



FILMMAKER KENNEDY DUNNING EMPHASIZES AFRICAN AMERICAN EMPOWERMENT

SAMIRA BARNETT

Contributing Writer

Kennedy Dunning, an Atlanta-based filmmaker and screenwriter, uses film to tell stories. Her work aims to improve African American women's public image and change individuals' own perceptions of women of color in society.

Dunning discovered her passion for filmmaking at a young age. She was always obsessed with storytelling as a child, performing skits in front of her family and making short trailers using the iMovie app. However, it was her high school experience that sparked her interest in film. She realized how the negative stereotypes of African Americans were perpetuated in the minds of the white students at her predominantly white high school. Through film, she hoped to change people's perceptions of African American women by conveying a message that genuinely reflects the empowerment and independence that black women embody.

"I started realizing how visual humans are, like we learn from images," said Dunning. "I wanted to take that responsibility in creating complex and accurate stories that truly reflect specifically the black female experience. I wanted to change the world to make it a better place for black women."

Malcolm X once said: "The most disrespected person in America is the black woman. The most unprotected person in America is the black woman. The most neglected person in America is the black woman." This quote inspired her most recent film, *How Hair You*. She began making this film two years ago at the peak of the pandemic, as a sophomore at Spelman University.

"I was on social media and I was noticing how a lot of women, black and white, were equating letting themselves go to letting their body hair grow," said Dunning. "I didn't think that was letting yourself go because it is a thing that is natural that grows out of your body."

"So, I called my feminist study teacher, and the film was kind of born from there," Dunning continued. "Just growing up with lighter skin and darker hair I have always been interested in body hair."

In addition to her recent recognition in August at the Bronze Lens Festival for *How Hair You*, she has received various scholarships and awards for her work.

"I got a Chevrolet scholarship for an essay describing why filmmaking is important to me and a year ago I won the

pitch competition by Macro and Beats by Dre with my passion project called *The Hallway*," said Dunning. "The film I am probably most proud of is *Woody Spike Stuck in the Spring*. It was the first student film ever selected for the black women film network short film festival."

She continues working on the script for *The Hallway*, a story dedicated to black girls using their voices to speak about issues that are important to them. Her other films include *I'm here*, *Hands Down*, *The Suburban Princess*, *Peridot*, etc. Dunning is also working on a pilot for a new TV show. "The world tries to make black women feel so small and I don't want black women to ever be afraid to be themselves, express themselves and achieve whatever they want," said Dunning.

Her goals for the future include becoming a director, screenwriter and film critic. Her internship with Macro has provided her with numerous networking opportunities, as well as connections with Netflix and HBO. She intends to continue working at Macro as an assistant to one of the executives after graduation, as well as at Netflix or HBO in the future.

"You must have tough skin to be in the film industry, listen to your mentors and take advice on what they did to make it to where they are but shape it into what's best for your life," said Dunning.

To stay updated on new film releases and to view some of her films visit her website at kennedydunning.squarespace.com

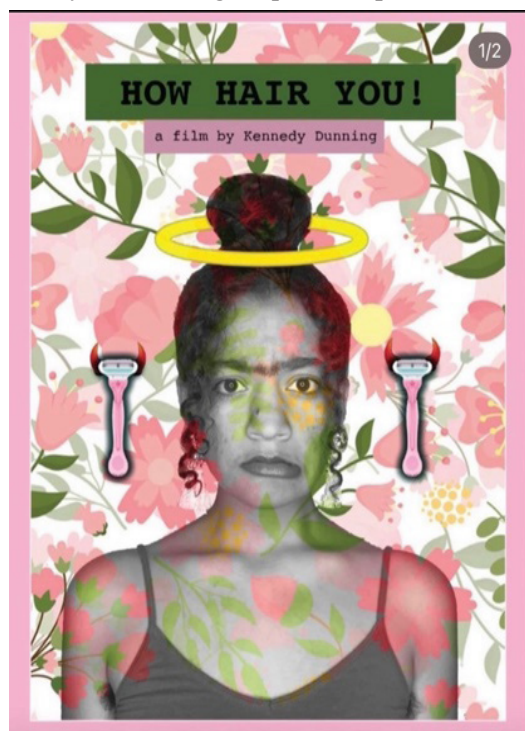


Image courtesy of Kennedy Dunning

THE STRANGER THINGS EXPERIENCE COMES TO ATLANTA

BRIANNA WELCH

Contributing Writer

The Upside Down and Demogorgons at Pullman Yards take over Atlanta from October to January. The experience contains plenty of interactive activities and fun sets to visit.

