An Interview with Billy Nahn

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at
Time with Tannia
(http://timewithtannia.com)

By:

Tannia E. Ortiz-Lopés

1.) You are a writer, director, and executive producer at Nahnsense.com. All these require creativity, discipline, excellent time management, and patience. Where is your favorite "thinking corner"? How do you balance your private and professional life?

I have several favorite spots depending on sunshine, time of day and current sense of adventure. Shanie and I reside in Fountain Hills, a small, art-friendly community in the State of Arizona, USA. So, often times, I'll end up at our local Starbucks, grab a table, Grande Pike Place in a ceramic mug, and press the keyboard. Other times, I'll opt to be outside in our backyard at a small table.

My personal and professional life is a preferred blend of both. I operate a full-time Airbnb, an entire home with a pool, and find those hours flipping the house between guests as very productive toward thinking about my writings. I enjoy turning over the home. I love this time, and often bring my laptop to sit outside, enjoy my surroundings while I await the linens tumbling in the dryer.

2.) You have a very catchy company name, Nahnsense. Is this a description of your creative world? Areas of expertise?

I had spent many years in the Advertising profession writing and directing Television Commercials. When I decided to go out on my own, I knew having my name in the company would be beneficial. I was also completely aware how crazy the advertising/marketing industry is, so nahnsense seemed utterly perfect. I love to live a creative life. Albeit writing, or in appreciation of the world we

live in, and/or anything alongside my wife.

3.) From 1998-2017 you worked as the Super Bowl Commercial Director. Take us through the process of choosing and assigning the spots through this major national & international event.

My role was often as a writer, director or producer, and often times all three. Super Bowl commercials are perceived as the highest level in our profession. Filming in Los Angeles, with big sets and crews/ crew size was in excess of 50 people. It's an incredible experience and highly, highly rewarding. Many of my best career memories are on "the set" with my best friends who were executive producers, line producers as well as incredible clients.

- **Client contact us** – With GoDaddy, we would receive creative strategy briefs from Brand Marketing Directors and/or the Chief Marketing Officer (CMO).

- **Concept Development** – A team of writers, art directors, account supervisors would usually have several brainstorming sessions. Ideas would percolate to the top. The writers would normally then expand those ideas into several Creative Treatments. These Treatments would be presented to the team.

- **Production length and Turn arount Time** – It is never the same as each project is different. Some TV commercials can be in reaction to a needed offer and need to be turnaround in weeks. Others will be developed over several months. For example, some large budget commercials can be months in the making from initial ideas to a commercial being broadcast.

- **Filming** – Each production has its own set of needs and requirements. Does the concept require location shoots?, like exteriors or specific locations of large home or business setting. Other creative ideas dictate constructing specific sets within a large studio. These sets can be very specifically art- designed settings. Often times studio settings are preferred because you can control all the lighting, design, camera angles and not worry about on-location concerns like crowds, permits and ever changing daylight.

"Super Bowl commercials are perceived as the highest level in our profession" WHY?

Well, the Super Bowl is one of the largest viewed sporting events in the world.

Often times 110 plus million viewers with the cost to air a 30 second spot over 5 million dollars.

The commercials are scene as the best of the best, written by the top ad agencies, top directors and production companies.

It's an honor to have participated in those commercials with GoDaddy.

4.) Can you share with us one commemorate year when you have the odds against you and still you were able to pull it through?

2011. In April, Shanie and I got married on a beach in front of our families. We then, uprooted from the Midwest and moved house and home to Arizona to start a dream job at GoDaddy. In June, Shanie was diagnosed with Breast Cancer. After several meetings with wonderful doctors, specialists, and her parents, we decided on a course of action. It was because of everyone's efforts, love and kindness that we carried on through this ordeal. It became the diamond-hard foundation for our marriage.

5.) Now let us talk about "the author." In 2017 you and your newly wed wife chose to travel to Saint Martin to celebrate your honeymoon during the peak of the hurricane season. If you don't mind me asking, what were you thinking?

