

New web series focuses on unsung hero mentors in North Philly

23-year-old North Philly native Tony Chennault has wrapped production this week on Chapter 2 of his *Oldhead* web series. Chapter 1 was released in late February, and the prologue episode of the series premiered last summer.

Chennault, a former Wake Forest and Villanova basketball player, has based the series in the North Philly neighborhood of Olney, where he grew up. It showcases the struggles of growing up in a place where drug dealing and gang affiliation seem like the only lucrative way to make it in the world.

Chennault's inspiration for creating the web series stems from the positive influences he received from older members (the old heads) of his community in his formative years in North Philly.

"I was blessed along my journey to have old heads in my community that looked out for me — that made sure I stayed on the right path — that made sure I didn't resort to a life of crime and drugs. I grew up without my father. I grew up in a single parent home. My mom raised three boys. With the guidance of my older brothers and the old heads in my community—they led me down the right path," says Chennault.

The sky was the limit, or so it seemed, for the rising basketball star until his brother, Michael Jay, was shot to death, and his mother, Crystal Moron, later died of a heart attack. He says the loss caused him to lose his passion for the game.

"Everybody has their 'why' to doing things. It was my 'why.' I had to figure out what other things I could do that still put that

fire in my belly like I had for basketball, and film was that for me. I always loved film ever since I was a kid,” says Chennault.

After graduating, Chennault exchanged his basketball jersey for a director’s chair to pursue his passion for storytelling and filmmaking. He started his own production company, Chennault Productions (also known as 267 Productions), with the help of fellow Wildcats Rob Jennings, Alex Ruane, Tom Smith and Josh Meekins.

Oldhead is driven by protagonist “Bump,” who is concerned by the current state of his neighborhood. Bump watches as the community’s youth make poor decisions and is particularly disturbed by the path of his best friend’s little brother, Sean.

The funding for *Oldhead* currently comes out of the pockets of the Chennault Productions team, who all have day jobs. Currently, Chennault is the Sixers’ camp manager and hopes to start a leadership academy for kids.

Chennault and his production team hope to film one episode every month. Once they have all four episodes (plus the prologue) completed and released via social media, Chennault plans to have a large screening of each episode back to back at a Philadelphia theater sometime this summer.

Chennault says he believes in the dream of every aspiring storyteller and filmmaker.

“Nobody knows your story the way you do. We all have a story no matter who we are or where we come from or what we have been through. Nobody can tell your story like you can,” he said.

Help support Tony Chennault's dream and check out the first webisode of *Oldhead* by going here.

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cawtGAkM7Bg>)