



SALES AND MARKETING ROUNDTABLE #278: Elevating Caregivers Through Film & Story with Peter Murphy Lewis

Thank you to everyone who attended our latest Sales and Marketing Roundtable! To provide anonymity during the Roundtable discussion, participants and their communities will not be identified.

ABOUT OUR GUEST

This week on Varsity's Roundtable, we talked with Peter Murphy Lewis, documentary filmmaker and co-creator of [People Worth Caring About](#), a YouTube series that shines a spotlight on caregivers in long-term care communities across the country.

In this conversation, Peter shared how storytelling can reshape public perceptions of aging and care and how communities can use authentic storytelling to better connect with prospective residents.



“Authenticity beats data, beats polished video, beats beautiful people. Real stories and real emotions are what connect with people.” (Peter Murphy Lewis)



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FRESH PERSPECTIVES

- **STORYTELLING AS ADVOCACY** - Peter's documentaries aren't just creative projects—they're advocacy tools that reframe how people see senior living. By spotlighting caregivers, he's helping close the gap between perception and reality, showing the humanity and pride behind the profession.
- **CAREGIVERS AS BRAND AMBASSADORS** - Rather than relying on polished marketing or executive voices, Peter believes trust should flow through caregivers. Their authenticity, warmth, and relatability build credibility in a way no ad campaign can replicate.
- **"HUMAN OVER HOLLYWOOD" APPROACH** - His philosophy of keeping production simple—often just an iPhone and a good story—proves that emotional truth resonates more than cinematic polish. Real faces and raw emotion create stronger audience connection.
- **REGIONAL CULTURE SHAPES CARE** - Through filming in places like Ohio, Kansas, and New Mexico, Peter discovered how culture deeply influences care—from joyful, music-filled communities to those shaped by Indigenous and Latin American traditions of respect for elders.
- **STORY AS A TRUST-BUILDING TOOL** - Peter sees storytelling as a way to "de-risk" decisions for families. When potential residents see genuine care and connection, they stop worrying about amenities and start feeling comfortable with the people behind the community.
- **SIMPLE FRAMEWORK, POWERFUL IMPACT** - His *Before, After, and Amplify* storytelling model helps even non-marketers craft emotionally resonant stories. By showing transformation—personal or professional—organizations can inspire empathy and engagement with just a few words.

LINKS & CONTACT INFO

Peter Murphy Lewis ([Linkedin](#))

People Worth Caring About ([YouTube channel](#))

People Worth Caring About ([Trailer](#))

Roundtable Talk interview with Peter ([here](#))

COMING UP ON VARSITY'S ROUNDTABLE!

Please join our next Roundtable gathering on Thursday, October 16 at noon ET, 11 a.m. CT and 9 a.m. PT. We'll be joined by Hoyle Koontz from The Vectre. He'll share innovative sales tools for your team and prospective residents.

NEW ON VARSITY'S PODCAST, ROUNDTABLE TALK

Agetech is one of the fastest-growing frontiers in innovation, with the potential to transform how older adults live, connect, and thrive. At the center of this movement is Rick Robinson, Vice President and General Manager of the Agetech Collaborative from AARP, who is building a vibrant ecosystem of startups, investors, and enterprises committed to reshaping the future of aging.

In this episode of Roundtable Talk, Rick discusses how the collaborative accelerates startups, drives inclusivity in product design, and helps older adults embrace new technology. He also highlights the promise of AI and embodied devices to ease challenges like social isolation and the caregiver shortage. Check out the [episode here](#) on the Varsity website!





In conversation with Peter Murphy Lewis
Documentarian, TV Host, Podcaster
Creator and host of “People Worth Caring About”

Peter never planned on becoming a documentarian. Just a year ago, he wasn't one. His background is mostly in entrepreneurship and marketing, having launched and sold a travel company in South America a couple of years ago. His shift into filmmaking came after working in TV about a decade ago, then moving to the U.S., getting involved in long-term care, starting a podcast, and becoming a CNA. Eventually, he decided to merge his TV experience with his passion for care by creating documentaries.