The 45-minute experience kicks off with guests lined up and in groups based on color code. The Hawkins doctors lead the guests through the Hawkins Lab. The guests were told they were there for a sleep study but in reality the guests are there to be experimented on to see if they have secret powers. The cast from the show have pre-filmed footage that goes along with the audience's trip through the Hawkins lab and there is even a 3D part where guests can use their newly unlocked powers to help the characters fight the Vecna and Demogorgons.

After the interactive experience, guests get to go to the area

called the "Mix-Tape." This room has unique merchandise, Hawkins's very own Scoops Ahoy, Argyle's workplace called Surfer Boy Pizza, a bar with themed drinks, a retro Family Video, a scavenger hunt, props from the show on display, the Byers' home, various photo ops and an arcade.

The fun did not stop there. The actors are extremely committed to staying in character, which makes the experience authentic and entertaining. They invite the attendants to play Dungeons and Dragons, encourage dancing to the 80s soundtrack playing and get you involved with the other stations within the Mix-Tape. The actors made the experience truly worth the money.

Since I had the VIP ticket, all of the food and drinks were free and unlimited. The drinks were definitely unique with eccentric flavors and ingredients. The menu named drinks after the characters, well-known sets and popular sayings from the show such as "Friends Don't Lie," "The Hopper" and "The Starcourt Special." They also offered free mocktails to all guests that were delicious.

The merchandise is high qual-

ity and a few of the items could not be found in stores or on the internet. The item that caught my attention the most was the Eddie Munson jacket that had his character printed on the back of it, which I knew had to be rare.

The 80s arcade games available were Pac-Man, Dig Dug, Joust, Space Invaders, Missile Command and Centipede. I played a lot of these games for the first time and I loved them, especially Space Invaders and Pac-Man.

The event ended with receiving free goodie bags that contained a reusable Stranger Things themed cup and a figure of the character Dustin Henderson that doubled as a bluetooth speaker. The whole environment and actors do an excellent job of making the guests feel as if they time traveled back to the 80s and are a part of the cast. Overall, this experience was intriguing, very interactive and a guaranteed good time for fans of the show.

The experience is open for the rest of November up to February on Wednesdays-Fridays from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays from 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Average VIP ticket prices for an adult are \$99.90, VIP tickets for a child between ages 5-17 is \$75 and VIP group bundles are \$85 a person. On average, general admission tickets are \$59.90 for an adult, \$45 for a child between the ages of 5-17 and \$51 for a standard group bundle of 6 or greater.

This experience is wheelchair accessible and contains flashing lights which may affect guests who have epilepsy or other photo sensitivities.

The Stranger Things Experience is truly a fantastic and one-of-a-kind event that I would advise anyone to attend before they head back to Hawkins in February.

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Image courtesy of Netflix

LIVING WEST

UWG’S BCM STUDENTS REACH OUT TO THE COMMUNITY

JANNETTE EMMERICK

Feature Editor

UWG’s Baptist Collegiate Ministries (BCM) students hosted a booth for The Great Exchange at the Carrollton campus on Oct. 27.

“The Great Exchange’s main mission is to advance the Gospel and spread more knowledge about who Jesus is and to have more conversations with people and kind of gauge their interest,” said Emily Grissett, the community missions leader for UWG BCM. “Just to let them know that Jesus loves them.”

The Great Exchange is a predominantly protestant Christian ministry partnered with BCM and interdenominational CRU and Navigators ministries which visit college campuses. Their main approach when visiting a campus is to host surveys and engage the community with thoughtful and civil conversations about spirituality and beliefs.

