

**MEDIA & MARKETING**

# Local couple's personal tragedy set to hit the big screen on Easter weekend



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Robert and Kelly Pascuzzi wrote a book called "The Ravine" that was made into a movie that premieres Easter weekend.

ROBERT & KELLY PASCUZZI

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An Overland Park couple has taken a "horrific tragedy" and turned it into a life calling, a novel and now a feature film.

"The Ravine," a book written and self-published by [Robert Pascuzzi](#) for cathartic reasons, is one week away from a sold-out red carpet premiere in Overland Park.

The movie of the same name is a drama about a family that was devastated by a murder/suicide and the journey they took finding a way to make sense of it all.

"The whole story is based on a real-life event and a period of time that our family experienced," [Robert Pascuzzi](#) told the *Kansas City Business Journal*. "We decided after a couple years went by that we didn't want to leave it as it was. It was a horrific tragedy. We wanted to try and find some good out of all of this. We felt a calling. So we decided to write a book and turn it into something good. It's a message of hope, restoration and forgiveness through tragedy. It was a three-year project to write the book, which came out in 2014."

After the April 1 premiere, "The Ravine" will begin playing over Easter weekend in the Kansas City area at Liberty-based movie theater chain B&B Theatres' Liberty Cinema 12 and Overland Park 16 locations. The movie also will be shown during premiere weekend in Sioux City, Ankeny and Des Moines, Iowa.

Robert and [Kelly Pascuzzi](#), who produced the movie, chose initial markets that have a personal connection where they knew they could garner support. The objective of premiere weekend is to sell out every showing, so the movie will be on the top of the revenue-per-screen charts and garner more media attention.

If all goes as planned, they'll use that to hit social media and build up more support rolling into the next weekend. Then, they'll keep opening in more theaters with the goal of hitting every theater in America if the film is a success.

### The path to the big screen

[Robert Pascuzzi](#) and his wife had never written a novel and had no experience or connections in the movie industry. He said the reason they were able to accomplish it was just pure will. They got emotionally involved in the idea of the book and movie, and they never let go of it.

"The premise of the whole thing at the start was if we could write this book and it could help even one person to not have to go through what we experienced, then it would be worth it," Pascuzzi said. "So that was the seed. I had no idea how to write a book. I don't have a writing background, and I have never written a novel before.

"My point here is that people are capable of anything. What we're willing to do is much different, but we're capable of anything. The book is a physical manifestation of that, and the movie certainly is as well."

After the book was published, [Bob Proctor](#), a life coach the Pascuzzis had hired earlier in their lives, called Pascuzzi to say he read the book and to ask whether he ever thought of

turning it into a movie. Pascuzzi said he had thought about it but had no connections to the movie business.

A movie called "The Ravine" is based on the lives of an Overland Park couple and will premiere over Easter weekend.

ROBERT & KELLY PASCUZZI



A few hours after that phone call, an Academy Award-winning movie producer, [Phillip Goldfine](#), called Pascuzzi saying Proctor gave him the number. The Pascuzzis sent Goldfine the book, and a few months later they were sitting in Hollywood talking to him about a movie. Goldfine introduced them to [Keoni Waxman](#), who helped convert the book to a screenplay and directed the film. Goldfine also introduced the Pascuzzis to [Nancy Naylor](#), who was the casting director.

"You look back now, and you see how the dots all connected, but when you're looking forward at the time you can't see it," Pascuzzi said. "You just have to trust it. That's what we did. There were a lot of escape hatches on this project where we could have bailed out, but we just knew we were supposed to do this. We felt it was a calling, and that's not something you turn away from. You see it to the finish line."

Pascuzzi, who worked at Creative Planning for 15 years, sold his interest in the Overland Park-based financial planning firm's corporate retirement practice to CEO [Peter Mallouk](#) in 2019 so that he could focus entirely on the movie. The Pascuzzis also run a business called Creative Living, where they are life coaches.

### Bringing a movie to life

One perk of making your own movie is helping to cast it — and in this case your fictional counterparts.

"The Ravine" stars [Eric Dane](#), who is best known for playing Dr. [Mark Sloan](#) in "Grey's Anatomy," and [Teri Polo](#), who played Pam in "Meet the Fockers." [Ramin Djawadi](#), who is best known for doing the score for the "Game of Thrones" series and the "Iron Man" movies, wrote the film's score.

The actors and crew shot the movie's scenes in New Orleans in the fourth quarter of 2019 and got it done just before the pandemic hit. They spent the past year finishing the movie.

Pascuzzi said the premiere will be an emotional evening.

"We've put so much time, energy, emotion and financial resources into this," Pascuzzi said. "This isn't about Kelly and me, but it was a calling. It's why we stayed with it. It's why I know this will fly. We didn't do it for the money, but just because we wanted to help people with the message so I can't wait to see the impact on people in the audience."

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