes. In executive rooms he has seen faces already positioned for a fast answer, and he has learned that the decisions made in haste are the ones that haunt the host. The song is guided by his refusal to treat silence as fear. The pause is not avoidance. It is the depth a choice needs if it is going to be seen, not only heard.

13 **A Yes That Holds**

Guided by years at kitchen tables (coaching conversations and the financial work of Wiseside Financial) where coffee goes cold and the paper can wait. He learned that people often ask for a number when they are really asking whether someone will stay. There is a yes that comes from pressure and a yes that comes from love; only one still stands in December. He would rather leave without a signature than talk someone past a doubt that will swing the door back open.

14 **What Arrives**

He wrote this thinking about consequence as inheritance: every choice is a seed in ground you may never see. The lyric holds both fatherhood and lineage: someone built a bridge they would never cross, and the road that arrived was his. It is also a charge that runs through his companies and his books: choose the harder road so the ones behind you live, even if what arrives never makes it back to you.

15 **The Weight Of Command**

This grew from walking into organizations full of glowing dashboards and departments out of sync: information without alignment, which he has long treated as a fractured corporate soul. In The Dark Side of BI and in his work with B.I.M. Corporation, he argues that business intelligence is not a reporting department; it is the operating system. The weight of command, as he sings it, is not control. It is coherence: relationships, direction, and a spine that runs from vision to execution.

16 **Intelligence Amplified**

Psyche and Silicon, and his wider writing on human judgment in the age of algorithms, sit behind this track. Machines can forecast in seconds; they cannot carry the cost of yesterday, and ethics does not live in a server. He wrote it to keep a sentence at the center of Decision Intelligence: business intelligence is human. Amplify insight, integrate it, and never abdicate the choice.

17 **The Ethics Of Autonomous Decision Systems**

As systems begin to decide in real time, his question is not whether they are fast enough, but who defines the boundary when a system stands alone. The song is guided by his consulting and authorship at the meeting point of business intelligence, psychology, and responsibility: data may reveal an answer; ethics still shapes the line. He wants leaders to build systems that can decide, and to keep those systems from deciding without accountability.

18 **Empire In Motion**

Written from the view he has seen in corner offices: the ledger is no longer the only pressure, and a title is no longer enough. Books such as Beyond Authority and Steering the Storm, and years of coaching executives through shifting markets, guided a song about the new executive mind. The old model was command and control. The one he teaches is understand and align: not louder, not merely faster, but sharper, and answerable to consequence.

19 **The Singularity**

This is the album's widest thought experiment, drawn from his work on intelligence as something that learns you while you learn. When every system begins to think, he asks what remains uniquely ours: control or convergence, loss or design. He does not sing the end of the human. He sings a realignment: business intelligence at the core, human and machine intertwined, a future that is not the machine alone and not the person left behind.

20 Intelligence Awakening

Guided less by a single episode than by how he thinks about stories in an age of signals. He has watched media learn an audience click by click, and he has spent his career insisting that intelligence should deepen meaning rather than merely aim at it. The song imagines creation that is no longer only guessed: strategy aligned with art, insight shaping the heart, and business intelligence as the quiet pattern behind every frame.

LISTEN

The Pause Before The Move on Spotify
https://open.spotify.com/album/4klN7QQKNKyKtJQ2KG7I4r

The Pause Before The Move on Apple Music
https://music.apple.com/us/album/the-pause-before-the-move/6818982972

Nakel Nikiema
https://nakelnikiema.com

Signal & Silence on Spotify
https://open.spotify.com/album/3cEUO1rq8fTNmUDMo4SbZU

Signal & Silence on Apple Music
https://music.apple.com/us/album/signal-silence/6819271113

Signal & Silence is the companion project in the same Decision Intelligence catalog: six long-form listening sessions for the decision, hiring, crisis, investment, acquisition, and exit hours. It was released on October 4, 2026.

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Nikiema is available for podcast and media interviews on leadership, decision-making, and the psychology of executive pressure. He also takes keynotes and workshops, including Intelligent Calm: Transforming Leadership Anxiety into Strategic Clarity.