

Quite The Story Behind The Story: “All Arizona,” And the People You “Meet”

APRIL 2, 2020 BY JOE FAVORITO

Because of some of the side hustles...although usually side hustles bring you money (not in this case for the most part), I get more than my share of inbound emails. **Many are requests from students or parents, some are for items for our newsletter, some are just blind random solicitations for some kind of vague assistance which usually amounts to little.**

Then there are some that lead you to places you never thought, and in challenging times like these, make you realize that all this “stuff” we do has purpose. **Yesterday was one of those wow moments. Mark Dalton is the head of communications for the Arizona Cardinals and a longtime friend.** He has Philly roots which tie back to our days with the Sixers. In addition to being one of the best at his job in sport, let alone the NFL, he is also a great teacher and one of the best all-around people in our business. I was in the middle of a bunch of crisis-type things when he sent the following...

Joe –Hoping this finds you and your loved ones weathering these uncertain and unsettling times OK.

I know you like stuff like this so passing along the video below was posted simultaneously this AM by the 5 pro sports teams in Arizona. (Suns/Mercury/Diamondbacks/Cardinals/Coyotes). It was the idea of Cardinals VP/Broadcasting & Digital Tim DeLaney who coordinated w his counterparts at the other teams. Tim put this together from his dining room table while working from home.

Thanks for looking at it and hoping that things return to normal for all of us soon!

I didn't get the chance to look at the link until later that night as I was compiling the pieces for this week's newsletter which comes out Sunday. **When I did...amazing.**

I had never met Tim DeLaney and only came to know a little about him in several email exchanges that followed. What I do know is that he is a great storyteller, and the reaction to the piece, done with vision and hustle in just three or four days, was not just an emotional reminder of why we love sport; it is a hallmark narrative that has resonated more positivity than anything created in weeks, and will set a pretty cool standard for all those who will follow...and judging from reactions of those who saw it in the past 24 hours...there will be more emotive pieces coming.

But wait. There's more. In my exchange last night with Tim...a suburban Philly guy who played football at Kutztown University...I was able to explain to him why this video spoke to me directly; and how it ties to challenges overcome and stories realized of the past.

Our niece Katie is seven months pregnant, a nurse at a hospital on Long Island and keeps going into work because the facility is overrun. She refuses to miss a day. Her husband is a fireman in Brooklyn and hasn't missed a shift and they have a two year old daughter. My nieces husbands name is Connor Geraghty. His father Edward was a battalion chief who was lost on 9/11. Connor waited several years after he graduated from Sacred Heart University before he could join the NYFD.

He graduated top of his class. Their son when he is born in May or early June will be named Edward. Again they are our heroes. We never forget them.

But wait. There's more. I called Tim Wednesday to get some additional details as to how the piece came to fruition, starting with an idea last Friday while on his living room couch, followed by several days of emails and calls with the other area teams to garner footage and ideate, followed by a remote voiceover session of the script by v/o specialist Chris McCann from his home in Alabama, followed by an edit not in a studio but on his kitchen table, and a final coordinated distribution on Tuesday morning by all the participating teams on social...**all producing an award worthy journey for all of the country, not just for Arizona.**

But wait. There's more. In the video you see a young girl with her mom leaving the hospital. That is Tim's daughter Anna, now age 11. Anna you **see spent two YEARS in isolation herself** following a battle with cancer, which makes the tribute to the healthcare workers even more poignant, and makes the video even more noteworthy.

It also gives us what great stories often do. Perspective. The words and images preach patience and celebration, and if Anna can endure her own exile and my niece and her husband can selflessly give like thousands of other healthcare workers and first responders and delivery people and cashiers, can't we use the pause for good as well.

It's not easy. It's not by choice. It's frustrating, but it is manageable for most, especially those of us not dealing with health or massive financial issues yet.

So there you have it. The backstory is sometimes better than the story itself, although this time I think they feed each other. A thoughtful email led us down a path we didn't expect, much like to led an award winning content creator to produce a video that will speak to millions.

Pretty wonderful this business and this life, no?

You never know where you go. But the ride. Man, the ride.

Hang in there, every day forward is getting us closer to the end of this and when we are there, thank all of those who helped get us there. The heroes are all around us. **Just watch the video again.**