According to the regional coordinator Nathaniel Caouette, The Great Exchange visits both local churches and local college campuses in the Southeast US, reaching around fifty schools so far.

The Great Exchange has partnered with BCM at UWG, but the booth itself was led by the campus’ own students, making it a

primarily student run organization.

“This past year has actually been kind of weird for us because we used to have a campus minister up until this year,” said Grissett. “And then a lot of stuff has changed and shifted. So now it’s mainly student run, but we have a bunch of local pastors that come and help and they’re our strategy and support team.”

Still, UWG BCM provides a community for UWG’s Christian students to get connected.

“At 7 p.m. on Tuesdays, we do the worship service and we’ll have the band come and play and we have a local pastor come and preach. Then we do small groups after that,” said Grissett.

Additionally, every Thursday at 5:30 p.m UWG BCM meets for a night of games as well as providing free dinner to the attendees.

“The game night is really just for fellowship and for people to come and hang out and get free food and learn more about the organization,” said Grissett.

“It’s just really a great opportunity to get to know other college students and make new friendships,” said Grissett. “As a freshman, it was pretty intimidating for me to come into college and this organization has really helped me to find my place.”

While BCM has “Baptist” in their namesake, the campus group is open to Christians from any denomination or anyone curious about the group and their faith.

“A lot of people in leadership are willing to talk,” said Grissett. “Even if we don’t share the same beliefs, our main mission is to love people. We really just want to share the love that Jesus has shown us.”

BCM provides many ways to share that kindness through volunteering and giving back to the Carrollton community. Some of their community missions included visiting a nursing home and last month, they helped with a local food pantry.

“[This month] we’re going to a homelessness awareness gala,” said Grissett there’s going to be an auction [at the Gala] and on Nov. 10 and we’re going to help out with the auction items and just make sure everything runs smoothly like with sign ups and passing out food,” said Grissett.

Officially titled the Impact Gala, the event is hosted by Impact West Georgia, a non-profit organization that strives to help those in need, including the homeless, illiterate and those struggling with healthcare access and any other debilitating challenges.

“We also offer different opportunities as well,” said Grissett. “[We do] bible studies and community missions. A lot of the leaders [in BCM] are super helpful.”

More information about UWGBCM can be found through their instagram @uwgbcm or their website at uwgbcm.org.

“Everybody and anybody is welcome to come to BCM,” said Grissett.

UWG’S SPOOKY SAFE TREAT 2022

DOUGLAS SALTER

Contributing Writer

UWG’s big Halloween event, Safe Treat, has come and gone and was a big success. Every spooky season, The University of West Georgia opens their campus to the entire Carrollton community for a trick-or-treating evening. Hosted by Housing and Residence Life, Safe Treat took place between Love Valley and the Campus Center on Oct. 27 from 6pm. to 8p.m.

Campus organizations were allowed to register to set up a table. Organizations were instructed to keep it family friendly for all. There were also two small contests going on throughout the evening. The first contest was pumpkin carving judged by President Kelly. The awards were the spookiest, best activity, most original and best overall pumpkin. The second competition was on which organization had the best table.

“Being part of the Carrollton community is so special, so to see our students get to welcome the community on campus truly makes this event stand out among all of the events,” said Cassidy Nelson, UWG Housing and Residence

Coordinator. “The community gets to see the talents of our students through the carved pumpkins, then get to interact with our student organizations and departments at the tables. It’s truly a showcase of what it means to be part of the UWG and Carrollton Community.”

The event would not have been as successful without the preparation going into planning the event. Organizations have to be registered and volunteers have to sign up. Kona Ice catered snow cones and a DJ kept the crowd going with upbeat tunes. UWG’s community coordinated and collaborated to pull off this annual event.

“More than 80 departments, teams and organizations registered to have tables this year. This was the most tables we’ve had in the last four years,” said Nelson. “The Residence Hall Association (RHA) really takes the lead on

our committee efforts. We start in August with reserving spaces, marketing, making the run of the show, event mapping and deciding if we want to add any new elements. This year we added the Kona Ice truck for the first time based on the committee’s recommendation.”

