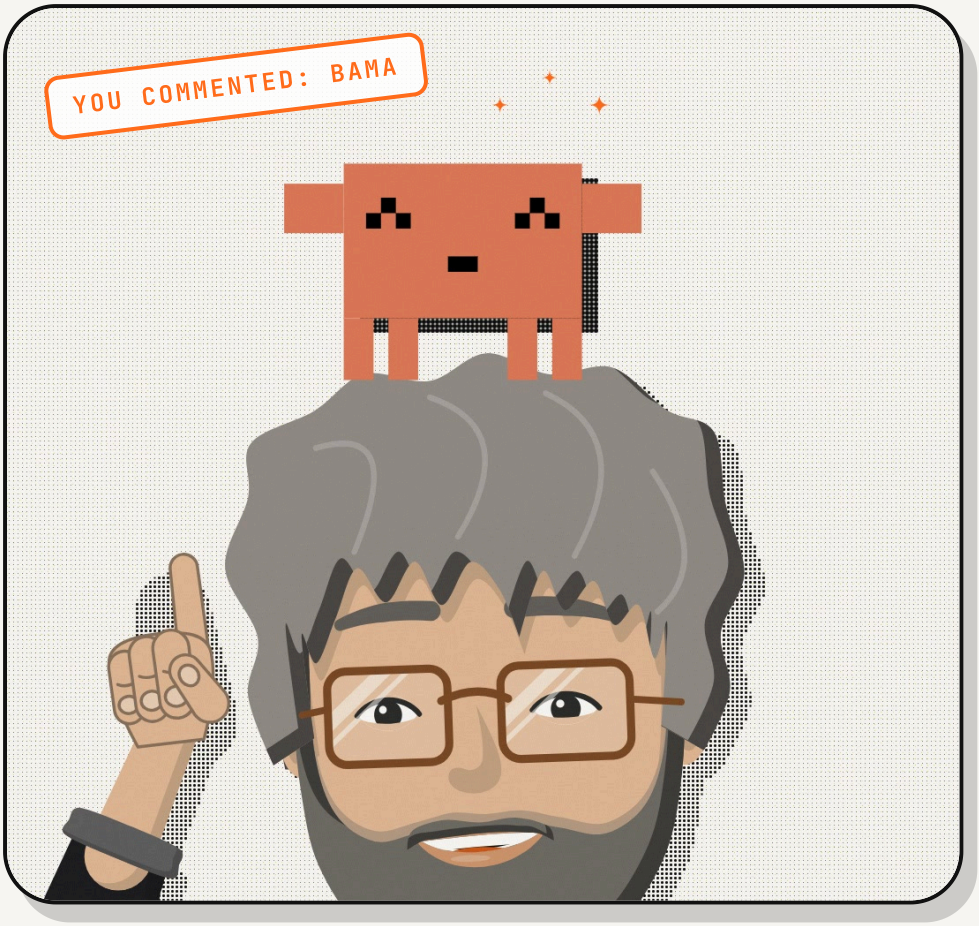
BAMA

FREE GUIDE



BAMA and REA: rebuilding Mac apps *with Claude*

The links to BAMA and REA, how to install both, what they really do, what they cost and where the legal line is. Plus a look ahead at ArtCraft, the topic of my next reel.

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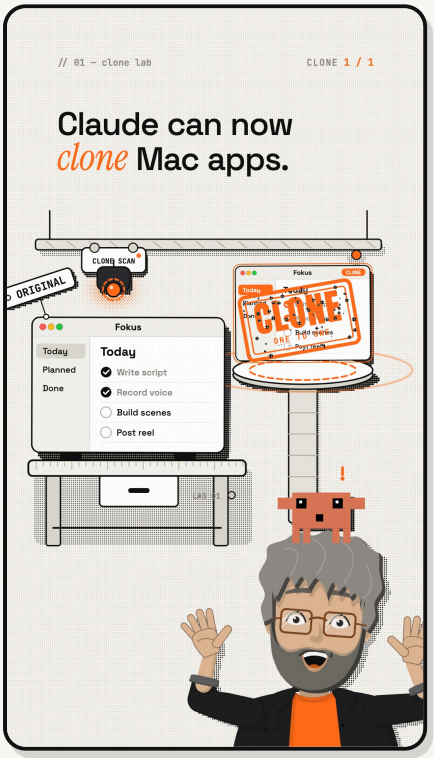
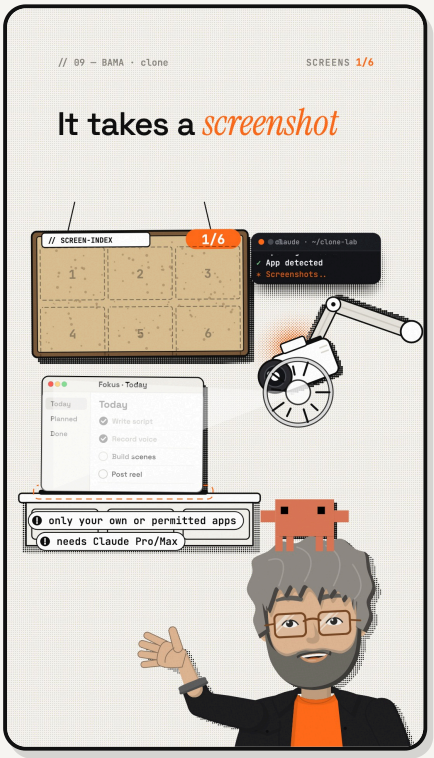
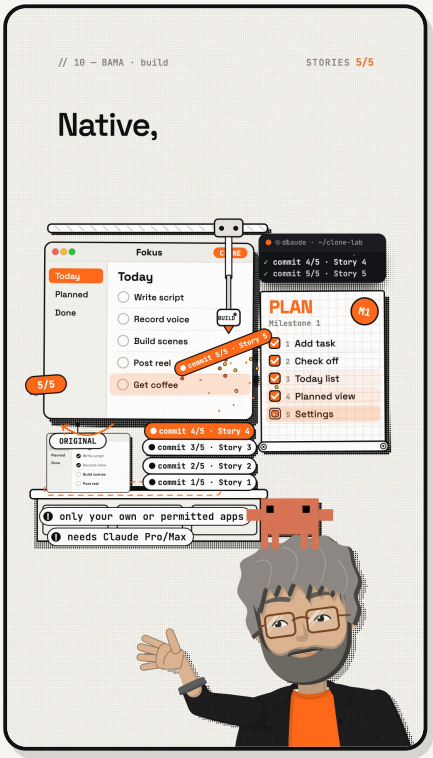
At a glance

