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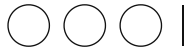
NEWS

# 'Keep doing': Transgender filmmaker talks about overcoming hate



Jill Moon, Staff Writer

June 21, 2023



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Filmmaker Colton Crawford moved to Granite City three and a half years ago and said he began transitioning to their "true self" two years ago. Crawford will begin filming this weekend in Granite City for their "In Living History with Colton Crawford" series that focus more on small-town history than small-town haunts.

Colton Crawford



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GRANITE CITY – With zero irony filmmaker Colton Crawford said it's "all about love."

Crawford, a transgender woman, simplified a potentially complicated discussion about transgender life, or at least their life.

Crawford moved to Granite City three and a half years ago on kind of a whim.

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"I pointed to a place on a map, and landed on Granite City, Illinois," said Crawford, who grew up in Blackfoot, Idaho, where their mother, Brenda Baumgartner Stanley, an author and former news anchor, still lives.



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Crawford immediately started film projects in their new hometown, where they still love living today. Currently, Crawford and their creative and life partner, actor and historian Anthony Sellers, originally from St. Louis, who they met while they were making "Under the Setting Moon," are revamping Crawford's webseries, "My Haunted History."

The series has been renamed "In Living History with Colton Crawford," focusing more on small-town history than small-town haunts, except during the planned second episode about Alton.

And it reflects Crawford's filmmaking in a new experience.

Sellers said he identifies as, "Hey you," in characteristic humanitarian humor. Sellers, a scholar in history who graduated with a bachelor's in history from the University of Missouri St. Louis, specialized in modern war. He brings another dynamic to the upcoming web series, Crawford said.

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Crawford and Sellers will start shooting in Granite City this weekend about the city's histo firefighters, featuring a collector's original Granite City fire truck driven by the first firefig

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series' first guest also is opening a private museum in a reconstructed space in all the majesty that first responders deserve. It'll be a few months to find out more about it, so stay tuned.

"I tell a lot of people that I do what I do because I wish there was someone who I could see who does what I do when I was growing up," said Crawford, in their second year of transitioning, who is a writer, director and producer. "I do what I do to bring people together. The trans community has gotten a bad rap, finger pointed for using hard drugs and such. I don't do that. I want to show that trans women are not that."

Crawford praised their physician at Barnes-Jewish Hospital in St. Louis for her expertise, compassion and support.

"She's very lovely and helpful," Crawford said.

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When Crawford launched their career in Granite City as Colton Baumgartner, they had not yet experienced an event that solidified their confidence to transition.

"I was still figuring things out myself," Crawford said. "I had kind of a death scare and after that I wanted to be my own true self.

"Society is finally waking up to reality. My own father would say, 'Act like a boy,' when I was a child. There was a lot of suppression. Now I act on the outside what I felt on the inside.

"I would have done this a long time ago, but I wasn't strong enough."

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Crawford acknowledged depression setting in when they began hormone replacement therapy. The hormones were adjusted and specific medication was prescribed to offset those hormonal side effects.

Crawford and Sellers said part of the backlash against the trans and drag communities is due to the internet.

"There's a lot of connectivity on the internet and people put bad stuff out there and people think it's reality," Crawford noted.

Sellers said it's a diversion from real issues, such as poverty and climate change.

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"It really comes down to greed and money," Sellers said.

"Power and control of the masses," Crawford said. "It takes society to preserve how progressive as humans that we are."



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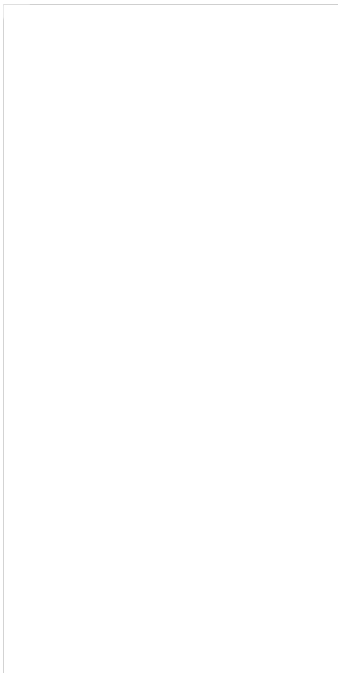
But Crawford gave the Illinois legislature credit. While other states are trying to ban, and/or make trans life more difficult and drag shows get permits, nothing like that is happening in Illinois.



"It comes down to being afraid, a lot of fear-mongering," Crawford said about the current c  
"The higher ups have a controlling-the-masses narrative around the country. Especially w  
thought everyone was like him. It's all about controlling the masses.

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"That's why we got to keep doing what we're doing — keep doing," Crawford said.

"We're all human," Sellers said. "It's not worth hating and killing."

Crawford described themselves as conservative when it comes to allowing transgender athletes to compete in traditional gender team sports.

"I rely on science," Crawford said. "As a transgender person, going through what I'm going through right now in transition and having knowledge about the biology of the body, there are scientific biological facts if you have already gone through puberty and transition. So I'm conservative on that. I have that knowledge."



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The first episode of "In Living History with Colton Crawford" will be the Granite City session, the second about Alton.

"A lot of movies that I've created, brought in the LGBTQ-plus community, but also just a normal storyline," Crawford said. "Everyone are just people, however we identify."

"Under the Setting Moon" screenplay novel is in paperback at Amazon right now, and Crawford recommends it as a companion to "Under the Setting Moon" when it starts streaming as a short film in a few months.

"It's a cute love story about conjuring the devil to bring back the love of your life," Crawford said. "Through perseverance love changes all."



Written By  
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