

Protagonist Films' James Bartolomeo Directs Web Film Series for Pennsylvania Tourism

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PHILADELPHIA, June 19, 2009, --- *The Peter Arthur Stories*, a new web-based film series directed by James Bartolomeo of Protagonist Films, Baltimore, for the Pennsylvania Tourism Office and Philadelphia agency Red Tettemer, follows a man on a road trip through eastern Pennsylvania as he attempts to recapture a slice of his youth...or to be more precise, a slice of shoofly pie.

The first episode finds Arthur in a job interview when a question has him hearkening back to a fond childhood memory, being in a roadside diner at the age of 12 and having a piece of Pennsylvania Dutch sweet treat shoofly pie served to him by an attractive waitress named Meg.

He's obsessed over that pie and the ruby-lipped Meg ever since and now he's inspired to act on that obsession. He blows off the job interview, buys a motorscooter with sidecar and takes off on a road trip through Pennsylvania to find Meg.

Along the way, he has a series of hilarious adventures in the four six-minute webisodes, including nearly getting bayoneted while caught up in a Civil War reenactment in Gettysburg.

Pennsylvania derives much of its tourist business through people from neighboring states on weekend getaways, and the web series (which can be viewed at www.pastories.com) is squarely aimed at them.

"We're celebrating that road trip mentality, jumping in the car and having fun, where the journey is as important as the destination," said Steve Red, chief creative officer of Red.

Toward that end, the webisodes showcase the state's sylvan back roads, quaint small towns, historical settings and colorful characters. "It's a wonderful way to show off the state," said Bartolomeo. "You know those soporific tourism spots that are shot in slo-mo and feature generic actors riding horses and happy kids playing on the beach? This campaign is kind of the opposite of that."

Part of what makes the series so appealing is its absurd sense of humor.

Bartolomeo, who co-wrote the scripts, has a particular taste for incongruous juxtapositions. "We shot the Civil War sequence in Gettysburg as if it were a scene from a period film, but when the camera turns around, it finds four tourists on Segways watching...because it's only a reenactment," he recalled.

Pennsylvania Tourism is promoting *The Peter Arthur Stories* in a big way.

Giant billboards promoting the series have been hung from numerous buildings in midtown Manhattan including Madison Square Garden.

Red Tettemer also hired street vendors to hand out slices of pie. Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell declared a "Shoofly Pie" Day in the state.

There is also a sweepstakes tied into the web series offering a chance to win a weekend getaway in Pennsylvania.

Scripts for the webisodes were written by Bartolomeo, Red and Red Tettemer colleagues Todd Taylor, Matt Lanzdorf and Michael Barker.

Joe Mosca produced on behalf of Protagonist Films.

Richard Bonds is executive director of the Pennsylvania Tourism Office.

Bartolomeo, whose background is primarily in directing 30-second TV commercials, relished the opportunity to create and direct multiple six-minute web episodes, and found it good preparation for even longer work. He is planning to direct a feature film, based on the R.A. Nelson novel entitled *Teach Me*.