The event truly shined this Halloween with around a thousand people from all over the community enjoying the festivities. Safe Treat was able to swing for the fences and they hit a big home run with the Carrollton Community.

“Next year I would love to see us utilize more of Love Valley or the Campus Center with inflatables, a not so spooky movie or a concession stand with Dine West,” said Nelson. With more than 700 children that came through check in stations this year, we can find ways to engage them in other activities to help with waiting times.”



Photo: Douglas Salter, The West Georgian



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LIVING WEST

UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA HEALTH EDUCATION HOSTS CLOTHESLINE PROJECT

ANNA ROBERTS
Contributing Writer

The University of West Georgia Health Education Department hosted the Clothesline Project in Love Valley Oct. 24-27. This project is to raise awareness about domestic violence, sexual assault and intimate partner violence. During the days of the event, students, faculty and staff were able to decorate a white shirt with their story or a message to others and have them displayed on a clothesline around Love Valley.

“We believe that every month is Domestic Violence Awareness month,” said Omarion Smart, Health Educator and Peer Mentor at the University of West Georgia. “You should never ignore victims or diminish their stories and we should encourage those who have and have not come out and share their experiences.”

The white shirts were decorated with a variety of colors, with each color representing a different group of survivors. White represents those we have lost due to violence. Yellow represents battered and assaulted victims. Red, pink and orange represents survivors of rape and sexual assault.



Photo: Anna Roberts, *The West Georgian*

Blue or green represents survivors of incest or child sexual violence. Purple represents those attacked due to gender identity or sexual orientation. Finally, black represents women who are attacked for political reasons.

“We’ve had a really large turnout,” said Smart. “The students on campus really showed how much they support each other and support our victims. My favorite part of this event is seeing all of the messages lined up next to each other. Seeing the student body come together to support those who have been wronged, or are still being wronged and haven’t spoken out.”

This project provides UWG’s community a new way to speak out against violence. It gives survivors a new avenue to share their story, and allies a new way to show their support.

Hanging each t-shirt up in a

visual display allows viewers to see just how many students have been impacted by sexual and domestic violence. The event provides insight into the statistics that oftentimes are ignored or looked over.

“We are here to give a voice to the voiceless and encourage survivors to share their stories,” said Smart.

The Clothesline Project aims to increase awareness of the impact of violence and abuse, to honor a survivor’s strength to continue and to provide another avenue for them to courageously break the silence that often surrounds their experience.

If you or someone you know have experienced sexual or domestic violence or abuse please reach out to Patient/Victim Advocates on campus at (678)-839-0641 or the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-(800)-656-4673.

REVIEW: BEE AND PUPPYCAT REVAMP ON NETFLIX

ALEX AMOS
Webmaster

Netflix introduced the famous Youtube start-up Bee and Puppycat on Sept 6 this year, garnering an abundance of critically-acclaimed reviews.

Netflix picked up the 16-episode project in 2020 and planned its release for this year. The show was originally created by Natasha Allegri and released in 2013 on Youtube with ten short episodes.

The show begins with Bee, the main protagonist meeting her loyal and mischievous friend, PuppyCat. The two go on many different adventures together throughout the revamped series while seeing old faces from the original Youtube episodes along the way, giving the show a poignant comeback.

The reboot also expands on developing some of the characters, including the Wizard family, who serve as prominent figures in the story. An example of this was when the show revealed that Merlin Wizard was having a child with Toast, another supporting character, who was used for comedic relief in most scenes. This reveal was a significant surprise because Toast was never portrayed as having serious thoughts or feelings in the original Youtube series.

By reintroducing past characters, the show incorporates old plot themes from the original series while maintaining a perfect balance with the updated storyline. The new series essentially resets the storyline to the beginning of Bee and Puppycat’s initial interactions to cater to a new audience. The reboot dives much deeper into the main story of the two protagonists by displaying fundamental dynamics between them that were not yet introduced, including why Puppycat is secretly connected to Bee before they even meet.

