

# ryer banta

Ryer Banta graduated from film school in Bozeman, Montana at the end of 2001. While many classmates were heading off for Los Angeles or New York immediately upon graduating, Banta decided to stay in Montana. Not wanting to rush into a project, he began working as a cashier at the Bridger Bowl Ski Resort in Bozeman.

Two months after graduating, Banta discovered news that Phil Elverum (The Microphones) and Kyle Field (Little Wings) were planning an unorthodox tour together, playing a series of small towns and unconventional venues throughout northern Idaho and eastern Washington. The “Wise Old Little Boy” tour seemed especially interesting and surprising due to the critical success both artists were experiencing. Intrigued, and sensing that it was going to be a unique angle to view the artists, Banta contacted Elverum about the possibility of doing a documentary. After a few exchanges through e-mail with both Elverum and Field, everything was in place for Banta to join their tour.

Tired of viewing the documentary form only in terms of providing a retrospective or history, Banta set out to document the truth contained within small moments—allowing the scenes to speak for themselves, as one might within a fictional narrative. It’s a similar approach, in many ways, to the creation of a record—not a document of the musician’s past, but rather a portrait of a specific point in time.

Having been a one-man crew—doing all the filming and sound recording himself—Banta came back from the tour and was offered a job working in the art department for the film *Northfork*. Shortly after, he found himself working another art department job, this time for the Norwegian film *Wolfsummer*. Banta found himself at a crossroads—to continue working on other people’s projects, or to finish work on his own documentary. He chose to do the latter, and spent the next month completing a rough cut of *Wise Old Little Boy*.

Banta spent another winter in Bozeman, fine-tuning the film and working another season at the ski resort. In the spring of 2003, he moved to Missoula, Montana, with a near-complete version of the documentary—though a few details needed to be finalized. The documentary spent some time on the back-burner as Banta created abstract video projections for a few Missoula bands. Working with experimental folk artist Burke Jam and the instrumental rock group, This is a Process of a Still Life, proved to be especially fruitful. It was through creating several hour-long abstract videos for This is a Process of a Still Life that Banta met Ben Rouner, owner of Firefly Sessions. A friendship and creative partnership quickly arose between the two, and Banta enlisted Rouner’s help in completing the remaining work on the film. After several months of collaboration, the last few details on the documentary, as well as the DVD menus and design were completed. Nearing the completion of the film, K Records—and their distributor Secretly Canadian—expressed a growing interest in the film and it’s distribution.

Banta continues to work out of Missoula, where he is able to further refine his voice as a filmmaker to an ever-growing audience. Not content to restrict his work to any one style or genre, he is pursuing a variety of future projects.

## Filmography:

FSR-002      *Wise Old Little Boy*      DVD / released fall 2004



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