

A storyteller at heart

KSU alumnus starts Web comedy series

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Issue date: 3/5/09 **Section:** [News](#)

A Kent State alumnus recently released a portion of his first Web series, "The Road to Sundance: On a Shoestring Budget."

Alumnus Matt Pallotta is the director of the series of what he calls "Webisodes" about the adventures of a low-budget, independent film crew working to create its first film in Northeast Ohio.

"I always knew I wanted to be a story teller," he said.

Pallotta's interest in production began early in his childhood, when he was writing a children's book in elementary school.

After graduating from a northeast Ohio high school, Pallotta went to Los Angeles to pursue his career.

"I got a good idea of what the business was like without stepping foot into the door," he said.

Pallotta moved home to attend Kent State and major in electronic media production.

"If I don't have a degree, what do I have to offer?" he said.

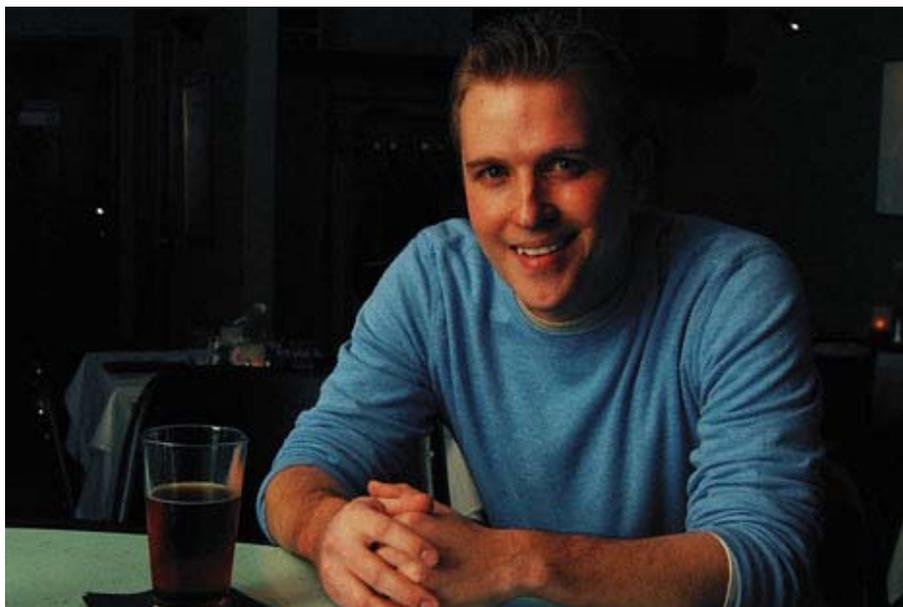
Pallotta established a Web site, redduckpictures.com, and produced his first film in 2004, all before his graduation from Kent State in 2006.

Pallotta is currently working as a freelance videographer.

"The Road to Sundance: On a Shoestring Budget" is based on the screenplay "Where the Sun Sets in Purgatory," by C.S. Nash.

According to Red Duck Pictures' Web site, this production is close to home for the crew.

"The Road to Sundance: On a Shoestring Budget' is a documentary-style comedy," Pallotta said. "The characters are poking fun at their own real-life experiences."



Kent State alumnus Matt Pallotta sits at the bar of Moe's Restaurant in Cuyahoga Falls. In Pallotta's Web series, "The Road to Sundance: On a Shoestring Budget," the restaurant is a meeting spot for his characters. Brittany Ankrom | Daily Kent Stater

All five episodes were released Jan. 20.

The lead role, George, played by Bobby Thomas, is a blue-collar carpenter working in northeast Ohio. He has a change of heart after a possible mid-life crisis and decides he's finally going to follow his dream - to create a film and take it to the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah.

George has little knowledge as to how he's going to pursue his dream. And to complicate things even further, his finances are not working in his favor.

George finds his first cast member, Parker, on Craig's List.

The supporting role, Parker, played by Andrew Goldsworth, is a college student at a local university seeking an internship. George's project seems like the perfect fit for Parker, Goldsworth said.

"We tried to create a world for the characters and a story that the audience can get lost in," Pallotta said.

Each character has his own MySpace page. "It's going a step beyond watching the show," Pallotta said.

The episodes of "The Road to Sundance: On a Shoestring Budget" are ongoing.

"We try to be smart about it and make references to past episodes," Pallotta said. "It's not (about) just watching one episode."

The episodes can be found at redduckpictures.com and on YouTube and MySpace. They are no longer than 10 minutes each.

The group brainstorms the ideas for the production together, but Pallotta is the main writer.

"It comes out funnier on screen than it ever was on paper," Pallotta said.

Pallotta, Thomas and Goldsworth worked together at a previous job. Thomas and Goldsworth still auditioned for the series, along with other locals from the Cleveland area.

Thomas works as a freelance voice-over and acts in "The Road to Sundance: On a Shoestring Budget" as a side job. He's done stage work for the past eight to nine years.

Goldsworth went to Ashland University and majored in electronic media production. He's currently freelancing in Chardon with a small production company.

"You're never going to be able to go far unless you go above and beyond what's asked of you," Pallotta said. "If you don't challenge yourself, you'll never progress. If you don't break the mold, when you come out (of school) you're just another dime-a-dozen student."

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