The Netflix series also has beautifully updated animation to stun its original and

new audiences with vibrant colors, unique character designs and more fluid facial expressions. Because of small touches like these, the show felt more whimsical and the outstanding reviews corroborate this with IMDb rating the show with an 8.2/10 and Google users rating the show with 5/5 stars.

Though there was full backing for the show, several issues arose while trying to release the new episodes. The largest setback occurred in mid-2020 when the CEO of Frederator Studios, Fred Seibert, leaked all of the new episodes of the show on his Vimeo account. Seibert had meant to post the episodes privately but it was too late to mend his mistake. The creators worried the show would lose its steam due to the leak. However, even with the major setback, the show still hit its targeted goal of numbers within weeks of the Netflix release.

Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed this masterpiece of a show not only because of its excellent storyline and animation but also because of its tenacious fanbase and ambitious team of creators. The show has been years in the making but it now has the accreditation it deserves.



Image courtesy of Netflix

ENTERTAINMENT

**TAYLOR SWIFT DROPS
NEWEST ALBUM,
“MIDNIGHTS” TOPPING
CHARTS IN FIRST DAYS**
BRITTANY MERSFELDER
Editor-in-Chief

Multiple genre artist Taylor Swift dropped her latest album at midnight on Oct. 21. The album is a form of soft pop, a genre Swift is no stranger to. Her fanbase known as the ‘Swifties’ expected *Midnights* to be a rock album as Swift has hinted at that genre before. Still, the fanbase adores her little subtle hints at the new music being released.

Before *Midnights* released, Swift began a TikTok series called “Midnights with Me.” These videos revealed each song title one by one out of an old fashioned lottery ball machine. She released one song title every other day leading up to the album’s release. The album has been three years in the making and fans are thrilled with what she was able to create.

The first song on the album is titled “Lavender Haze.” The song has a quick tempo and a nice beat to it. The phrase ‘Lavender Haze’ is a slang term from the 1950’s

meaning to fall in love. It is an all encompassing love glow, according to Swift. “Lavender Haze” talks about how Swift fell for her current boyfriend and that she wants to stay with that feeling.

The third song is the next one that stood out to me; it is also my favorite on the entire album. This song is titled “Anti-hero.” The mood of the song is very dark; it talks about how Swift self-loathes and feels like she is always the problem in her relationships. Swift chose “Anti-hero” to be the song that hits the radio first. The song is relatable to a host of fans and has begun to go viral on platforms such as TikTok and Instagram Reels.

One gripe I do have about the song “Snow on The Beach feat. Lana Del Rey” is that Del Rey does not have much of a part in the song. Her voice is drowned out by Swift; Del Rey is barely in the song. The song is beautiful, don’t get me wrong. I just believe that Del Rey needed more of a part than what she was given.

Another song I had an issue with would be “Vigilante Sh**.” This song did

not stand up to what I had expected from Swift. The entire song is about getting revenge yet trying not to start drama around your relationships. She’s explaining that she knows when to end relationships with people regardless of what the relationship status is. Personally, the song is very lackluster. It has only a beat with no background music behind it. The songs that she writes that include only a beat are songs that feel lazily composed.

The only other song that I truly enjoyed is “Mastermind.” The song is cute and gives a lot of fairytale love vibes. Swift discusses how she met her current love and that it was destined to happen. She plans so far in advance to make anything happen; it is never accidental.

Overall the *Midnights* album did not fully stand up to my expectations. It has a couple hits but only one I will listen to outside of the album itself. Swift outdid herself with the easter eggs and the secret code words throughout the past three years. This album would be great for anyone who enjoyed the 1989 era.

Midnights



- Lavender Haze
- Maroon
- Anti-Hero
- Snow On The Beach
- You're On Your Own, Kid
- Midnight Rain
- Question...?
- Vigilante Shit
- Bejeweled
- Labyrinth
- Karma
- Sweet Nothing
- Mastermind

Image courtesy of Spotify