QUESTION	SHORT ANSWER
BAMA	21 skills for Claude Code and Codex: look at the app, screenshot every screen, write a plan, rebuild it natively in Swift.
REA	A toolbox for your AI agent: it inspects an app without its source code and explains how a feature works. Over 414,000 stars on GitHub.
Cost	Both are open source and free. Claude Code needs a paid Claude plan; cloning native apps needs Claude Pro or Max.
The line	Only your own or permitted software, research and interoperability. Don't copy other people's brands, icons or designs one to one.

// FROM THE VIDEO







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What the video doesn’t say

- **ArtCraft has nothing to do with REA.** They are two separate projects. ArtCraft didn't "copy" its apps, it wrote them from scratch as a clean-room rebuild: its own code, built from public specifications and observation. That is a big difference, legally too.
- **"Free" is only half true.** REA and BAMA cost nothing. The agent that runs them does: Claude Code only works with a paid Claude plan or via the API. And BAMA's clone step needs Computer Use for native Mac apps, which means Claude Pro or Max.
- **BAMA is brand new.** The repo went online on 24 October 2026, so it is one week old (as of 31 October 2026). Expect bugs and frequent updates.
- **BAMA needs macOS 26.** Plus Xcode 26 for the Swift 6.2 compiler. You never have to open Xcode, but it has to be installed.
- **The build plans are not cloned third-party apps.** Dave Ebbelaar took the 12 specs apart from his own menu bar app "Onyx". They describe what an app should do, not what someone else's app looks like.
- **REA's star count is unusual.** 414,956 stars in a little over six months, but only about 1,600 watchers. Nobody outside GitHub can check whether every star is real. The number is the one GitHub shows.

THE MENTOR SAYS

Rebuilding means understanding and writing it again. Copying means trouble. Stay on the first side.

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The links

BAMA · daveebbelaar/bama

Build Any Mac App: 21 skills that take a native Mac app from screenshot to your Dock.

github.com ↗

REA · morluto/rea

Reverse Engineer Anything: your agent inspects apps down to the binary level, with evidence.

github.com ↗

Install REA

You need Node.js 22 (or newer) and npm. Then in the terminal:

```
npx rea-agents setup
```

Pick your agents (Claude Code, Codex, Cursor, Gemini CLI ...), review the proposed changes and approve them. Then restart your agent. To analyze native programs, REA also needs an analysis tool such as Ghidra (free), Hopper or IDA. JavaScript and Electron apps work without one.

Install BAMA in Claude Code

```
/plugin marketplace add daveebbelaar/bama
/plugin install bama@bama
```

Then type `/bama`: the router looks at your project and picks the next skill. For the clone step, turn on Computer Use: in Claude Code via `/mcp` → `computer-use` → Enable, in the Claude desktop app in Settings.

