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# "Hollywood East": The Story of the Massachusetts Film Industry

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# **“Hollywood East”**

## **The Story of the Massachusetts Film Industry**

Alison Brace

Honors Advisors: David Olsen and Salem Mekuria  
Honors Visitor: Nolan Flynn

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Prerequisite for Honors  
in Media Arts and Sciences

April 24, 2012

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## **Artist's Statement**

I am an Economics and Media Arts & Sciences double-major, and I hope one day to work in the business side of the film industry. When I first came to Wellesley, the state of Massachusetts was promising to become the third-largest center for motion picture production, after Los Angeles and New York. At that time, three different studios, the largest of which was Plymouth Rock Studios, were in planning stages and were intending to be built here in Massachusetts. The Plymouth Rock Studios project was scheduled to break ground in 2010 and be completed by 2012, the year of my graduation. With the economic recession, these projects did not come to fruition, and yet the production activity in the state remains strong. While industry professionals admit that we are losing business to other states due to our lack of infrastructure, the activity in the Commonwealth appears promising, and I am excited to see what the future holds for the Massachusetts film industry. There is something inherently special about Massachusetts, and it has been fun and interesting to see the pride local communities have developed in being part of a motion picture.

This is a story about the film industry in Massachusetts and the far-reaching effects it has on the state and its identity. Since I came to Wellesley, about 42 independent and Hollywood films have come to Massachusetts, including two movies nominated for Best Picture in the 2011 Academy Awards. Not only do the productions benefit the Massachusetts economy directly, but they also contribute to the state through identity and tourism. This film weaves through the politics,

elements, and expanding effects of the activity in Massachusetts. It is a story of perseverance and identity, struggles and successes, and hopes for the future.

## **Background**

The Massachusetts film and television industry has grown considerably in the last decade. The Film Tax Credits were written into law in 2005 by Governor Mitt Romney and were expanded in 2007 by Governor Deval Patrick. The Film Tax Credits have three components, which are meant to incentivize productions to film as much as possible in the state of Massachusetts. The first component is the Sales Tax Exemption, which exempts productions from the Massachusetts state sales tax if they have spent at least \$50,000 in Massachusetts in the last 12 consecutive months. The next is the Payroll Credit, which gives a 25% payroll tax credit to productions spending \$50,000 in Massachusetts in 12 consecutive months. Furthermore, the 25% credit is only applicable to the aggregate payroll eligible for Massachusetts personal income tax withholding. The third and final component is the 25% Production Expenses credit. This credit is also only eligible for productions that spent \$50,000 in MA in 12 consecutive months. In addition, the production must spend 50% of its total expenditure in MA or film 50% of it in MA in order to be eligible for this credit. Finally, the credits are transferrable. In other words, productions can sell unused credits to a 3<sup>rd</sup> party or refund them with the state at 90% of its value. This portion of the Film Tax Credits has been a point of contention because large corporations can buy these credits and legally reduce their tax liabilities. Objectively, I do understand how this would upset some people, but I

personally feel the benefits of this policy outweigh the costs. However, while these credits have been instrumental in bringing business to the state, there are conflicting views about how effective the credits are. Some feel the program has generated both jobs and revenue, while others believe the credits are too expensive for the revenue brought in and that there is room for people to abuse the system. Yet the studies of impact and revenue raised from this program fail to include key components, such as the increase in tourism – so the monetary benefits exceed the numbers published – and they do not account for qualitative benefits, such as increase in community pride and increased exposure of a jurisdiction.

Regardless of the difference in opinions, there is no doubt that the Film Tax Credits have generated a substantial increase in production activity since they were signed in 2005. Since the tax credits were instated, nearly seventy productions – film and television, independent and Hollywood – have come to Massachusetts.<sup>1</sup> A study conducted by the University of Massachusetts, Massachusetts' state university, estimated that employment in the Motion Picture and Video Industries increased 33.5%, the largest increase among the top 15 states with the highest number of motion picture and video employees. The study also conducts an IMPLAN analysis, which, to give a simplification of the work, is an economic analysis that determines the additional effect of direct spending in an industry. The UMass study states that, according to the IMPLAN analysis run on the data, in 2008, every dollar of output produced by the film industry generated an additional \$.95 for

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<sup>1</sup> Massachusetts Film Office, "Made in Massachusetts."  
<http://www.mafilm.org/made-in-mass/>.