Now, he's nearly full-time in content production, with three documentaries scheduled to film in November. Those projects include one about a community bank, another in hospitality, and a third featuring a turnaround ownership group that discovered his work from a previous episode.

He's also planning future seasons of his series *People Worth Caring About*—season four starts in May in Kentucky, and season five begins shortly after in North Dakota. Each season will include seven episodes, bringing the total to 35 across five seasons.



Of all the stories out there to be told, what made you want to do a series about senior living?

There were two main reasons Peter wanted to focus on senior living. First, he's been telling other people's stories through television for about a decade.

The second reason came from personal experience. He grew up seeing long-term care in a very positive light. His grandparents lived in a wonderful nursing home where the caregivers were like family. Some even taught him Sunday school or led his Boy Scout troop. So when he later started working in long-term care as a VP of marketing for an electronic health records company, he was surprised to learn that nursing homes had such a negative reputation in the U.S.

Instead of letting that change his view, it motivated him. He wanted to help shift perceptions by sharing genuine, heartfelt stories from caregivers and communities. Essentially, to show the beauty he always saw in senior living.



Why was it important for you to center the stories on staff rather than residents in retirement communities?

For me, it just made sense to tell the story from the caregivers' point of view. When you show senior living through the eyes of staff—especially CNAs, nurses, or directors of nursing—the audience connects more easily. Most viewers can see themselves in those roles a lot more than they can in an 80-year-old resident's shoes.

I also know that if someone like me—a VP of marketing in a jacket and nice glasses—were the face of the story, people might not relate. I don't look like the folks who work in those communities, or like the residents who might live there, so I'd risk coming off as out of touch. Caregivers, on the other hand, look like the people watching and represent the heart of these communities.

Plus, there are already plenty of stories out there about residents. What's been missing are the voices of the staff—the people who make senior living feel like family. That's the story I wanted to highlight.



Did you notice any regional or cultural differences in how long-term care is delivered across the states?

I definitely saw cultural differences. In Ohio, I visited a lively, mostly Black assisted living community where we danced and sang karaoke—very different from the more reserved, faith-driven homes back in Kansas. New Mexico reminded me of Latin America, with strong family ties and deep respect for elders.

One home there was about half Navajo, and a Filipino therapist had even learned Navajo to connect with residents. The most moving story was from Tony, a Navajo woman rediscovering her heritage through her work and caring for residents as if they were her own family.



How can storytelling like yours be used more effectively to share with prospective residents of communities the wonderful things that caregivers do ?

It really comes down to “show, don’t tell.” Let caregivers tell their own stories—hand them the mic and let their passion shine through. I use a simple storytelling framework I call *Before, After, and Amplify*: who were you before an experience, who are you after it, and how can you share that change with others?

That approach works beautifully in short social clips or longer features because it connects emotionally. For example, before becoming a CNA, I thought caregiving was just for trained professionals. Afterward, I realized it’s something every person should embrace. Sharing stories like that helps people understand the heart behind the work.

And when we tell stories instead of just showing amenities, it helps potential residents and families feel more at ease. They see the warmth, compassion, and commitment of the staff—qualities that make them think, “*I could belong here.*”

