

Bright Future for Film School Dropout: Patrick Cotter Launches YouTube Career with Road Trip Across America

fanfest.com/2017/11/13/film-school-dropout-patrick-cotter-launches-youtube-career-with-road-trip-across-america/
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November 13,
2017

FAN FEST NEWS



To most people, dropping out of college might seem like an irresponsible move and an undoubtable recipe for disaster, but for Patrick Cotter, an up-and-coming filmmaker from Australia– it was the complete opposite. His decision to leave University to pursue a more unconventional career path might have been the one move that was essential to kickstart this 18-year-old's true passion: captivating audiences with great storytelling.



Photo: Patrick Cotter

The Melbourne native recently found his creative voice through shooting and editing short installments of his trip across America via YouTube. The series is called *My Biggest Adventure*, and chronicles his time spent away from home, exploring the United States, and going on wacky adventures with a friend he met from the Internet. The entire series is raw, real, and refreshing.

I know what you're thinking, "hey, I recognize this dude," and you most likely do... if Cotter looks familiar, well, that's probably because he has a well-known sister who stars in that post apocalyptic series on The CW called *The 100*, but let's get one thing straight– being Eliza Taylor's little bro **is not** the most interesting thing about Cotter, not by a long shot. Though he might have gotten a leg up in the industry because of his famous sister, and her willingness to help cultivate his passions, there's so much more to Cotter than him being 'that celebrities sibling.'

Let's take you to the beginning for a moment: Cotter made the decision to go to film school

because he wanted to further his YouTube career, and gain the proper skills to apply to his dreams of becoming a content creator on the world's largest video-sharing platform. Unbeknownst to him, he wound up hating his film courses that were originally meant to ignite his passion, not squash it.

"I didn't make videos for two months since starting the course, instead of helping me, it sent me in a downward spiral and I was going into a really dark place that I had never been before," he admitted. "It was something that I wasn't used to because film was something I had always wanted to do and I really saw myself in that path. Going into a course that's meant to push you further and it's done the opposite was actually weird."

Instead of pushing himself to develop an aversion to his chosen career path, Cotter decided to take action! He enlisted the help of several friends overseas, including his sister Eliza, and after a lengthy process of saving up money and planning the details, he set out on a journey across America to tap into his true filmmaking potential. And boy, was it the rude awakening that he needed.

"It made me focus on my skills and helped me gain a more refined process, not to mention real world experience. I was forced to teach myself everything I needed to know. All the editing and filming, everything."



Photo: Patrick Cotter

But despite overcoming his own obstacles when it came to discovering his abilities, he did have a teeny bit of virtual help, along the way, and ended up harnessing YouTube as a resource, of course. Peter McKinnon, one of many YouTuber's Cotter attributes his success to was someone he would watch and take pointers from. From video advice to photography, another passion of Cotter's, McKinnon, whose video tutorials are fun, friendly, and informative, gave Cotter the confidence to explore his own stylistic nuance.

"He's somebody that has really taught me a lot and it's something that I point out." he said. "My videos from my trip to America, the way that my editing has progressed, I've accounted to what I learned from him."

With creative influences such as the Fine Brothers, Casey Neistat, and Philip DeFranco,

Cotter is a fan, like many of us, of many of the original creators from when YouTube first launched back in 2005. Add notable, and often outrageous travel bloggers like [FunForLouis](#) and you've got the fixings for filmmaking success. But success isn't what's driving this young man to the YouTube scene... inspiring others is.

"One thing I always spread is appreciation for life, and in my videos I never try to focus on negativity, drama, and bad news," said Cotter. "It's always finding the happiness and the good moments in things and just having fun adventures. I see in the comments a lot, people saying that I've put a smile on their face, or made their day better. That's all I can ask for, really."

Making people's day better is something that Cotter has always hoped to do along this journey. Even if his channel doesn't inspire someone to make their own videos, but maybe guides them down another path of self-discovery, well then, to this charismatic bloke- it's all worth it. In addition to support online, Cotter has an extremely supportive family to lean on. Cotter credits his start on YouTube to his sister Eliza [Taylor] gifting him a camera to properly record videos on, the leg up he needed to get started in the industry.

"It was hard being a 15-year-old kid who didn't have a job trying to get a camera that's so expensive. In order to be taken seriously, I wanted a microphone and lighting. It's just not the easiest thing to acquire at that age," he admitted. "It was really the push that I needed, and once I started working, I was able to buy more stuff. Tripods, microphones, a new GoPro."