Massachusetts, and every job generated an additional .79 jobs.<sup>2</sup> These numbers are just the beginning of the story of the multilayered story of the Massachusetts film industry.

## **Approach to Research**

When I first began formulating my idea for my senior thesis, I envisioned trying to find a way to incorporate what I've learned in my Economics major with the knowledge and skills I've gained from my Media Arts & Sciences major. Therefore, when I submitted my proposal at the beginning of the year, I intended to create a documentary on the economic impacts of the film industry in Massachusetts. I began by examining the reason for growth – the Film Tax Credits. Once I understood the framework, I researched the major players in the Massachusetts film industry. The most important of these is the Massachusetts Film Office (MFO). In January 2011, Governor Patrick moved the MFO from its public-private position back into the government. The MFO is essentially a one-stop shop to meet a production's needs, from development, to location scouting to pre-production, production, and more. In the summer of 2011, Lisa Strout was named the new head of the Film Office, and she has been very helpful to me throughout my thesis process. She sent me materials, granted me phone interviews in the fall, pointed me towards different studies, and was one of my main on-camera interviewees for my documentary.

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<sup>2</sup> Foster, Pacey C. and Terkla, David, "Film and Television Production in Massachusetts: The Beginning of Hollywood East?" (2011).

Other big players in the Massachusetts film industry are the unions. There are four major unions related to this field. The first is IATSE Local 481, which is the union for crew workers (grips, electricians, hair, make-up, wardrobe, etc.). While in the past, a worker needed only to work on set 90 days before becoming eligible, it is now much more difficult to become unionized. I was not able to get first hand information on the new process because union members are not supposed to talk about it and were therefore unwilling to answer those questions. The next major union is the Screen Actors Guild, which is a nation-wide union for actors. Local actors are also members of the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA). Last month, it was announced that these two unions have voted to merge and create one SAG-AFTRA union.<sup>3</sup> A final union, which I did not explore much in my research, is the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. In addition to the four major unions is an organization called the Massachusetts Production Coalition, which identifies itself as being the unified and voice of the Massachusetts film industry.

An additional segment I explored was the casting component of a motion picture. Boston Casting is the leading casting company in the area and is responsible for casting extras in supporting and smaller roles. The company has worked on a number of productions, including Academy Award Best Picture Nominee *The Fighter*. I conducted an on-camera interview with the founder of this company, but

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<sup>3</sup> "SAG, AFTRA Members Approve Merger to Form SAG-AFTRA". Massachusetts Film Office. <http://www.mafilm.org/2012/04/02/sag-aftra-members-approve-merger-to-form-sag-aftra/>.



she unfortunately decided in retrospect that she was uncomfortable appearing in my documentary.

During the course of the fall semester, I took a tour of the movie and TV sites that have been filmed in Boston in order to inform my research. A mid-semester review with the studio art departments helped me look at this tour in a different way, and it unlocked an important aspect of the industry that I had overlooked. I became interested in the questions of how the film industry affects tourism and how it can affect the local identities of communities. I am very grateful to the studio art department for leading me in this direction because these themes have become important parts of my final story.

### **Overview of my Structure**

My story opens with a brief introduction to the tax credits, in order to give a general context for the recent growth in the film industry. From there, it moves to a section on tourism and how people are affected by film. This segment includes footage from the tour of the movie sites, along with images of the actual locations, film clips, and interviews with various individuals. This piece transitions into what is special about Massachusetts, other than the tax credits that draws filmmakers to the area. Interviewees speak about the history, the architecture, the diversity of landscapes, the quality of life, and the general appeal the state has. The next portion focuses primarily on the local crew and small businesses that are affected by the industry. Incorporated into this discussion is how the film industry can create a certain identity and pride for these individuals and businesses. The next section

acknowledges what is missing. Industry professionals widely agree that the lack of formal infrastructure (soundstages and back lots) is preventing the state from attracting and maintaining business. Finally, the interviews guide the audience through how Boston is portrayed on film and how it can reach many people, before the film concludes.

