

Although 1st & Hope is a skateboarding film, it appeals to anyone who embraces the moment and enjoys the unexpected turns in life. - Palmer Brown

Brian Lotti best described *1st and Hope* when he said that he “wanted to treat a few skateboarders as if they were small boatmen traveling through the mountains and rivers of those classic Chinese ink-and-brush-landscape paintings,” something akin to skaters flowing through the urban fabric of a bustling city like water down a stream. The fluidity he speaks of has all but vanished modern society, as well as most modern skateboard videos, that showcase trick after trick, and nothing but the trick, with the skating finely spliced together and meticulously edited. The *fluidity of the journey* that Lotti craves differs from the sensory overloads that are commonplace in videos and the media. As the motion plays out on the screen, there is no overall theme of flow, just a bunch of carefully edited sequences in no linear order, leaving the question of “how did the skater get to the point of the trick?”

Most people don't stop to think about the means to the ends.

Revisiting a theme can sometimes be tricky, and in *Color 4.2*, we touched on the concept of the *1st and Hope* project, a skateboard journey that was best described as *the quality of the roll*, as well as the desire to “PLAY the city as if she herself was an instrument like a guitar”. But over the last few months, the movie has morphed from its humble original idea, to a movie that's concept has traveled far and wide by word of mouth, partly because of the fact of the concept of the “roll”, an idea that draws the attention both old and new, as well as the fact that it will also be released alongside a new album from Beck, who wrote the original music for the *1st and Hope* film.

While more a traditional skate movie than a glitzy video, *1st and Hope* aims to deliver a view of skateboarding from a skateboarder's perspective. Starting the film off, Brian Lotti and Kenny Anderson meet up at *1st Street* in Los Angeles, with the end goal of making it to Staples Center before sunset. “Throughout their journey they are joined by some of the most influential skateboarders of yesterday and today,” says associate producer Palmer Brown, “together they tell a story which reveals the spontaneity and artistic flow of skateboarding as we watch the skaters bridge the gap between the true originators of modern street skating (Eric Dressen, Matt Hensley, Ray Barbee and Brian Lotti) to some of the most creative and innovative talents of recent years (Kenny Anderson, Mike Carroll, Shiloh Greathouse and Paul Rodriguez).”

With so many people actively involved in *1st and Hope*, pinning down a person to pick their brains about the subject can be a never ending hunt, like standing over a barrel of fish and pulling the trigger, hoping that you nail something before your time is through. Co-producer Palmer Brown was the fish that I managed to snare, and in a quick interview of concepts and ideals, I posed to him questions about how the movie came about, the concept of the roll, and the overall feeling of awe from skating with so many of the greats of street skating, past and present.

Color: Brian Lotti's words of wanting to “PLAY the city as if she herself was an instrument like a guitar” seem really true to this film. Did it feel that you were “playing

the city” from the start of filming through the long editing process?

Palmer: Yeah it did. You know before we started filming and during the off time of filming, Lotti and I would skate around downtown a lot. Sometimes while filming we would get caught up in one area trying to get the shot right. We would spend a whole day there. Lotti always had a strong vision about what he wanted and I saw it. So the "playing" part was real natural to us. It was amazing to see the transitions flow so well during the editing process and actually capture the feeling Lotti is talking about with that statement.

Color: The skaters that joined you ranged from old school pioneers to modern day pros. What was the vibe like as you skated from place to place?

Palmer: That was probably the most amazing part of filming this movie. It was so different with each person. They all individually put off there own vibe. It was always so positive. Each day was a new day and every session was so unique. Like skating flat with Paulo one day and then having Dressen fly by you doing 100mph the next. I remember having to do a few extra takes with Ray Barbee because I was watching him the whole time instead of skating. Like I said before, I think we all share the same passion for skateboarding. We all skate differently and we all come from different generations, yet we were all able to get together for the soul purpose of skating.

Color: Logistically, was it able to get a lot of interest for people to join you in the shoot? Were they stoked on being able to just cruise around and just skate?

Palmer: It was hard for some. Everyone has other projects they're working on and their own schedule in life so we would try to plan accordingly. I think we all share that same passion for skateboarding. So as the film was talked about more and more you kind of got sucked into the story. It takes you back to when you first started. It seemed like everyone had a lot of fun and was happy to do it.

Color: So what skate videos inspired you when you were growing up?

Palmer: Old contest videos. It was cool seeing all the pros in one place skating together. Seeing Gonz skate. Powell videos. Watching Ray Barbee push. Anything with Lance Mountain because he always looked like he was having fun. Streets on Fire. Neil Blender, Natas, Julien and the soundtrack. It's weird how certain people and parts just stick with you throughout all these years.

Color: Do you hope to see more videos like this in the future, a return to the more traditional skate videos?

Palmer: Not necessarily. I think every film should represent the way they look at skateboarding. Not everyone sees it the same. There are a small amount of skate videos already out there with a similar vibe. The companies I'd expect to portray skateboarding like this will most likely continue to. As long as they do... I'll be happy.

1st and Hope is the first installment from The Way Back When Project from Elwood, a series of films that aim is to showcase the history of street skating and its global progression