

FIVE WITH A FALCON: Isaiah Manuel, Film and Video Production (COMM '25)

[*Five With a Falcon* theme fades in]

Dominic Iannaco (host):

Alright. Now let's start. Can you introduce yourself?

Isaiah Manuel:

Yeah. My name's Isaiah Manuel. I'm 22 years old from Leominster, Massachusetts, born and raised. I'm a senior at Fitchburg State.

[*Five With a Falcon* theme fades out]

Dominic:

What's your major?

Isaiah:

My major is Communications with the concentration in Film and Video Production.

Dominic:

So why Fitchburg? Like what interested you about it

Isaiah:

Coming outta high school? I wasn't sure if I wanted to go to college. I had always wanted to work for the railroad. It was right after the pandemic. And so it was a weird kind of in-between era where a lot of people, you know, a lot of people's plans were changing, including mines.

And I was looking at local colleges and I found Mount Wachusett Community College. I saw that they had associate's degree in video production. I forget what exactly it was called. But, photography and video were stuff I'd always done as a hobby. And, I liked it. I stuck with it. And then after a year I transferred to Fitchburg State, because I would've had to retake a lot of the classes at Mount Wachusett if I had stayed there and then transferred after two years.

Dominic:

So tell me about your time at Fitchburg State

Isaiah:

Yeah. So, um, to start at Fitchburg State, I wasn't really sure what I wanted to do in the world of video. It was, like I said, it was something I knew that I enjoyed. But I had no idea where I wanted to go with it. And it really wasn't until my junior year that I found what I wanted to do. And it was actually not even through a class. I got the opportunity to work with a producer at GBH to help produce one of their episodes of one of their live shows. And so that was what introduced me to, live television production.

I got to go into the studio and kind of see how the whole thing worked. And I was, that was when I really was like, wow, this is really cool. This is something I think I'd wanna get into as a career. And then, the following semester, I took the multi-cam production class at Fitchburg, and that introduced me to FATV Fitchburg Access TV. And from there I started

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Isaiah (cont'd):

really getting involved in multi-cam studio broadcasts and then multi-cam sports broadcasts. So in particularly camera work for football, hockey, things like that.

Dominic:

Where do you like find a sense of belonging here?

Isaiah:

Um, I'd say. I didn't really have a sense of belonging at Fitchburg until my junior year, and that's when I really started to meet a lot of the people in my major. And it's great to come into the Comm media department, especially the film department and you always see someone that, you know. And especially last year and a half, there was always someone to talk to on my way to class, people walking around randomly. I really enjoyed that aspect and that's something I'll miss the most from Fitchburg

Dominic:

Out of like your four years here, what's like your greatest accomplishment?

Isaiah:

My greatest accomplishment in my four years. Um, so in my, let's see, this would've been my junior year. I pitched a documentary idea at the Massachusetts Production Coalition Film Festival in Boston, because of Professor Kevin McCarthy who urged me to do so.

It was the day that submissions were due and I was in, I think the, uh, the video editing lab, and Kevin walked in and said, "Hey, Isaiah, I know you have this idea. You should submit it to this." And I was like, "when's it due?"

And he is like, "Four hours from now."

And so I submitted, you know, a little, um, a little writeup of it. I had already done the treatment and everything for Kevin's class on documentary development.

And just for background, this is documentary on Massachusetts trash and where it goes after we throw it away. A couple days later, I got an email saying. "We'd like to have you come and pitch" – like one of, I think it was 25 or 50 people who pitched, it wasn't 50, I think it was 25, and so I went a couple weeks later.

This was the end of November, I want to say, of 2023, and I went into Boston, and in front of like a really big audience. I pitched my project, which is something that I never thought I would've had the confidence to do something like that. Um, but I just got up. I did it and you know, lo and behold I won out of all the other people, I'd say that was by far my, my biggest accomplishment at Fitchburg.

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Dominic:

In what ways have you, like, felt like you've grown since you got here?

Isaiah:

Oh yeah, a hundred percent. So what ways have I grown? I'm definitely more. I'm more of a easygoing person when it comes to interacting with other people. And then professionally, I feel like I've developed a really unique skillset. And so I'm not nervous, like when I'm applying to jobs or things like that because I know that the skills that I've developed while

Isaiah:

I've been here at Fitchburg State, both the social skills and the professional skills are a really unique skillset. And I don't have a very big problem kind of discounting that, like I know to have confidence in myself. And so that's a really big thing because beforehand, even in my first couple years at college, I would've been. Really nervous to say, like, right now I'm interning at TD Garden. Like I would've been really nervous about that.

But going into it this year, like I know that I know what I'm doing and I know I have the skills that they need, so I know I'll be able to figure it out.

Dominic:

And finally, I'm gonna give you like the room. Anything you want to say? Anything you like, have a project coming up or anything like you want to pitch?

Isaiah:

Not really. A couple weeks ago I released with Fitchburg Access TV. I edited a documentary about, um. Really about Fitchburg history. That's pretty cool. You can watch that on FATV's website. Other than that, I've been working a lot trying to get as much experience as I can in all aspects of live sports production, which is the area that I've really gotten into. Things I'm looking forward to graduating in May.

Looking forward to, like I said, even though it doesn't feel like I'm really a student here anymore, because I'm on full-time internship, so I'm never here. Um, it'll be cool to, to get that.

[Five With a Falcon theme fades in]

That's gonna be a big accomplishment, especially because I said, I never thought that I would go to college, especially a four year college. And so it's gonna be a really cool thing to graduate.

Dominic:

Well, it was great having you on here and that's our episode of Five With A Falcon.

[Five With a Falcon theme fades out]

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Dominic Iannaco:

Hi, this is Dominic Ryan Iannaco, and you're listening to *Perseverantia*, the Fitchburg State Podcast Network.

[*Perseverantia* theme fades out]