### **Background Interest**

My interest in production began in high school, when I was an assistant director for many of the school plays. I was inspired by the number of elements involved in bringing a production to life. My senior year, the Hollywood movie *The Box*, starring Cameron Diaz and James Marsden, filmed at my high school. Because my advisor was one of the contact people for a portion of the shooting, I was able to spend time on set and watch them work. During one of the scenes, I was by “video village” (where the director watches the scenes), and I started talking to the assistant to the director between shoots. The next semester, I took a moving image class at my high school, and I interned at my teacher’s production company for the last month of high school. The summer before Wellesley, I worked as an intern for Boston Casting and was exposed to a side of the industry that I had never thought much about. I was given the opportunity to read a script for an independent film and to observe the auditions for some of the speaking roles. These experiences encouraged me to take the Introduction to Video Production class my first year at Wellesley, and I haven’t looked back since. The summer after my first year at Wellesley, I was offered an internship by the man I met on set at *The Box* to work as

a set intern on an independent film called *Valediction* (whose name has since been changed to *Locked-In*).

I am truly fascinated about how one industry can incorporate so many different professional trades to create a work that incorporates so many different art forms. During my first year, I went to a jobs conference in Boston, where I was able to see, in one room, just how many different segments of people were involved in this industry, and I listened to presentations on the then-hopeful studio projects. I was excited by the possibility of MA becoming the third largest center for production in the country and hoped to find a way to stay in Massachusetts while pursuing my passion for film. Now at the end of my Wellesley career, I see no better topic to spend a year experiencing than that of the Massachusetts film industry. It is a story I will be watching closely in the next few years, and I hope to one-day work in the business side of the industry, should it succeed in becoming a permanent part of Massachusetts.

### **On-Camera Interviews for Thesis Project**

Throughout the course of the spring semester, I interviewed six individuals connected to the film industry, five of whom appear in my final product. These six people are Lisa Strout, head of the MFO, Dave Aspro, tour guide for On Locations Tours, Joe DiLorenzo, President and CEO of Plymouth Rock Studios, Lynne Viti, Wellesley College professor, Stephen Bruno, unionized local crew member, and Angela Peri, founder and head of Boston Casting.

*Lisa Strout*

Lisa Strout is the current director of the Massachusetts Film Office and a native of Lexington, MA. Her nearly 30-year career began in the Bay State, where she worked on a number of local productions, including exterior shots for the popular TV series *Cheers*. Since her start in Massachusetts, she has worked on a number of major productions in Hollywood and elsewhere, serving as a locations manager on many of those projects, before joining the New Mexico film office in 2001. In her most recent post, she served as a seven-year director of New Mexico's film office, where she was instrumental in attracting high-profile films and in growing the New Mexico film industry to about \$3.6 billion. On June 15, 2011, the Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism announced Lisa as the new director of the Massachusetts Film Office. She is currently working to create a database for locations in Massachusetts to educate producers about the variety of options the Commonwealth has to offer. She is also looking for opportunities to expand the MFO's involvement in the development stages of productions in order to attract and maintain more business.

*Dave Aspro*

Dave Aspro is a local actor and a tour guide for On Location Tours. He grew up in Norwood, MA and studied theater at the University of Vermont. In college, he served as stage manager, director, and actor in a number of productions. He has been giving tours for the Boston TV & Movie tour for three seasons.

