

Jeff Around Town – April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2025

**Jeff:** Time for Jeff Around Town. I'm in Council Bluffs with photographer extraordinaire Buck Christensen. Buck, thanks for being here.

**Buck:** Thanks for visiting Bad Goods.

**Jeff:** Bad Goods. So, tell us a little bit about where you are then we'll talk about what you're doing at Bad Goods.

**Buck:** Okay, so we're in the Harvester Artist Space, the commercial space, in the epicenter of the arts in Council Bluffs, which includes the Hoff Center right next door.

**Jeff:** Okay, and you have started, along with two other creatives, you've started something called Coffee with Creatives on Saturday morning. It's just sort of a casual meetup, or you want to talk about that and who the other people are?

**Buck:** Exactly right. It's just a casual two-hour hangout with other creatives, me and Annie Bruggenhemke and Dustin Lutz.

**Jeff:** Okay, and what's the idea behind this?

**Buck:** Just to give a space to ourselves and to other local creatives to hang out and kind of escape their normal routine for a while.

**Jeff:** You've been doing photography for a number of years on both sides of the river. For those who have not seen Buck's work, you are well known for... when I think of your work, I especially think of the Bob Carey Bridge. You are the guy who will go out in the middle of the night during a blizzard or a fog event to capture these beautiful, mystical, mysterious photos, like with the old market.

**Buck:** So, I used to kind of consider myself more of like a travel photographer, and I think a lot of landscape photographers do that, where they think of themselves as a photographer of vacations or trips or mountains or oceans, because you know we're in Omaha and Council Bluffs, which is more of a flyover type of labeled place. But as soon as we had our kid in 2011, I still had that itch to make stuff even though we weren't traveling. So, I started to try to figure out what's beautiful about our area, and it wasn't hard to find a lot of places that would definitely interest me if I were here traveling. So, I kind of used that as a springboard to just go find amazing stuff here, and fog and you know moonlight and stormy weather is a perfect backdrop to look at our area in a new way, which is kind of the fun creative challenge for me.

**Jeff:** I love that, Buck. I love what you just said. Like yes, we have this, there's this romance, of course, of traveling, and I certainly love to do that, to visit new places, but to look inward, so to speak, and look at where you are right now in life and where you live and finding the beauty there. The Loess Hills offers beauty.

**Buck:** And I think Council Bluffs has this reputation for being, you know, just kind of this river city, this kind of not very charismatic city, but especially when you get to the east side in the Loess Hills and Hitchcock area and the preserves that a lot of people don't know about, it's wildly beautiful. And you know, with Omaha skyline as a backdrop, that's one of my, I

like to juxtapose those type of scenes where you kind of get this foreground of the natural silence of the hills with the, you know, the dazzle of the lights of Omaha.

**Jeff:** And that's funny you say that because, so if you're in the Omaha side, you don't actually get to see that.

**Buck:** Yeah, that's, it's challenging over there. So, when I'm on the Omaha side, which I grew up in Omaha, so I know Omaha pretty well, I still like to, you know, go to the old market and just kind of capture that whole ambient thing without there being this, this Council Bluffs versus Omaha juxtaposition.

**Jeff:** Yeah, it's one community.

**Buck:** There's this, there's a strange rivalry that I don't think makes a whole lot of sense. We're just divided by a river.

**Jeff:** And we're not even divided by that. You might say that it's what really joins us together.

**Buck:** Yeah, right. And they've, they're literally bridging it so that we all have access to each other. I don't know if it's my mission or my goal to try to highlight all of the... the beauty over here, but it certainly is encouraging when you share something and a lot of Omaha's are like, well, where is that? And you tell them it's Council Bluffs and you tell them it's, you know, uh, Crescent, Iowa. And they're like, wow, that's, that's...

**Jeff:** I look at those photos too. And I think, wait, that was here? Yeah. And that's incredible. So Buck, if folks want to find a coffee with creatives, how do they, how do they find you?

**Buck:** We do have a Facebook page, bad goods. Um, this happens every Saturday, 9 to 11. Um, we're at 1010 South Maine. So bad goods.

**Jeff:** Thanks a lot. Thanks for being on Jeff around town.

**Buck:** Yeah. Thanks for having me, Jeff. Good to talk to you.