Well, the other moniker for that time of year is low season: Less tourists, less hustle and bustle, less costs, a more laid-back island way of life – at least for a few days. ☺ All those factors played into our decision to book a trip. Honestly, we weren't overly concerned about any hurricanes when we departed the States for Saint Martin. It wasn't until a day or so later on the island that things began to surface about that tropical depression forming off the Cabo Verde Islands of West Africa – Hurricane Irma.

6.) In the book summary of your book, "LOVE IN THE EYE OF THE STORM" your experience is described as: "A dramatic true story about being on a Caribbean Island during one of the largest hurricanes in modern history. Love, friendship, survival and gracious luck all come into play during this harrowing ordeal." How did you cope with the devastation surrounding you?

After Hurricane Irma had passed directly over the island, we initially were so busy dealing with all the damage to Villa Haiku/The BnB/ we sheltered at. Every building was severly compromised and our days were filled with salvaging keepsakes, shoring up structures and just trying to survive. It wasn't until 3 days or so later that we were able to venture outside the home property and immediate neighborhood. We were in search of electricity to charge our phones. The neighborhood president was also a principal at a local school and for some reason they still had electricity. He invited us to travel to the school and charge our phones, mosquito rackets and flashlights. On the N7, the main road the circles the island, we were stunned by the complete island-wide devastation Hurricane Irma had done. Everything, and I mean everything with in eyesight was catastrophically damaged. We drove in silence, shocked by what 225 m.p.h. winds can do to homes, business, fauna and marine craft. "How did anybody survive?" was repeated several times on our way to that school. To this day, the haunting images remain in sharp focus.

7.) Do you consider that this experience deepened your love and reinforced your wedding vows?

It most definitely deepened our connection to each other. It was our combined talents, emotions, and appreciation of each other that saw us through this ordeal. We were two as one. Shanie never complained, never waivered, a pillar of courage and strength. We could lean on each other when we needed it. We were so lucky to be sheltering with Alain and Martine. They barely knew us. Took us in. It was the serendipitous blend of us four that kept us strong.

8.) When and why did you decide to write the book? Targeted audience?

When we finally were able to get back to the United States, Shanie and I went over to our dear neighbors. They were having a welcome home party for us and cooking pizzas in their outdoor pizza oven. We were all seated around a big patio table with others seated on the edge of the pool, and I began to retell our plight before, during and after Hurricane Irma. Everyone was astonished by our story. I knew then I had to write it all down.

9.) Lessons learned from this tribulation?

I had no idea what was going to happen after I hit the "Publish Button" on Kindle Direct Publishing. With a week or so, comments and reviews started coming in. A comment, "Shared Experience", resonated deep within myself as well as my readers. Unfortunately/fortunately, many, many people have endured catastrophic events either via mother nature or other forces. When you read, hear or talk with others who have gone through something similar, you quickly learn, your emotions, fears, guilts, appreciations, expectations and even joys are not alone to you. You unknowingly and gratefully become part of a larger community – A caring community. This has been and continues to be the greatest treasure in writing this book.

10.) Where our readers can buy your books?

Paperback and ebook available at Amazon.com. “Love In The Eye Of The Storm”

https://www.amazon.com/dp/0578533375?ref_=pe_3052080_397514860

https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07T5MGTCF/ref=rdr_kindle_ext_tmb

11.) Where our readers can contact you?

Billy@nahnsense.com or on our Facebook page, Love In The Eye Of The Storm

https://www.amazon.com/author/billynahn

12.) A word of advice for those dealing with such “harrowing ordeal.”

Believe… In yourself…in your community…in the kindness of strangers. Believe, because you are way stronger than you realize.

UPDATE: The book won a Gold level award (first place) for the Kos Fetherling International Book Awards/ Travel Category. https://kfbookawards.com/winners/

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