Photo: Patrick Cotter

Two years later, all of his hard work really did pay off, his financial situation improved, and he finally got some good momentum. But despite working his butt off to afford equipment, there still seemed to be that elephant in the room. Was there a lingering shadow over his head, as he tried to make his own way in the world and break away from his sister's undeniable fame? Cotter says "yeah, there's a shadow." But he doesn't feel like it's done any damage. He added "for our family, it's ride or die."

"The way that my family works is it's always a support system, it's not just like I just live there and stay there. We always help each other," he boasts. "Even Eliza, she really has been the biggest supporter since she was the one who got me my first real camera when I couldn't afford it."

Cotter mentioned that in the beginning his sister would tweet out his videos, not because he asked her to, but because she was proud of the work he was trying to accomplish. He really looked to her for her opinion while he was producing new content. She has always been there for him, he stated, to be that sounding board, and any insight from the notable actress was welcomed.

"It's always been a big help," he said. "She was the one that first got in contact with the Fine Brothers and since they knew I was her brother, and a big fan, they told her to get me over to L.A. Yes, it's opening more doors for me. It's helping me along my path and extending that for me a lot more. I don't feel like it's really hindered anything, but it hasn't completely skyrocketed things. I would say it's that little push to make sure things go a little smoother."

Luck would have it that the Fine Brothers were huge fans of *The 100*, and Cotter got a chance to star in an episode of Teens React, a popular segment on the Fine Brothers channel. He had been watching them since he was 11-years-old, and was finally sitting on the iconic set he had seen thousands of times before.

"I was shaking the whole time, I was so nervous," he said. "I'd been waiting all my life to be on Teens React and I knew nothing about the challenge we did. But it was still really cool because I got to meet Benji, who is an amazing guy. He sat down with me and we just talked about YouTube and his podcast. He asked me advice on how the audience might react and how to tweak it. And I was like you're asking me, what, huh, what's this. Just sitting in that chair was just a really transformative experience. I've been sitting in my chair at home watching on my computer screen for five or six years and now I'm the one being watched. It was just a complete mind-swap. It was a really cool experience. Not everyone gets to do it, but I was so thankful for it."

Cotter adds "I've taken the boost from Eliza, and have gone my own way with it." And even though a lot of fans might see celebrity siblings play off each others social medias to gain the upper hand on one another, Cotter prides himself off of not doing that.

"When it comes to other things, I do it my own way. Getting views and connecting with people online and networking myself," he said. "Not just network with her network. Meet people by commenting on their videos, tell them I enjoy their stuff, and talk to people in DM's and get to know them and build a social media relationship with other creators. I look at it this way, Eliza gave me the push, and I made my own trajectory."



Richard Harmon, *The 100* and Patrick Cotter.
Photo: Patrick Cotter

Cotter was steadfast during over conversation that he has no intention of leveraging his sister's fame for his own personal, or professional gain. But what about plans to star alongside his star-studded sibling? Well... most likely not. Though Cotter has no desire at this

time to star in front of the screen, perhaps only for his Vlogs, he has high hopes of working behind the scenes in a big TV or Movie production. Despite being more comfortable behind the camera, Cotter comments "it's not totally out."

"A sketch series would be really fun because I've grown up watching sketch comedies," he grinned. "It's in my DNA to goof around and have one-line punches. It would be a lot of fun to be able to explore that, but behind the camera is where I've become much more comfortable, especially stepping further behind because when I first started it was all in front of the camera but since doing the trip I was always behind the camera and not really talking as much. It was nice, I became a lot more comfortable just filming."

What's next for the photographer/filmmaker? Well, for starters, he wants to get to every country in the world by the time his life is over, yes, you heard it right... every country! Plus he has high hopes of one day being able to run his own small travel team.



Photo: Patrick Cotter

"My goal is to run a series where I'm traveling around and documenting and showing aspects of the world that people don't really get to see," he said. "There are too many shows where it's the same major hot spots and tourist attractions, that you've seen ten times. Being able to show the viewers every country in the world in a different way, that's what I want to do. Showing all the smaller spots that people don't get to see and the small communities and the sides of countries that aren't represented as much."

When Cotter traveled to India that was a highlight he took away from his trip, going past the slums and seeing the beauty that has yet to be uncovered to the common tourist. "India had really nice people, it was just really energetic and so colorful," he said. "For me, as soon as we stepped off the plane it was a complete cultural flip. It's creating a series like that, where I can provide that kind of difference for people's preconceived view of a country. Offering a different reality. That's what's next."

You can keep an eye on Cotter's film and photography progress by checking in with him on social media:

Twitter: [@PatrickCotter98](#)

YouTube: [PatCotterFilms](#)

Facebook: [Cottography](#)

Instagram: [@PatCotter98](#) | [@cottography](#)