

Letter of Reference for Atticus Graybill

March 4, 2022

To whom it may concern:

As a Behavioral Scientist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for over 20 years I have had the opportunity to focus the majority of my career on safeguarding the health, safety and resilience of individuals CDC deploys to dangerous and inhospitable environments. I've collaborated with psychiatrists from the Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress at USUHS to develop and run a 3-day training course to create a cadre of non-clinicians who can assess and address the wellbeing and resilience of colleagues in the field during a strenuous deployment.

I share this because the culmination of that 3-day experiential learning initiative that I ran for about 9 years would not have been possible were it not for the expertise, creativity, flexibility and tenacity of Atticus Graybill. He helped us do something that, as far as I know, had not been done at that time in that way. He and his colleagues seamlessly integrated state-of-the-art Virtual Reality technology with cinematic artistry to create a series of highly-realistic Virtual Reality Environments (VREs) for us. We immersed our colleagues in those VREs to simulate the kinds of sights, sounds and even smells they might encounter in the field. Our expectation was that this unique and engaging pre-deployment experience would prepare trainees for the rigors of deployment and serve as a kind of mental "vaccination" against potentially-traumatizing experiences they were likely to have.

I still am impressed with how well Atticus patiently guided us novices for about 7 years through his world of story boards, green screens, camera angles, lighting, casting, wardrobe, scripting and other essential (but foreign to us) elements of video production. Under his direction and orchestration of the contributions of a variety of other technical experts we emerged with a library of scenarios that included simulated deployment to places like:

A primitive & austere third-world country; A town that had been rocked by a hurricane; A city decimated by a powerful earthquake; A subway in which people were exposed to a highly contagious pathogen; A community where a dirty bomb had been detonated...

Atticus collaborated with us and demonstrated sublime patience so we were able to produce targeted training video content not just for two people at a time but as technology advanced we eventually were able to use his video product to train 27 people simultaneously. It was a significant accomplishment*. As I recall, we were able to share this with about 300 people who then were better positioned to provide peer-support-related resilience services to their colleagues.

Respectfully,

Rick

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* [Virtual Classroom Immersion Training: Safeguarding the Health, Safety, and Resiliency of Emergency Responders \(td.org\)](https://www.pesinnovation.com/immersiontraining.pdf)