

About Director James Kicklighter

Spending the first eighteen years of his life in Bellville, Georgia, population 123, James Kicklighter has become a multi-award winning writer/director whose work has been recognized by the world's press, including The Hollywood Reporter, The Times of India, Film Courage and FilmInk Australia. Kicklighter is currently in post-production on two films, *Angel of Anywhere* and *The American Question*.

Angel of Anywhere is the story of an empathetic stripper who plays therapist to the many damaged clientele and co-workers who frequent the popular Anywhere Bar. The cast includes Briana Evigan ("Step Up Movie 2: The Streets," "Sorority Row"), Ser'Darius Blain ("When The Game Stands Tall," "Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle"), and introduces Axel Roldos as Angel.

The American Question, his new documentary shot across the United States, examines personal values systems to understand the partisan divide in America, cutting below politics to find the common ground that can be the foundation for coming together. The film is being produced with a wide range of thought leaders across the cultural spectrum and recently began editorial with Carlos Puga, the Emmy-award winning producer of MTV's "True Life," SXSW Jury Award Winner and Sundance Award Nominee.

He recently directed the debut advertisement for *We The Future*, a new organization established by 2008 Obama for America Field Organizer and former Lyft executive John McBride, arming supporters with new tools that leverage social networks and digital communication channels to mobilize their friends and communities in elections.

His first feature film, *Desires of the Heart*, was released theatrically across India in November 2015. *Desires* follows the journey of Dr. Kris Sharma (Val Lauren) as he leaves a budding romance with an artist (Alicia Minshew) in Savannah, GA for a marriage arranged by his parents in Rajasthan, India, where he discovers centuries old secrets that may determine the fate of his destiny. The film was an official selection of numerous festivals across the United States and around the world, including the Cannes Marché du Film and was the winner of Best Foreign Film at the Los Angeles Femme Film Festival. Film Threat declared that *Desires* "matches its narrative's expansive ambitions with gorgeous visions that turn both Georgia and India into almost permanent states of postcard-friendly imagery." The Independent Critic said it is "both intelligent and fantastic...[challenging] both heart and mind with a story that is culturally grounded, somewhat mystical in nature, and yet psychologically insightful."

Previously, Ain't it Cool News said of *Followed*, his adaptation of the Zombie short story from Hugo Award winner Will McIntosh, "[is] an entirely new and refreshing take on the zombie genre, directed with a delicate and gentle hand, [it's] the most unexpected horror surprise seen in quite a while." Fotogramas, one of Europe's leading film publications, stated that "[*Followed*]... return[s] the genre to progressive social commentary."

His critically acclaimed documentary *Digital Edition*, about The Atlanta Journal-Constitution's transition from print to digital as they operate in a new media environment, is now streaming on Amazon Prime and was an official selection of the 2017 Atlanta Film Festival, an Academy Award qualifying event. Marcus Jones of Crushed Celluloid raved, "Kicklighter's direction has a kinetic pace to match its subject matter, but always keeps everything on a very human level...[*Digital Edition*] covers an important topic that I don't feel has been given much thought in media."

He was the Film Director for Hillary Clinton's 2016 Presidential Campaign in Virginia, directing content featuring Sen. Tim Kaine, Sean Astin, Lena Dunham ("Girls"), Kate Walsh, ("Grey's Anatomy") Bellamy Young ("Scandal"), Constance Wu ("Fresh off the Boat"), Miley Cyrus, Olympic figure skater Michelle Kwan, former secretary of state Madeleine Albright, amongst other public, private and political figures. Additionally, he is revising his first book, the biography of famed entertainment publicist Bobby Zarem, and shopping the coming-of-age screenplay *Escaping Bellview*, featured on The Black List, SpecScout, Slated and most recently, named to the Top 50 in the 2016 International Screenwriters' Association Fast Track Fellowship.

James is developing several films with a southern voice for producers Richard Saperstein (*The Mist*, *Se7en*), M. Elizabeth Hughes (*Short Term 12*, *Girlfriend's Day*) and Beau Turpin (*Beneath the Leaves*, *Counterpunch*), including *The Perpetual State of Georgia* from Casey Nelson and Kate Murdoch (*The Last Treasure Hunt*) and *Erk*, a biopic about legendary college football coach Erk Russell.

Outside of entertainment production, Kicklighter produces the ad campaign for the National Student Leadership Conference, profiling the most influential leaders in America, including U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Head of the National Institutes of Health, Co-Chair of the Republican National Committee, Director of Operations for the U.S. Peace Corps, amongst others. He also volunteers with AMBITION, a Los Angeles-based program that teaches entrepreneurial skills to low-income students, many of which become first-generation college graduates.

He serves on the Advisory Board for the Department of Communication Arts at Georgia Southern University, his alma mater, where he was recently chosen out of over 30,000 living graduates to be listed on the inaugural “40 Under 40 Alumni” for “impact in business, leadership, community, educational and/or philanthropic endeavors.”