*Joe DiLorenzo*

A Massachusetts native, Joe Dilorenzo joined Plymouth Rock Studios in 2007 after spending 29 years in the sports and entertainment industry. During this time, he worked over eighteen years in executive roles for the Boston Celtics and helped make the team public on the New York Stock Exchange. He also played an integral role in the acquisition of Fox 25 News station and the radio station WEEI. He has served in many roles in the Boston Garden/Boston Bruins organization and has served in executive roles for a software and solutions company. In 2002, he and Joe Malone, the former Massachusetts State Treasurer, founded a company called M/D Group, which specializes in business development and corporate strategy. He is the sole remaining partner working on the Plymouth Rock Studios project.

*Lynne Viti*

Lynne Viti is a writing professor at Wellesley College. She has been teaching at the college since 1987. An accomplished academic, she has received graduate degrees in Teaching, English Literature, and Law. She has traditionally taught courses related to law and culture and this year taught her first semester of the *Boston on Film* course. Professor Viti is a Baltimore native but has lived in Massachusetts long enough to “fake a good Boston accent,” as she says. She was my writing professor for my first-year writing course, and I am honored to be have been able to bookend my experience at Wellesley by interviewing her about her new course.

### *Stephen Bruno*

Stephen Bruno has been a unionized crew worker since 1996 and does work for film, television, and theater. His first experience on set was on *The Crucible*, and he hasn't looked back since. In between movies, he is a hairdresser at the upscale Patrice Vinci Salon on Newbury Street in Back Bay, Boston. He is from an Italian community in the North Shore of Boston. I met Stephen while working as a set intern on the independent film *Locked-In*.

### *Angela Peri*

Angela Peri is the founder and head of Boston Casting, Boston's largest and most prominent casting company. She started the company in 1991 and has gone on to work on major motion pictures like Academy Award nominee *The Fighter*, *Knight and Day*, *The Proposal*, *Edge of Darkness*, and *Pink Panther 2*, to name a few. In addition, Angela casts TV shows and commercials. She is a member of the Casting Society of America and was one of the original board members of the Massachusetts Production Coalition. I worked for Angela the summer before I came to Wellesley and have kept in touch with Boston Casting over the past four years. Unfortunately after doing the interview, Angela decided she was no longer comfortable appearing in my film, and so I have used her interview to supplement the rest of my research.

### **Visual Elements**

My project consists of a combination of Hollywood film clips, interviews, and footage of a Boston TV and movie sites tour, Massachusetts landscapes,

preparations for shooting scenes for ABC network's pilot *Gilded Lillys*, a pitch book for Plymouth Rock Studios, and newspaper clips. I carefully chose the backgrounds for my interviews based on my impressions of the subjects and their relationships with the film industry. Lisa Strout is the head of the MFO, so I placed her in a more formal setting. I wanted to portray her as a higher-level and knowledgeable voice in the story, and I felt a formal location was the best method of achieving this affect (see fig. 1).

Figure 1: Lisa Strout



David Aspro, on the other hand, is a young and goofy individual who is passionate and excited about the industry. I interviewed him in the Public Gardens in Boston on a bench used in a scene from Good Will Hunting. Because of his role as a tour guide for Boston movie sites, I found it appropriate to film his interview at a place used in a famous Boston-based movie. In addition, I felt that the openness of the park and the fluidity of the path and shadows behind him complemented his casual demeanor (see fig. 2).

Figure 2: David Aspro





Joe DiLorenzo requested to meet at the coffee shop used in my documentary, but I wanted to set up a shot that showed this background to emphasize the state of Plymouth Rock Studios (PRS). As I have already discussed, this project is struggling to survive, and showing a casual interview in a casual location supported the feel of PRS. Furthermore, Mr. DiLorenzo's dynamism fit well with the geometric background of the wall (see fig 3).

Figure 3: Joe DiLorenzo



Lynne Viti is a professor, so I shot her interview in her office, with her academic robe showing on the back of her door. Her interview looks very different from the others. She has a tight shot and a very simple background. In retrospect, I think this framing separates her from the other interviewees, which I think is interesting, as she is my only interviewee who is not directly related to the film industry. She is an outsider looking in, so I like that her interview looks different from the others (see fig. 4).

