

LAWRENCE

BUSINESS

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Lawrence, KS



LOCAL MEDIA
& MARKETING



BIG-SCREEN BUSINESS Marc Havener

Local filmmaker uses his ties in Hollywood to tell stories and create videos that resonate with people while building up his community in the process.

by Darin White

Aerial photography by Marc Havener for the Stan Herd earthwork "Build Back Better"

Ever hear the saying “attitude of gratitude”? This understanding about the way we view things can drastically affect the way we see and live our lives.

It might be said that despite challenges, our choice to focus on the positive, to believe the glass is half full, to take the sunny-side up view—whatever the colloquialism, saying, good juju, prayers or the like—our focus does make a difference.

Filmmaker Marc Havener, who operates Resonate Pictures, tells compelling stories in a number of ways: commercials, web spots, documentaries and short films. He reveals, “What draws me to telling stories is their power to develop empathy. The more empathy a community or business has, the stronger it becomes. Imagine a place where people and businesses value each other as much as themselves.”

Havener told stories long before they were award-winning films, including “Dear Larry: A Letter to Home.” The COVID public service announcement (PSA) about the beautiful city of Lawrence has won two American Advertising Awards national Addys and Best of Show at the KC AD Club Awards.

WORKING IN HOLLYWOOD

After graduating from the University of Kansas (KU) in film, Havener moved to Los Angeles and, not long after, got a job as a barista. He had many patrons who were A-list actors. One of

them was James Caviezel, who helped Havener land his first role on the Ang Lee film “Ride With the Devil,” which was, ironically, back in the Kansas City area.

He remembers the first decade of his career working in Hollywood and how it felt like a small community. “A lot of people and personalities working together, all with individual interests but with a common goal of creating something great. I’ve worked with Kevin Costner, George Clooney, Kate Bosworth, among others, and they all taught me by example that being kind and respectful leads to a more efficient process. Being disrespectful and demeaning does the opposite.”

In Los Angeles, when he was working as a production assistant (one of the least powerful people on set) for other films, he “kept a pretty positive, can-do attitude.” Occasionally, a stressed-out producer, assistant director or stunt coordinator would get upset and take it out on him. Most of the time, he was able to take the criticism in stride. On one occasion, a very successful, multiple-Oscar-winning producer berated him as he was driving a golf cart across the Sony lot to the Jimmy Stewart building for not driving quickly, directly or for some other reason. His wife had just recently had their first child, and perhaps with a new understanding of the world, Havener let him know that was not how he was supposed to be treated. The next day, he was told not to come back to work.

“The point is, I’ve seen leadership that builds up and leadership that tears down,” he explains. “I want to build up my community.

Lawrence is a great place to practice that, because you can see results from even the smallest contributions. It’s like the difference between a drop of water in an ocean versus a drop of water in a drinking glass. I’d say most of my contributions come through my art. I’m grateful for this place where I’ve been able to turn my art and passions into a business that can help strengthen and build the community and businesses and organizations.”

BACK TO LAWRENCE

A decade after he first got that fated Hollywood job, Havener moved back to Lawrence with his wife to raise his young family and focus on telling stories. He does build up his community in films like “Dear Larry: A Letter to Home,” “The Beauty Within” for Van Go, and “Fill Up Pour Out” for Heartland Community Health Center (HCHC).

“The Beauty Within” is a short film that follows five Van Go graduates who speak about their younger selves and how being involved in Van Go changed them for good during dark or challenging times—possibly even saved some of their lives. It received three Kansas City Addy Awards, which “recognizes and rewards the creative spirit of excellence in the art of advertising.”

Co-executive directors at Van Go, Eliza Darmon and Kristen Malloy, observe: “From the minute Marc walked in Van Go, we could see his wheels turning on how best to tell the story of what happens within these walls beyond the artwork and job training. His vision

for the project and respect for the alumni who told their stories was impeccable. He is a genuine collaborator who intently listened and took our ideas to heart.”

Havener believes, “If a story is going to resonate with people, it has to move them on an emotional level. That’s the question I’m asking before every project. Be it for a business, an organization or a community ... why will people care about this? They will care if they are moved. They will care if they feel an emotion. And they will care if it is a reflection of their inner world. If you make them care, whatever you are trying to communicate will stick.”

The documentary short film “Fill Up Pour Out” is described in the intro as, “Set in Lawrence, Kansas, this film looks into what motivates three health-care workers driven to serve their patients inside a complicated system and reshape the way care is given regardless of background or circumstances.” Havener follows Heartland Community Health Center employees who, as former director of HCHC, Jon Stewart states, “We deliver health care, not sick care.”

RESPECT

Havener would like people to understand and take to heart the quote by Maya Angelou, “People will forget what you said ... but people will never forget how you made them feel.” He helps his clients look beyond the product and service, tell the story and be drawn in by the message, which is what the audience or customer will connect to and will more likely “be absorbed, internalized and remembered.”

In addition to working with not-for-profit groups, Resonate Pictures has shaped stories for Fortune 500 companies, including Spotify, Altria and InBev. It has also worked on pieces for President Biden’s election campaign and the Presidential Inauguration Day Parade. Havener’s goal in his work is to “... help businesses uncover their story and then tell it in a way that will resonate with their audience.”

He does just this as he continues to collect awards, laurels and Addys. He maintains a positive attitude and is grateful for the opportunity to create a life for himself and his family in Lawrence, Kansas, and tell powerful stories that can make a difference and change lives. ▲



Marc filming the KU Basketball Championship parade - photo by Jeff Burkhead

top to bottom:
Marc filming an EZ Go commercial on a golf course,
Courtesy of Reliant Studios

Movie poster for “The Burley Farmer” by Marc Havener
Directing a VanGo film , photo by Mariah Seifert



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