

C-47 Magazine

Interview with FahTru Media's Keith Bolden

for January 2009 issue

C-47: Thank you Keith for talking with me. This is one of the few times that I am not interviewing a filmmaker but someone that deals with television. How do you describe what you do?

Mr. Bolden: I am the president of FahTru Media. Currently, we provide content to the Los Angeles based Global Broadcasting Company for broadcast on their network presently in Europe but eventually in Africa, South America, and Asia also.

C-47: How did you get started?

Mr. Bolden: The Network is owned by Mark Geragos and Carol Angela Davis. You may recognize Mark as the attorney that represented Michael Jackson in that child molestation case a few years back. I met Carol through a mutual friend of ours, Kurtis Blow. Mr. Blow is one of the first commercially successful rappers and a pioneer of hip hop. Back in March of this year Kurtis called me and asked me to look over a contract for him. From there he asked me if I could talk to the party wanting the contract with him. My background in contracts is really marginal, I have done a few things in music, managed a few artists and things like that but not to the extent of looking over broadcast contracts. I called Kurtis' contracting party and said that I was calling on Kurtis' behalf, and that's when I met Carol Davis. We hit it off right away and there was a chemistry between us and even though I didn't have broadcasting experience, we discussed different concepts, things she wanted me to develop and one of those things was the **Brother 2 Brother** show which was supposed to be a cross between a male version of **The View** and **Dr. Phil**. However, in the final production it doesn't look anything like **The View**, male or female version, though there is still a little **Dr. Phil** element. We went from one time-slot on the network to over 18 and we are struggling to fill those slots. So, if any of your readers have 13 episodes of just about anything that isn't X rated I'd really like for them to get in touch with me ASAP.

C-47: Is this domestic broadcasting?

Mr. Bolden: Well, Global Broadcasting Company is a cable network. They are launching in Europe and from Europe they will expand into Africa, South America, and Asia. The satellite launched November 15th and it takes a few weeks to align. I'm certain before Christmas they will start programming.

C-47: Will we be able to see shows here in the States?

Mr. Bolden: It's launching on European cable, but all of the shows that we are producing or co-producing will be viewable online at FahTru.com and each show has its own website as well. 12.9 million homes have already pre-subscribed to the network in 17 countries throughout Europe and, as I mentioned earlier, will eventually branch out to other continents. We're promoting the websites on the shows and promoting the shows on the website. Thus, giving our sponsors a tremendous value and allowing viewers to see the shows no matter what country they're in.

C-47: How much time is allotted for each slot?

Mr. Bolden: The slots we have are 30-minutes and an hour. 24-minutes of actual content, 6-minutes worth of commercials and 48-minutes of actual content and about 12 minutes of commercial time. The slots we have vary from 24 to 48 minutes. And, recently we got a green light for a 2-hour slot. We plan to present an independent movie every week in this slot; we're working with Goddess Productions on this right now.

C-47: Will the network be translating your programming to fit whatever country they broadcast?

Mr. Bolden: No, the network will not translate the programming. This is an all English language cable network with American-made programming. This is an American content network. Every channel, every show has an American theme.

C-47: So the broadcast viewer will tune into this cable network that contains programming that you have supplied?

Mr. Bolden: Yes, my company FahTru Media and a handful of other domestic content providers. It's a voyeur style of programming that gives the viewer a glimpse of American culture without the major networks' filters. The channels cover everything from health and finance to religion and hip-hop.

C-47: Now FahTru Media is a production company and provider and working with Global Broadcasting Company to provide them with programming content?

Mr. Bolden: Yes, we are producing some of the content, some of it is 100 percent FahTru Media productions, and some of the programming we are co-producing and working with outsourced production companies.

C-47: FahTru Media is based here in Houston?

Mr. Bolden: Yes, we are based right here in Houston. We were basically a mom and pop operation, more pop than mom. Now, our relationship with the Global has played a big part in our current growth and development.

C-47: How did you get into this area of television?

