

Filmmaker, Alfred University alumnus visiting campus to screen, discuss works

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Trent Cooper, filmmaker and 1993 Alfred University graduate

ALFRED, NY Alfred University alumnus and filmmaker Trent Cooper will be on the Alfred campus Oct. 20 to screen some of his works, including his most recent, a documentary series that examines the intersection of race and high school basketball in rural eastern Kentucky.

Cooper is a 1993 graduate of Alfred University and a veteran filmmaker. He helped direct the Emmy Award-winning documentary, *All or Nothing: A Season with the Arizona Cardinals* for Amazon Studios. The series which won a 2017 Sports Emmy for Outstanding Serialized Sports Documentary -- presented an inside look at the lives of Cardinals & players, coaches and owners over the course of the 2016 National Football League season.

On Friday, Oct. 20, at 7 p.m. in Holmes Auditorium, Harder Hall, Cooper will screen and discuss some of his work, including his newest project, *Us Against the World*, a documentary series produced by Uproxx Studios. The event is free and open to the public.

A 10-part series, “*Us Against the World*” follows the lives of a handful of promising high school basketball players (all racial minorities) who re-locate to Lott & Creek, KY, to play at Cordia High School for coach Rodrick Rhodes, a former NBA player. Hoping to escape the violence of their inner city hometowns in New York City (one player is a refugee from Africa) and build a future playing basketball, the youngsters find themselves subjected to racial intolerance.

Rhodes, an African American, was hired in 2011 to coach Cordia, and five years later led the Lions to a state championship. Later that year, the school board opted not to renew Rhodes & contract and some believe race played a factor in the board & s decision. Most of the documentary follows Cordia & s players as they attempt to defend their state title without their coach on the bench.

View the trailer of [“Us Against the World”](#)

Cooper earned a bachelor & s degree in political science from Alfred University in 1993. After graduation, he took a job as a marketing assistant with a production company in Tampa, FL, where he stayed two years before moving on to a corporate communications firm in Denver, CO, producing regional television commercials.

Five years later, Cooper, who had long dreamed of making it in the movie business, moved to New York City and started his own production company. He produced commercials for the likes of DirectTV, the National Football League and ESPN.

Cooper's big break came in 2002 when *The Comeback*, a four-minute short film he wrote and directed, starring noted Hollywood actor Samuel L. Jackson, aired during ESPN's ESPY Awards show. The film, about a 55-year-old man in search of redemption on the Pee-Wee football field, was a hit at festivals around the world, winning the award for Best Short Film at HBO's U.S. Comedy Arts Festival.

The Comeback caught the attention of Hollywood film producer Alan Blomquist (*What's Eating Gilbert Grape*, *Cider House Rules*, *Chocolat* and *Walk The Line*) and in 2006 Blomquist chose Cooper to direct *Larry the Cable Guy: Health Inspector*.

In 2010, Cooper directed Kevin Spacey, Camilla Belle and Johnny Knoxville in the comedy-drama *Father of Invention*. After serving as a director on the set of the *All or Nothing* series, Cooper directed a pair of documentaries for NFL 360: *Going Global: Odell Beckham Jr.* (2016); and *The Conversation* (2017). The latter followed sports journalist Jeffri Chadiha as he traveled across the country examining the impact of former NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick's national anthem protest.