Build a plan

1. Copy a spec from the `specs/` folder of the BAMA repo into an empty folder, for example `window-snapper.md`.
2. Start Claude Code in that folder.
3. Send this sentence:

```
Build the app in window-snapper.md with BAMA.
```

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BAMA and REA compared

PROJECT	WHAT IT DOES	FOR WHOM
REA	Understands other apps: functions, calls, data, with evidence	Developers, security researchers, people building an interface
BAMA	Builds new native Mac apps from an idea, a spec or screenshots	Indie developers, founders, Mac power users

BAMA's 12 build plans

PLAN	WHAT THE APP DOES
Window Snapper	Snap windows to halves or thirds with a shortcut
Window Switcher	Pick any window with Option-Tab and live previews
Launcher	Open apps and files from one search box
Clipboard History	Search and paste anything you copied
Text Snippets	Type a short keyword, get the full text
Color Picker	Pick a colour anywhere on screen and save it
Screenshots	Capture the screen, an area or a window and mark it up
Screen Recorder	Record the screen to MP4 with mic, system audio and webcam
Menu Bar Stats	CPU, memory, network and battery in the menu bar
Toolbox	Keep the Mac awake, show hidden files, switch audio
Creator Tools	Keystroke overlay, cursor highlight, teleprompter
Dev Toolkit	Open projects, convert JSON and Base64, free a port

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What it really costs

PART	PRICE
BAMA, REA	free, open source (MIT)
Claude Code	only with a paid Claude plan (Pro, Max, Team) or API credit
Cloning native Mac apps	Computer Use: Claude Pro or Max
Mac	macOS 26 and Xcode 26 (free in the App Store)
Analysis tool for REA	Ghidra free, Hopper and IDA paid

A tip against surprises: start with the smallest plan (Window Snapper). BAMA calls each spec "an afternoon of agent time". That takes a noticeable bite out of your usage limit.

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Prompts to copy

Rebuild your own app as a native Mac app (BAMA):

```
Clone my own web app [URL] as a native Mac app with BAMA. Screenshot every screen,
write the user stories and build milestone 1.
```

Understand first, then build (REA):

```
Use REA to find out how [feature] works in [an app I own or am allowed to analyze].
Show me the evidence and explain it in plain words.
```

A feature for your own project:

```
I like how [app] handles [feature]. Describe the behaviour only from using it,
without taking over the app's code, texts, icons or design, and turn it into user
stories for my own app [name].
```

An app from an idea instead of a template:

```
/bama I want a small menu bar app that [task]. Write an app brief first, then the
stories in milestones.
```

Adapt a build plan:

```
Read window-snapper.md. Change the name to [name], the shortcuts to [shortcuts] and
cut everything that isn't needed for version 1. Then build it with BAMA.
```

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Who gains what

WHO	PROBLEM	WHAT YOU DO
Indie developer	A new Mac app takes weeks	Idea as a spec, BAMA builds the first milestone
Founder	A click prototype doesn't feel real	A native app for the demo, with real local data
Agency	Client wants a small internal Mac app	Client brief as a spec, built in commits, easy to follow
Creator	A tool that fits your own workflow	Teleprompter or chapter markers as your own app
Developer with legacy	Own old tool without source code	Understand it with REA, rebuild it with BAMA

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What you can make of it

- **A service:** build small native Mac tools for teams with one specific problem (menu bar helpers, internal tools).
- **Content:** a series "I build a Mac app in one afternoon", one build plan per episode.
- **Your own spec:** write your app idea in BAMA's format (brief, how it works, stories, gotchas). That makes any idea buildable.
- **Learning:** let REA explain how your own or an open app solves a problem before you build it yourself.

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Limits and risks

- **Law:** by its own note, REA is only for lawful research, education, interoperability, preservation and software you own or are authorized to examine. Many licence agreements (EULAs) forbid reverse engineering. Read them first.
- **Brands and design:** names, logos, icons, texts and the exact look of other apps are protected. Rebuilding a function with your own design is not the same as a copy. You alone are responsible for the rights.
- **Privacy:** while cloning, the agent sees everything in the app. BAMA recommends a demo account with sample data.
- **Security:** you install other people's code and give Computer Use access to your screen. Only install from the official sources; REA itself warns about copies with similar names.
- **Maturity:** BAMA is one week old. Not every build works the first time, and updates come often.

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Your first hour

- [ ] Check: is your Mac on macOS 26? Install Xcode 26 from the App Store.
- [ ] Install BAMA in Claude Code (the two commands above).
- [ ] Copy the Window Snapper spec into an empty folder.
- [ ] Send the sentence "Build the app in window-snapper.md with BAMA." and let it build milestone 1.
- [ ] Start the finished app from the Dock and test it.
- [ ] Optional: set up REA (command above) and try it on your own or an open app.

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My tip

Don't start with "clone app X", start with your own idea as a spec. That is legally clean, and you learn how BAMA thinks: brief, stories, one commit per story. Once that clicks, you build tools in one afternoon that you would otherwise pay for every month.

All links, commands and numbers checked on 31 October 2026 on the official pages.

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Up next: ArtCraft

Mentioned briefly in the video, in full in the next reel: the ArtCraft team builds open-source apps with AI agents as clean-room rebuilds, for example PhotoCraft as a rebuild of Photoshop, plus apps for photos, video editing, vector graphics and PDF. If you can't wait: getartcraft.com.

THE MENTOR SAYS

First REA, now BAMA, and soon ArtCraft. I can't wait to see what you build.

— @reposprites

Want to make animated videos like this too? Visit my website and get the reel engine.

reposprites.com ↗