Mr. Bolden: It was an incremental process. We started off as an Internet marketing company. We were doing everything from web-based applications and web-development to event coordination and the full spectrum of design and layout to print and electronic media. I also had a liaison service that was dealing with the Asian-American communities and businesses. I was in an eclectic mix of marketing services. Then I started to do some things in film. I got a call to work as an Art Director on a low-budget film here in Houston starring a popular rapper Mike Jones. It was a film by legendary local producer Greg Carter entitled **American Dream**. They asked me to work on the set with the Art Director, which I had never done before. The third day I was on the set, the Art Director, was not there and they asked me to take over. I immediately went home and Googled “Art Director” to see what they did and the next day I came back like Scorsese. LOL. I was ready! Fortunately, I also had great people like producer Shawn McElveen; director of photography, Keith L. Smith; director D-Reck to keep me on point. Most importantly, I had a wonderful understanding and supportive wife to make sure I took the trash out no matter what time I came home from shooting! LOL!

That lasted a few weeks and they kept reducing my budget for what I had to provide, but I was still able to meet what they were looking for as far as design was concerned. Then, a few weeks after that, I was the Art Director for a film for a radio personality here in Houston, Jim “Jimbo” Kovacik from KBXX 97.9 The Box of the **Madd Hatta Morning Show**. He and Joseph Johnson, together formed the production company One 2 Many Writers, wrote and produced a movie called **Soul Searching**. Which by the way won several local awards and is currently doing the world film festival circuit. So with the work I did with **American Dream** I got the reputation of being able to do a lot with a little bit of money. That’s attractive to producers. This experience parlayed into music videos where we did the parody of Beyonce’s “To the Left-To the Left” with Money Black and Barlow called “To the Right-To the Right”; the radio and club favorite from Lil’ Wil “My Dougie”; and the Trinidad dance hall king, Chronics “Touch U”. These led to other ventures, including writing our own features and of course to my deal with Global Broadcasting Company.

C-47: How has working with the broadcast network affected the other projects you were working on?

Mr. Bolden: Once we got TV deal with Global it immediately changed our primary direction. We have several scripts that we are developing, such as the action feature **Fatal Reward**. We had a dialogue with parties at Fox Searchlight and SONY Pictures before the Global deal, now that project as well as several others are pretty much on hold while we strive to meet our broadcast deadlines. One exception is a film called **Hellstorm**. **Hellstorm** has taken a life of its own because of current events. Keith A. Smith wrote this script about a serial killer who kills people during a hurricane in Galveston. He wrote the script about two years ago. Hurricane Ike hit in such a timely way, at least for the progression of this project, and we are motivated to assure the immediate production of this film. The reason I bring this up, is that as important as this project is, even this film takes a backseat to what we are doing with television. Television is dated. If you don’t have content ready at a specific time and a specific date,

you don't go on the air. When that clock ticks down to the second and if you don't have anything to put on the air, you are in big trouble. With film, you can have a release in, let's say January, but if you are not ready you can move the release date up to March, it's no big deal, but with television you have to have something done at a specific time and at a specific date. Also, it is easier to promote a film on a television show than the other way around

C-47: What do you think about this opportunity to provide worldwide TV programming?

Mr. Bolden: You know with the opportunity we have been presented with these global television broadcasts, and with Europe not only being the foundation that we are building on, but Europe is the launching pad for Global and for us, as well. The content that we provide will be available to a world market. This type of opportunity is something that we are excited about, it's something that we don't want to squander, we want to offer up our best products and we want to secure our places with this network and establish a reputation for not just providing quality content but timely content that meets our production deadlines. This is the biggest challenge we are facing right now. And, for FahTru Media, it's a once in a lifetime opportunity for a small company to truly have a positive and substantial global impact.

C-47: Assuming this all works out are you planning to move your company out of Houston?

Mr. Bolden: Not at all. We can do all the production programming right here. So there is no need to leave. The network wants programming that shows off American culture and trends. So we will always want to be based in the States and hopefully here in Houston. Houston is a city with a wonderful future and I want FahTru Media to be a big part of it.

C-47: What do you think about the Houston production market?

