

John Ryland | Enthusiast-Brand Creative

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EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

What follows is an approximation of my work life dating back to the turn of the century. I'm the owner of a custom motorcycle shop and hotel in Richmond, Virginia, but have been immersed in advertising, publishing and creative endeavors since not finishing college, circa 1992 at Virginia Commonwealth University. It's a long, strange tale, but a testament that you can still make cool things happen even if you're not cut out for higher education. It's been many years since I had to supply a resume, so hopefully this will paint a suitable picture.

Classified Moto

2009-Present

Owner, Designer, Head Creative

Towards the end of my traditional advertising career, I discovered motorcycles — riding, modifying and designing them. So when layoffs finally caught me (after 11 years at The Martin Agency), I took my severance, cashed in my 401k and made Classified Moto my full time job. I applied the skills I had acquired in the ad world to my own business, and the brand took off. One thing led to another, and before long, our bikes were making waves worldwide. We asserted ourselves in popular culture with builds for celebrities, television and feature films — all the while, learning more and more about what worked for our brand and what didn't. Alt-custom motorcycles are the hook, but for years we've functioned as a sort of enthusiast agency, creating long format programming, advertising and events for ourselves and our clients. Now, we've opened a Moto-themed hotel and event space, where I spend my days as designer, mechanic, writer, groundskeeper, maid and host. It's been a weird, fun, meandering journey for sure.

The Martin Agency

2000-2011

Copywriter, Art Director, Studio Designer, Studio Artist

The Martin Agency took a chance and offered me a Studio Artist position on a trial basis in 2000. Without a college degree or background in advertising, landing a job there was a long shot. Fairly quickly, however, I was promoted to Studio Designer. Soon after, I was asked by late Martin CCO Mike Hughes to participate in a pitch for the Miller Genuine Draft beer business. I partnered with a friend (who was a junior planner at the time), and we won the business. That was the start of my tenure as a creative at Martin. Clients included Miller, BFGoodrich Tires, Olympus, GEICO, UPS, Walmart and others. As a creative I worked as an Art Director, then Copywriter — and many times both.

Previous Life

I got married in 1992 and moved to St. Thomas, USVI, after my then-wife graduated from VCU. I expected to live a life of leisure but within a month landed a job as a reporter for The Virgin Islands Business Journal. I've been on some kind of tight timeline ever since. It was the dawn of desktop publishing, and soon I transitioned from writing to layout and design. I was stolen by The Island Trader to be their Art Director until moving back to Richmond a couple of years later. Upon my return, I worked as an Art Director for Southern States Cooperative — a billion-dollar-a-year agriculture outfit in Richmond. Technically, I was able to hone my skills, but creatively, it was a soul killer. While I was there, I started a side project that involved rejuvenating low income areas of the city without displacing its residents. That project caught the attention of someone at my holy grail of employment — The Martin Agency. While the revitalization project fizzled, the contact got me an interview that I never would have gotten otherwise. Although it was a dismal, unpolished first interview, the crew at Martin saw something in me and gave me a second chance. It turned into an 11-year career.