

[Sam LeCompte narrating]

So there are some really great shots of him just like chopping up cheesesteak and stuff like that and cooking caramelized onions.

[Narrator]

That is Sam LeCompte, a video intern with the Reporting and Documentary Storytelling Program at UVM. In our intern series, we tell the story of Sam and his internship journey. Sam, who grew up in Rye, New Hampshire, studies Film and Television Studies and English in the College of Arts and Sciences.

[Sam LeCompte]

So I got involved with the CAS internship program just off a whim, like I saw an email and they were like, "Here's some opportunities for you, look into it." Got in contact with Richard Watts, who directs the Center for Research on Vermont.

[Narrator]

Richard is also the coordinator of internships in the College. Sam picks up the story.

[Sam LeCompte]

He was able to set me up with this position basically doing short-form video work, which is what I'm gonna try to do professionally. So, kind of like on the grounds, meeting local people, talking about local towns and such. And what it's been for me is a great outlet to create but also curate a portfolio of work that's on professional sites.

[Narrator]

Which brings us back to those steaks frying on a grill. Sam and Richard launched a project to tell stories from a small Vermont town—a town with a hair salon, a coffee shop, and a very good sandwich shop. Here is sam again.

[Sam LeCompte]

One story that I actually really enjoyed was this one we did. It was part of our Hinesburg series. It was about Paisley Hippo, which is just this local sandwich shop. And this guy, this manager Johnny, when we went in, he was a very open guy, but he was kind of pretty, like, colloquial in that sense.

[Johnny, manager at Paisley Hippo]

I'm Johnny from Paisley Hippo. I'm the manager here. And, yeah. We're a sandwich spot here in Hinesburg. Everybody loves this spot. You know, we're known for it.

[Sam LeCompte]

It felt like I was capturing a piece of the town when I was talking to him. It kind of honed into me, like, why we were actually doing it. Like, Johnny, I think, felt like he was given this platform that he'd never had before to, like, talk about why he felt his business was important to the town.

And I felt like it was just a really genuine reaction. And so, in that interaction, Sam felt like he was really capturing the larger picture of the Hinesburg stories.

[Johnny, manager at Paisley Hippo]

I like how we're, like, really kinda small and, like, just, like, family-owned. And, just like the community that, you know, that we get to see every day, come and get our food. It's just—we just get to build a relationship with them. It just makes it really nice.

[Sam LeCompte]

It felt like we kind of put together this image of Paisley Hippo when it finally came out. That one-minute-and-a-half piece that we put together really felt like, "Oh, you're gonna feel like this when you walk in." So that's what I really liked.

[Narrator]

And in this day and age, it's these short stories that people watch that can bring home a message. Sam first started making videos in high school.

[Narrator fades out, new narration begins]

[Sam LeCompte]

When I got into the video work, it was just because I was like, "Oh, I used to do this when I was a kid." Like, I had fun just making funny little videos.

[Narrator]

But over time and through his studies at UVM and multiple internships, Sam has moved to trying to tell deeper stories with more substance.

[Sam LeCompte]

Film is like a much more visceral medium than audio to some extent. But like with film, you're—it's attacking a lot of the senses. So it's about telling, like, a story that's gonna matter, right? It's not about just making fast food for consumption, you know? Like, sometimes what we do in video and storytelling—and audio storytelling—is we have to tell the hard stories because, otherwise, they won't get told or those voices won't get heard. What I'm doing is really important to the lives of certain people. It may even bring about larger political change that, like, we're even unaware of in the process of making those videos.

[Narrator]

For more on the College of Arts and Sciences internship program, Google "internships at College of Arts and Sciences" or contact Richard Watts at UVM.