Mr. Bolden: Houston, right now is on the verge of becoming a media center, almost like Atlanta became with CNN maybe in a different type of vehicle or structure. Media, entertainment, and production as a whole is poised to explode here. Here in Houston we have quite a few things in our favor. Also, there is talk about turning the Astrodome into the world's largest sound stage. These are valid talks that have a pretty good chance of succeeding. If that happens, along with the upcoming industry friendly revision to the state tax codes, as the youngsters say, "Game Over" Houston could be the new "Hollywood South". Sorry about that Shreveport!

C-47: Where do you think you are at right now?

Mr. Bolden: Despite the obvious challenges of meeting demands on several levels. I like where I'm at. I kind of feel like someone just gave me a billion dollar check on a Friday night and the banks don't open until Monday. LOL! If we can just get through the weekend we'll be all right! Sure, I wish it were Monday already, but it's coming. In a few months we will be receiving the advertising revenue from the shows and that stream

will allow us to nurture our other projects. Also, it will allow a few of us to take a much needed vacation!

C-47: I take it that your programming is high-quality?

Mr. Bolden: Of course! FahTru's programs' concepts are great and ready for the domestic market as well. Some the shows we have scheduled for broadcast are **Brother 2 Brother** the male TV magazine hosted by local actor El Guilory and featuring celebrity interviews by Kendrick "KD" Smith, who was also recently featured in your magazine, Stacie Valley, and Ludi Muse. From Las Vegas we have **What's Next? Reality After the Reality Show** with Schatar Sapphira of MTV's **Flavor of Love** and **Charm School; Caribbean Vybez** which highlights the best in Caribbean music and culture; **Street Songs** is produced in the San Francisco Bay area and is a really fresh look at all urban music, fashion, and technology; we have **Hidden Histories** which is an action filled history re-enactment show; and relationship expert **Nancy Pina's Right Relationships**. Earlier I mentioned the independent film show, **Off the Reel**, which is another Goddess Production. Also from Goddess, we have **American Rocker** and **Poetry Lounge** featuring some of the best Houston area artist. We also have about 7 or 8 other shows in production or post production too. Shows like **Talk 2 US** with Houston' own, the beautiful and gifted, Portia Gant. There's **Extreme Golf TV** which is like golf meets the WWF. **American Soul** is soul music past, present and future; we're actually casting for a host of this show. **Sound Trac** is a music rating show kind of like **Siskel and Ebert** but more fun. Yes, we have high quality programming. From a production stand point most shows were shot in HD. Some were shot with the Red One cameras; which is several times greater in resolution than regular HD. We use first rate sound techs that use Sennheiser audio equipment; so we don't take risk on sound. Post production features the latest editing technology used by some of the best broadcast editors in the business. So, Yes! All of our programming is high quality in content, cast, equipment, production, and post-production

C-47: What are FahTru's relationship goals when it comes to production?

Mr. Bolden: We are looking forward to a long term relationship with this network just as h we are looking forward to a long term relationship with the production community here in Houston. Our goal is here and we are working toward providing long term production jobs right here in Houston, Texas USA. These are weekly television shows. We want to give people full time jobs in production right here in Houston.

C-47: Do you have any advice for those coming up and wanting to follow in your footsteps?

Mr. Bolden: That's a very important question and so often you hear more talented people than me say, "Never give up! Never give up on your dreams!" Well, I am not going to give that advice. Some dreams are worth giving up; especially in place of new and better ones. My first advice would be to love people and like things; not the other way around. Then I would say find out where opportunity lives then go there and knock.

However before you try to find “Opportunity” on MapQuest, make an honest assessment of your situation. Be practical, yet appreciative, about wherever you are in life. I think that if you take care of this moment and you do your best at whatever it is you are doing right now, you will take care of three things at once: You will take care of yesterday tomorrow, and today. Doing your best right now guarantees you a wonderful past and a greater future. Cherish the moment you are in and make the best of whatever you have, wherever you are, and whoever you’re with. Remember the happiest people don’t have the best of everything they just make the best of everything. Do your best and let God do the rest.

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