

James Kicklighter, Los Angeles-based filmmaker

Director James Kicklighter spent the first eighteen years of his life in Bellville, Georgia, population 123. Since then, he has gone on to become a multi-award winning Los Angeles-based filmmaker. His work has been recognized by the world's press, including [The Hollywood Reporter](#), The Times of India, [Film Courage](#) and FilmInk Australia.

Current Work

Angel of Anywhere is the story of an empathetic stripper who plays therapist to his many damaged clientele and co-workers. *Angel of Anywhere* stars Briana Evigan ("Step Up Movie 2: The Streets"), Ser'Darius Blain ("Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle"), and introduces Axel Roldos as Angel. Streaming on multiple platforms, including Amazon Prime, Vimeo and YouTube, *Angel* has screened at over a dozen global festivals, including the Oscar qualifying Hollyshorts and Sidewalk Film Festivals, winning Best Narrative Short at the 2018 Macon Film Festival. The film was distributed domestically by Hewes Pictures on ShortsTV.

Kicklighter recently produced the directorial debut of youth advocate and novelist Jim St. Germain (*A Stone of Hope*), *Skin*, now in post-production. The short film is a modern-day exploration of skin color and identity in society. Starring Philip Smithey ("Switched at Birth"), Elizabeth Ferrera ("Lethal Weapon"), Kahyun Kim ("American Gods") and Danny Trejo (*Predator*, *Machete*) *Skin* will be released in early 2019.

He is currently filming *The American Question*, a new documentary examining personal values systems to understand the partisan divide in America. It cuts 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. *The American Question* recently began editorial with Carlos Puga, the Emmy-award winning producer of MTV's "True Life." Carlos is also a SXSW Jury Award Winner and Sundance Award Nominee.

Previous Work

Los Angeles-based filmmaker James Kicklighter's first feature, [Desires of the Heart](#), was [released theatrically across India in November 2015](#). Kris Sharma (Val Lauren) leaves a budding romance with an artist (Alicia Minshew) in Savannah, GA for a marriage arranged by his parents in Rajasthan, India. There, 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 most recent [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. 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 for [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.

Coming Up Next

Director James Kicklighter 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.

His screenplay *Escaping Bellview*, was featured on The Black List, SpecScout, and slated. Additionally, it was named to the Top 50 in the 2016 ISA Fast Track Fellowship.

Philanthropy

Director James Kicklighter volunteers with [AMBITION](#), a Los Angeles-based program that teaches entrepreneurial skills to low-income students.

Additionally, James serves on the Advisory Board for the Department of Communication Arts at Georgia Southern University, his alma mater. He was recently chosen out of over 30,000 living graduates to be listed on the inaugural [“40 Under 40 Alumni.”](#)

He was selected for “impact in business, leadership, community, educational and/or philanthropic endeavors.”