Figure 4: Lynne Viti



Finally, I wanted to shoot Stephen Bruno in his place of work. I made the choice to endure a little bit of background noise in order to show him in his environment. Because he works on the crew of motion picture productions, I felt it was very important to show where he works on a daily basis in between productions. Setting the interview at a workplace clearly defines his role in the industry (see fig. 5).

Figure 5: Stephen Bruno



## **Struggles and Reflections**

My biggest struggle in this process has been letting go of my original concept. At the beginning of the year, I was stuck on making this project an economic documentary. This mentality was very limiting, and I struggled with finding my story. My advisors and the rest of the studio art faculty who participated in my critiques really helped me let go and be open to the idea of exploring the different elements of the story. My original approach was correct in the sense that the tax credits are the strongest driver and context for the recent film activity in the Commonwealth, but the story did not stop there. In my final documentary, I have used the credits in this role – a set-up for the story that grew out of it – and I am very grateful to the studio art faculty for their patience and guidance as I discovered a much more robust narrative.

Another challenge I faced was the number of segments of information I gathered throughout my on-camera interviews. Each person I interviewed had a very different relationship with the Massachusetts film industry, and I struggled with finding a cohesive way to incorporate these different points of view to form a coherent story. I feel I could have easily made a piece on any one of these individual storylines, but I made the active decision to cover the breadth of topics, as I felt more passionately about the big-picture story. Pulling these pieces together was a challenge that excited me, and I am still just as interested in this story as I was when I started it.

Finally, I had to really remove myself from my project and look at my collection of B-roll footage in order to use it most effectively. There were particular shots that I was very attached to, and it was difficult for me to come to terms with the fact that there was only a small portion of my piece where those shots could really add value. Similarly, I had to examine my collection of B-roll to think creatively about how to utilize some of that footage in segments where I had not originally planned to use them.

One of my favorite parts of this process has been the ongoing research and learning. Although the spring semester was officially my production semester, I consider my on-camera interviews to be research as much as my work in the fall semester was. Each interview informed the next, and I found myself reflecting on previous interviews when drafting a new set of questions for the next interviewee. My final projects for my Intro and Intermediate Video Production classes were both documentaries, but I approached my questions very differently for my thesis. In the past, I mainly used the same set of questions for each of my subjects. While that approach has been interesting because people give different answers to the same question, this project pushed me to think about what each person as an individual could bring to my story. While there were certain questions I asked each subject, I also devoted a portion of the interviews to the subjects' specializations. One of the more unexpected outcomes of this project was that I became connected to my project in a much different and more intimate way during this process.

## **Conclusion**

Spending a year doing my senior thesis has been a truly rewarding experience. I am as passionate about the subject as I was when I wrote my proposal in August, and I am inspired to follow the production activity in Massachusetts after graduation. I would like to whole-heartedly thank my advisors, David Olsen and Salem Mekuria, without whom I would have never produced the documentary I have now completed.

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# **Compilation of Thesis Work**

Alison Brace, Class of 2012

Thesis Proposal: Film Industry in MA

Thesis Advisors: Dave Olsen, Salem Mekuria

### **Background:**

Massachusetts has received increasing attention in its growth as a location for Hollywood and independent film productions. The Film Tax Credits were written into law in 2005 by Governor Mitt Romney and were expanded in 2007 by Governor Deval Patrick. These credits award major productions that film half of their movie or spend half of their production costs in Massachusetts a 25% tax credit. Since 2006, the number of movies filmed in the area has increased.

According to University of Massachusetts Professor Pacey Foster in his "Film and Television Production in Massachusetts: Industry Overview and Analysis," from 2005-2008, employment in the Motion Picture and Video Industries increased 33.5%, the largest increase among the top 15 states with the highest number of motion picture and video employees. The study also states that in 2008, every dollar of output produced by the film industry generates an additional \$.95 for Massachusetts, and every job generates an additional .79 jobs. These numbers are just the beginning of the story of what could become the third largest center of film production in the country.

