

Real Boot Life: Stories of Heart and Hard Work

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by Emerald Butler

From Walmart executives and Midwest ranchers to Nashville songwriters, The Real Boot Life from PFI Western store captures the everyday lives of hard-working Americans starting from their feet. The Store located in Springfield, Missouri was founded by owner/CEO Randy Little in 1975. A 30,000 square-foot retail center with state-of-the-art music and video technology, PFI is the largest western store in Missouri. Today, PFI doesn't focus only on the product of their boots, but on the stories of the people that wear them.

"The series was intended to show local people doing extraordinary things," Little began. "It morphed into a web-based series. Then it was so good that we said we've got to put this into a TV format." The series plays on RFD-TV, and PFI has been a sponsor of Larry's Country Diner for 10 years. 'The Real Boot Life' began with rodeo broadcasting host Justin McKee and Missouri Governor Mike Parson. Each guest shares their thoughts on hard work and how boots are a part of that. Little shared that throughout the series they have never included a call to action (a marketing term used to encourage an immediate sell). "They're feel-good stories. They're all about how to make you feel good about where you live. There's nothing in them about selling. There's nothing in them about anything other than to make you have an emotion about something."





One of the most emotional stories comes from Nashville songwriter and storyteller Rory Feek. His love story covers his marriage with his wife Joey, the music they made together, their daughter, and the legacy that continues at their Tennessee farm. It's hard not to be moved by Feek's story of love and grief, but also his determination to move forward. "I'm reminded that what makes great stories great is conflict and difficulties. It's not just going to be amazing and happy times where all your dreams come true. There are going to be some very difficult times and the harder and more difficult they are, the better chance for a great story," Feek shared in *The Real Boot Life*. At the end of his episode, Feek shares a

song called “Boots” that was recorded on Joey and Rory’s first album. Feek’s story fits PFI’s brand like a glove ..or shall we say like a boot?

Another featured story comes from our favorite Bluegrass queen, Rhonda Vincent, whose birthday happened to be on the day that we caught up with Randy Little. In this episode of “The Real Boot Life,” Rhonda shares the story of how she began playing music with her family in her little Missouri hometown, and how she feels like an ambassador for Bluegrass music and the honor and respect that comes with it. She talks about growing up in a musical family and the hard work that went into becoming a professional musician. “I learned one of the greatest lessons of my lifetime,” Rhonda shared, “that you always do your best because you don’t know who’s listening. I live the real boot life from growing up in a musical family in Northern Missouri in a very modest home that all we knew was that we had love. My boots and my music have taken me around the world.”



Little said that they are about to merge with another company and do some feel goods every week. "It's growing and making its own way. We just want to do our part of making good country music more popular, the country values that we have, and to highlight people that have been part of our industry and showcasing some of our premier customers."

From muddy fields to the Grand Ole Opry, in worn-out boots or sparkling ones, PFI and "The Real Boot Life" want to share these stories and their boots with America.

"Every pair of boots has a story to tell," says Little.

<https://youtu.be/k7gdJ7UeabI>