

Baytown TV producer to host new national reality TV series

By Whitney Lane Wiley

Jay Hix Jones was born and raised in Baytown, Texas but moved to Los Angeles to pursue television production. That's where he found success working on notable reality TV shows such as Hoarders, Ice Road Truckers, and even Extreme Makeover: Home Edition. His newest project, hosting his own reality show with his wife Kara, is more like an extreme makeover for the soul. The Experience documents participants' 72-hour journey in the Pacific Northwest mountains. The participants are secretly volunteered by friends or family, and surprised with an opportunity to get away from it all and explore the beautiful Pacific Northwest with Jay, Kara, and a guest mentor.

Jay was inspired to create the show because, living and working as a producer in Washington state, he needed to get away himself. "I would go outside and look to the left and to the right, and there were mountain ranges on either side," he said, "And I just thought 'I gotta get to the mountains,' ... I kept saying to myself 'I gotta get to the mountains.'" He described it as a show to help others unplug, where they "pluck" people from the fast paced work world and surprise them with a tailored experience in nature where they can reconnect with their deeper selves.

Max Paxton, host of Hoarders and a guest mentor on The Experience, says that it's weird seeing Jay in front of the camera. He explains how he encouraged Jay's endeavor after seeing a Facebook post: "I called him and said, 'Jay you're a preacher. Stop ignoring it and just go preach.' Jay freaked out and asked who put me up to calling and saying that. I hung up and didn't hear from Jay for about three months, and then I heard about The Experience. So I was happy to be a part of it... At the end of the day if we are helping people, it's worth our time."

Participants on the show are surprised at the end of a hectic workweek with an invitation to go on a soul-searching journey in the beauty of nature. "When you ask people, 'Hey, do you want to go in to the mountains with strangers?' you'd expect them to say no," Jay laughs, "but we haven't had a single person decline the experience."

The show isn't just "lighting fires with sticks" either, explains Jay. The Jones' intentionally tailor each trip to meet the needs of the participants, drawing on what their friends and relatives have told them. They even share their own experiences with participants, and lead them through a book they co-authored, also titled The Experience. The remarkable stories that have emerged from this series are worth watching—with participants experiencing deep renewal—there is even one episode where a woman is baptized in a mountain lake!

Because of the show's spiritual element, and Jay's unwillingness to sacrifice that aspect of the show, it was denied by several major networks. It will be aired on the national cable channel UplifTV and available on for online streaming on parables.tv, UplifTV's family-friendly version of Netflix, this February. www.TheExperienceBook.com



Baytonian Jay Hix Jones steps out from behind the camera to hosts new national show with his wife, all about disconnecting from the distractions of modern day life in order to reconnect with your purpose.



Kara Jones (right) begins the transformative journey with a new participant on the show