### **Project:**

I would like to film and edit a documentary detailing the story of Massachusetts' growing presence in the film industry. Through a series of on-camera interviews with professionals connected to different aspects of the industry, I hope to understand both the industry's and local government's perspectives on the growth in film activity. I hope to portray the successes and struggles in solidifying the state's position as "Hollywood East" and perhaps to present a case for action for major productions to film in our state. While I expect to address the economic impact of the industry on the state, I also hope to dive further into the more qualitative impacts of the industry's presence in Massachusetts. I think there are some great benefits to bringing films to Massachusetts, and I am hoping to call attention to these effects in my work next year.

I plan to explore both sides of the film deals. On the state's side: why did we pass the tax credits? What has the impact been to date? Why were these tax credits chosen over another bill or plan? How do the credits fit into the local government's vision for the state? Why should Hollywood and independent productions film here? On the film professionals' side: why do they want to film here? Is it a question of place and story (i.e. stories inherently tied to Massachusetts) or simply about the tax credits? Why do local professionals stay in Massachusetts rather than move to LA or New York? How important is it to have an established local film industry? What does it take to make a movie? How much work do they get through local productions and

how much do they rely on this work? These are just a handful of preliminary and high-level questions to revise and evolve as my research progresses.

The interviews will serve as the audio narrative to tell the story of the Massachusetts film industry and will be supported by various visuals. These visuals will include the interviews themselves along with a variety of others. Animations depicting the impact of film activity on the state economy and projecting what the growth in activity could mean for the state and the industry in the future will drive the economic segment of the piece. These graphs, projections, scrolling numbers, and other animated images will keep this section from becoming “economic talking heads” and will provide the audience with accessible, visual information to process the quantifiable impact of the growing industry. Footage of cinema audiences and relevant photographs will also help connect numbers and projections to the real impact on everyday people.

For the segments of the story focusing less on the economics and more on the actual creation of films, clips from movies shot in the area will help support the story told in the interviews. In addition, I plan to incorporate visuals tied to local film professional unions (SAG, AFTRA, IATSE Local 481, etc.). I will include “in the making of” photographs of past movies and will work with the Massachusetts Film Office to film some of the behind-the-scenes activities of local movies. Location scouting is a very important component in the decision of where to shoot a movie, so I would also like to draw upon the Massachusetts’ landscapes. The state is geographically a beautiful place with diverse settings and can therefore accommodate a variety of different stories. I will be capturing shots of these different landscapes and settings to emphasize the number of natural resources that can draw the attention of many productions. On the whole, all visuals I obtain will fall into one of two categories: the building blocks of making a film and the larger output and implications for the state.

Pursuing this project will allow me to combine interests in my two majors, Economics and Media Arts & Sciences, to explore a topic I am passionate about. My work experience to date has fallen within either the film or the economic/business sectors, and I am very interested in the intersection of the two. In my experience working in the film industry, I have realized that from pre- to post-production, a movie combines so many professions, and essentially every art form, into one, and I am excited by the recent activity here in Massachusetts. In my previous video courses at Wellesley, I created documentaries for my final projects. One followed a band and wove interviews with performance footage and was underscored by audio from the performances. The other told the story of individual army soldiers. I combined training footage with soldiers’ personal photographs to show the intersection, and perhaps tension, between the individuals as soldiers and individuals as ordinary people. Both projects, along with film-related internships and classes outside of Wellesley, have prepared me to take on a yearlong project, and I am excited by the opportunity to explore this subject through documentary film.

Over the summer I have begun to contact people with whom I would like to speak. Individuals who are willing to speak with me either on-camera or offline include:

- Angela Peri                      Founder of Boston Casting and original board member of MPC
- Joe DiLorenzo                COO of Plymouth Rock Studios
- Deval Patrick                 Governor of MA
- Lisa Strout                     Director of the Massachusetts Film Office

I will be working on expanding this list as part of my fall research.

**Timeline:**

*Fall Semester*

The fall semester will primarily be my research stage. I will create my semester timeline by October. This will include reading papers for background knowledge, studying documentaries to analyze technique, particularly those that use animation, researching and connecting with people to interview on-camera, and conducting offline interviews to enhance background knowledge and perhaps to identify new leads. During the fall semester, I will also complete all pre-production materials such as the synopsis, treatment, script, outline, storyboard, supporting research, and additional information.