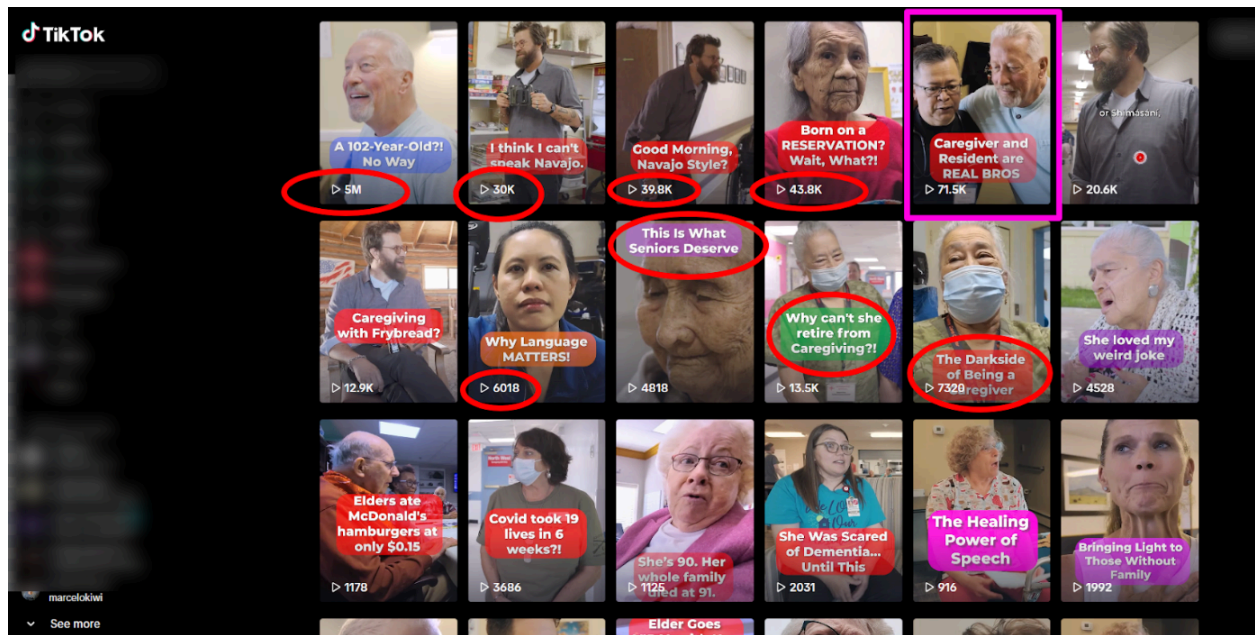


What advice would you give to people who are selling their communities to prospective residents?

You're not really selling rooms or amenities—you're selling peace of mind. What people are buying is the comfort of knowing they or their loved ones will be safe, cared for, and able to sleep well at night. So focus your storytelling on what builds trust.

The best way to do that is by borrowing trust from your caregivers. They're already passionate about your community, and their authenticity naturally connects with people. Don't be afraid to make them the face of your brand.

And if you're telling stories on social media, keep it short and clear—start with a strong caption that hooks people fast, then back it up with heartfelt content that shows what makes your community special.



Peter shared how his team's *People Worth Caring About* YouTube channel, launched just this past April, has grown far faster than expected—largely by focusing on authenticity, frequency, and learning from mistakes rather than chasing perfection. He described the early months as “six months of failing,” but said the results have since been “blowing me away.” His guiding mantra: progress over perfection.

- CHANNEL GROWTH: Launched April 18, 2025, now with roughly 300,000 YouTube views on full-length videos.
- CROSS-PLATFORM DISCOVERY: 22% of total YouTube traffic comes from external sources. Of that, 28% comes from Facebook, despite not having a Facebook account for the series. 6.4% of traffic surprisingly arrives via WhatsApp shares.
- AUDIENCE DEMOGRAPHICS: About 81–82% male viewers in the last 28 days. 75% of viewers under age 34 on YouTube, likely closer to 85% on TikTok.

Peter said the data reinforced one clear message: specific, human stories outperform broad or generic content. Titles that highlight emotion or identity—like “Born on a Reservation” or “Small Town Caregivers”—attract curious viewers who want authenticity.

QUESTIONS

WHAT WAS THE GENESIS THAT BROUGHT YOU INTO SENIOR LIVING AND FOCUSED ON THIS SPACE?

About a year and a half ago, I was speaking at a Nebraska Health Care Association convention when I met the president of their foundation. I pitched the idea of creating a caregiver-focused documentary to help with staffing shortages and improve public perception of senior living.

He loved it, the board approved it, and four months later we were filming the first season with a \$500 eBay camera and my phone. That season is now streaming on major platforms like Amazon, Hulu, and Apple TV—and we're aiming for Netflix with future seasons.

