

It's What I've Got

Life events hit us leaving us battered, bruised and sometimes broken. But we have to pick ourselves back up, collect the pieces or we're left behind making those hurts feel even more so. Then there's roller derby. People get hit, knocked down, battered, bruised and sometimes broken but they get back up smiling, laughing, loving and more complete than they were when they first started lacing their boots.

“It's What I've Got” delves into a fringe group of people to reveal ... people. Through interviews with Miranda Reaver, TieDie Pixie, JuJu Slice, NoEl Paso, X Mental, Scarlet O'Scare Ya (she works in education with tattoos all over her, gasp) and El Pea we discover that not all people are alike, but they're still your teammates. Acceptance, camaraderie, appreciation, love, belonging, recovery, purpose and confidence are some of the things one learns as they grow from being out of pack to fresh meat, getting their boutfit and jammer panty on slowly building their padstink. Roller derby is life.

“It's What I've Got” focuses on how roller derby provides athletes – many who attest to never being an athlete in school – six of the seven basic needs the human psyche require, business experience/sense (the teams are self owned, self run), physical and mental health/recovery and provides a way to give back. The teams I'm following, all from Kansas, are very community minded. Despite the lack of fan support they participate in parades, mud volleyball fund raisers, polar plunges, Girl Scout cookie kick-offs and other events to show their community spirit. It's also a way to get the word out about something so amazing that got them through maybe it can do for you too. Often times they get in return, “Oh wow, we have a roller derby team?” But they keep going, never stopping despite the difficulties.

The Film's Format.

I've decided to shoot this project on the RED 4K cinema camera and film. I believe the RED offers me the flexibility to capture the overall look and feel of being in the world of roller derby. It gives me a more robust file structure for future storage allowing the fidelity decades into the future. I've also decided to capture a few shots on film. Roller skating is a past-time going back generation after generation and I want the historical and home movies, nostalgic aspect to “It's What I've Got” that only film can offer.

Director's Statement.

When I see unhealthy, depressed, people in unhappy – no way to resolve their issues, not given a chance or don't know how to make a change it bothers me. Conversely, when I see something that can change things I want others to know. I shoot the games and practices for the Salina Sirens Roller Derby League (Salina, KS). I notice the camaraderie from the different walks and beliefs of life even if they're from different teams. The confidence these women exude is not commonly taught. They are brash and they don't care what people might think, they are covered in tats and they don't care what people might think, they are open and vulnerable to each other and they don't care what people might think. They go out facing the world confidently as a partner, mom, employer/employee not bogged down by the societal norms, but as a more complete human having great things to offer and they're doing it. There are people who are scarred, deeply cut, lost, don't fit in. These fringe folk have something to say and do about societal norms that need to be listened to. Don't get lost in their colorful

adjectives, the message is quite clear.

The Filmmaker's Bio.

Gary's passport is filled with stamps from the Sudan, Great Britain, 12 of the Caribbean nations and Guyana. Through his lens he has accounts of the Sahara Desert, pyramids, the Red Sea, the Nile and the Safari. He has captured visual witness of locales, live events, hotels and cuisine from tucked away paradises including Kaieteur Falls in Guyana – one of National Geographic's must-see wonders.

Some of the places you might have spent an evening watching Gary is ESPN, ESPN2, CBS SPORTS, FOX SPORTS, NBC, History Channel, Discovery Channel, TLC, HARPO Productions, PBS (national), OLN, Animal Planet, Al Jazeera, Versus, broadcast TV throughout the Caribbean and maybe if you went to a Denver Broncos game.

Whether it is a feature length movie, documentary, commercial or sporting event, Gary's visual storytelling draws in the viewer leaving them feeling they are part of the action.

Status.

Currently “It's What I've Got” has gathered interviews and bout footage from six Kansan teams. Other interviews collected are from employees of the University of Kansas, Kansas State University and Wichita State University. Contact has been made to the athletic departments to our other highly prolific schools from Fort Hays State and Pittsburg State to get their perspective of how Title IX operates and how it offers a future to those who might not have had that chance before. I've conducted an interview with a co-director at the Kansas Sports Hall of Fame to talk about women in sports history prior to Title IX to help us reflect and to appreciate the gains we've made.

Where the Money Will Go.

Money generously donated will be put toward following the teams and interviews even more than I can now by having to take on jobs or gigs to pay for life. Travel is a big expense (including trips outside of Kansas) and one I must work around. I believe production value is an utmost importance making it an utmost expense. The cost of the film, a game produced as if it were for ESPN itself, graphics and animations is a large but doable task.

Advertising/Sales.

The premier I want is at Cannes in May 2020 just before roller derby will be played as a non medal sport for the first time at the 2020 Summer Olympics. Submissions will also be mailed to Tribeca, Toronto, Los Angeles, Sundance and Moondance film festivals initially with the thought that other film festivals will come in to play. I will also follow the criteria to be recognized by the Academy qualifying “It's What I've Got” for the Academy and the Spirit Awards. The greater the recognition, the greater the possibilities for the return on investment.