*Spring Semester*

I will set my timeline in the beginning weeks of the spring semester. In the spring, I will conduct on-camera interviews, capture B-roll footage, and complete my animations. As I begin my hands-on work, I expect to refine any assumptions and questions I developed in the fall and refer to different documentary styles and techniques as I begin to shape the story. During the spring I will also edit my footage and complete all post-production work.

**Completed Media Arts & Sciences Courses:**

<b>Course</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Instructor</b>
ARTS 165: Intro to Video Production	A	Mekuria
ARTS 265: Intermediate Video Production	A	Mekuria
CS 215: Multimedia Design & Programming	A-	Metaxas
ARTS 221: Digital Imaging	A-	Olsen
ARTH 101: Intro to Art History Part II	B+	Conference leader: Carroll
CS 110: Computer Science & the Internet	B+	Gold
MUS 275: Computer Music	B+	Johnson
CS 220: Human Computer Interaction	B+	Shaer
<b>Total GPA</b>	<b>3.58</b>	
<b>Above-100 GPA</b>	<b>3.6</b>	

Ali Brace  
MAS Thesis  
December 16, 2011  
Treatment

### ***Situation***

This is a film about the growing motion picture industry in Massachusetts and about the identity that comes from it. When people think of film and television in America, they tend to think of LA and New York, but in recent years, Boston has become a bigger player in the industry. Stories about Boston, such as *The Departed*, *The Town*, and *The Fighter* all portray parts of the city. Casting calls ask for extras with authentic Boston accents. The way Boston is portrayed on the big screen contributes to the identity of the city, just as the unique identity of Boston contributes to the stories. Even on a micro scale, the film industry can have an impact. The L Street Tavern, the bar used in *Good Will Hunting* used to be just a local bar. Today, it sells tourist pints and t-shirts and, at least in part, identifies itself as the bar from *Good Will Hunting*. A small flower shop in South Boston, called Flowers by Thornton, was the flower shop used in *The Town*. Now it is one of the stops on the On Location Tour. The shop owner talks to the group about the experience, and the tour gets to look around. Not only does the store get to identify as the shop from *The Town*, but it also gets increased exposure because of its role. These relationships are what interest me most. How would a movie studio affect the town it was located in? How does the industry affect small businesses? How does filming in a location change the identity of that town? Why do people line up to be extras in these films? How important is it to have “authentic” extras? These are just some of the questions I will be exploring in my interviews for this project.

## ***Characters***

I will be interviewing at least 5 people for my main interviews and will fill in with supplemental interviews. These main “characters” will be Angela Peri, Joe DiLorenzo, Lisa Strout, Dave Aspro, and Joan.

Angela Peri is the founder and owner of Boston Casting, one of the major local casting companies. She is an advocate for the local industry and was on the original board of the Massachusetts Production Coalition. In addition to hundreds of local, regional, and national projects, she has worked on features such as *The Fighter*, *The Proposal*, *Pink Panther 2*, and *Edge of Darkness*, among others.

Joe DiLorenzo is the Chief Operating Officer of Plymouth Rock Studios. He has spent 29 years in the sports and entertainment industry and has been a part of many deals, including the acquisition of Fox station Channel 25 in Boston. He is now the only board member who is still actively working on the Plymouth Rock Studios project.

Lisa Strout is the new director of the Massachusetts Film Office (MFO). A Massachusetts native, she worked on my projects as a locations manager in Boston and LA before heading the New Mexico Film Office. She turned the New Mexico film industry into one with a \$3.6 billion economic impact and increased jobs from 300 to 3,000. She has spent 30 years in the industry and has just joined the MFO in June 2011.

Dave Aspro is a local actor and a tour guide for On Location Tours. This was his third year giving the Boston TV & Movies tour.

Joan is one of the owners of Flowers by Thornton. She spoke about her experiences of working with the producers of *The Town*. She has tentatively agreed to be a part of this project, but communication has been difficult.