A LOT OF SENIOR LIVING MARKETING IS CENTERED AROUND TELLING STORIES. HOW CAN SENIOR LIVING MARKETERS FIND AND TELL THOSE STORIES?

If you're focusing on resident stories, start with the caregivers who know them best. Ask in a team huddle, "What's the most impactful resident story you've experienced—and why?" Then ask to be introduced so you can capture it firsthand.

When filming, keep it simple and authentic—use an iPhone instead of a polished setup. Aim for *"human over Hollywood."* Have the caregiver join the interview, and tie the story back to your community's mission and values. That way, you're not only highlighting the resident—you're also showing how your team lives out your brand every day and borrowing trust from the caregivers who make it all possible.

HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO TRACK WHETHER PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF NURSING HOMES HAVE IMPROVED SINCE YOU STARTED CREATING THESE VIDEOS?

On our own videos we've seen very little negativity—maybe 5 to 10% of comments. I actually expected 70 or 80%. We made some early mistakes, like setting up our accounts in South America, which limited our reach at first, but even after fixing that, the response stayed positive. I think that's because the videos feature caregivers as the face of the story.

When viewers see authentic people—a CNA from the Philippines or a caregiver joking with a resident—it feels real and human, not like marketing, and that makes all the difference.

IF SOMEONE WANTS TO BRING YOUR DOCUMENTARY CONCEPT TO THEIR OWN STATE ASSOCIATION HOW SHOULD THEY GO ABOUT IT, AND HOW HAVE YOU EXPANDED THE PROJECT BEYOND NEBRASKA?

It's mostly grown through word of mouth—people in long-term care have seen how effective the series is for advocacy, education, and staffing. From there, other industries started reaching out after seeing the clips and getting inspired.

If someone wants to bring this to their own state association or community, they can just reach out. For example, I was recently booked by a home care association to film stories for their advocacy day at the state capitol—short clips they'll use for fundraising and lobbying. I love collaborating on creative ideas like that, tailoring each project to tell meaningful, story-driven messages that support their mission.

CAN YOU SHARE HOW YOU GOT PEOPLE WHO INITIALLY DIDN'T WANT TO BE ON CAMERA TO EVENTUALLY FEEL COMFORTABLE AND WANT TO PARTICIPATE?

We usually collect waivers about two weeks before filming and then a few more on the day we arrive. Around 80% of people agree right away, and most of the remaining 20% eventually change their minds once they see how respectfully we capture things. Out of three seasons, maybe five people have consistently declined.

The key is filming people in a genuine, flattering way—never to make them look weak or uncomfortable. When they sense that, their guard drops. Sometimes I'll even show them a short, beautiful clip of their interaction so they can see how great it looks. That's often when they take off the "no filming" sticky note, sign the waiver, and say, "Okay, I'm in."

DID YOU EVER NEED TO GET PERMISSION FROM A RESIDENT'S FAMILY MEMBER OR ADULT CHILD BEFORE FILMING, OR WAS CONSENT HANDLED DIRECTLY WITH THE RESIDENT?

Yes, in a few cases we did need family or guardian permission—specifically at two facilities, one in Ohio and one in New Mexico. Both were intermediate care facilities for adults with

disabilities, ranging from 18 to 50 years old. Some residents were highly independent, while others were nonverbal or required full support, so those situations required extra consent steps and coordination with families before filming.

YOU MENTIONED THE SERIES YOU HOSTED IN CHILE WHERE YOU SPENT A DAY IN THE LIFE OF VARIOUS JOBS. WHAT WERE SOME OF THE MOST UNIQUE, INTERESTING OR DIRTIEST JOBS YOU DID?

One of the wildest experiences I had was cleaning windows on a 15-story hospital building while strapped into a one-man harness—with nothing but two ropes, a bucket, and a squeegee. I'm terrified of heights, so naturally the crew thought it'd be funny to have me skydive afterward just to keep the fear going.

I've also done underwater welding alongside people who repair boats, wrestled as a *luchador libre* in full spandex and face paint, and even boxed a 120-pound national champion who completely kicked my butt. There were a lot of unforgettable—and humbling—moments like that.