In addition to the people listed above, I am also hoping to talk to someone, at least briefly, at the L Street Tavern. Furthermore, I will be conducting impromptu interviews, such as at a Boston Casting casting call and after the tour.

### ***Structure***

The film will be structured around the stories from the interviews. I expect it to begin with a general overview of the industry, probably from Lisa Strout. This section will touch on the amount of activity, the tax credits, and the potential for growth. This section could probably transition fluidly to the buzz and excitement it has caused. This section will focus on tourism, which should lead into the “movie culture” that has begun to grow in the area. This might be a good place for an emphasis on Angela Peri’s interview, and the information about casting and the nuts and bolts of putting together the project could nicely complement a section around Plymouth Rock Studios and what that project could do for the community and the industry. Next will be a section on the small businesses and how all this activity has affected them. From there it will return to some footage of the tour and some further information on tourism, and this will set up the ending scene, which will most likely return to more general comments.

This is not necessarily going to be the final order, and I expect it to change quite a bit as I begin getting my interviews. However, I was hoping to establish the general categories so that I may better prepare my interview questions. In addition, the



interviews will not be sectioned into chunks. Rather, multiple people might have something to say about certain subjects, so expect the interviews to be woven together, along with B-roll.

### ***Visuals***

For the visuals, I will use the actual footage of the interviews. I will probably conduct multi-camera interviews, so I may be able to have some different visuals to choose from. I will be filming one of the tours given by On Location Tours, and this footage should serve as a nice mechanism to transition between segments and support the content of the interviews. I will also use clips of movies filmed in the area in order to support points made in the interviews and to act as transitions between segments. Where appropriate, pictures could also be useful supporting visuals. These will be useful primarily for events or projects from the past that I cannot get footage for or for plans in the future, beyond the timeline of this project. In addition, I am hoping to film some of the “behind the scenes” activities. This should include a casting call, location scouting, or any meetings and conferences that I might gain access to. Finally, if appropriate, I can use animation to illustrate a point. In addition to the visuals listed above, I will be looking for cues in the interviews for some other opportunities for B-roll footage.

### ***Locations***

Overall, I will be filming in a variety of locations. Some will be indoor, some outdoor, some in the city, some outside, etc. Some of the locations I intend to use are:

- Tour bus
- Flowers by Thornton

- L Street Tavern
- The Boston Commons
- South Boston
- Other locations in Boston (TBD)
- Massachusetts Film Office
- Boston Casting
- Boston Casting casting call location (TBD)
- Plymouth Rock Studios (office)
- Waverly Oaks Golf Course (intended location for PRS)

This list will expand as I learn more from my interviewers.

***Intent***

This film is intended to provide the audience with a better understanding of what a motion picture industry means for the state of Massachusetts. I will show the character of the city, the identity of the local industry, and possibilities the industry opens up. I hope to generate an interest and excitement with my audience about the productions coming to Boston, and I hope the audience will learn something new through watching the film.

Ali Brace  
 MAS Thesis  
 December 16, 2011  
 Preliminary Script

*Note:* This is a very preliminary script. It is more of a sketch of the outline, so that I can fill it in with details when I have more information about my interviews. My storyboard will also begin to take shape as I get this other information.

Sound	Visuals	Time
Scene 1 – Intro <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low-volume sound from B-roll</li> <li>• Voiceover</li> <li>• Music</li> </ul>	Scene 1- Intro <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• B-roll</li> </ul>	1 minute
Title <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music – faded to silence</li> </ul>	Title <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TBD</li> </ul>	10 seconds
Scene 2 – General Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Natural sound from B-roll</li> <li>• Some interview sound will overlap with B-roll visuals</li> </ul>	Scene 2 – General Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MCU of subjects</li> <li>• Interview backgrounds will likely be in offices</li> <li>• B-roll - TBD</li> </ul>	3 minutes
Scene 3 – Tourism 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural sound from B-roll</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Sound from film clips</li> <li>• Some interview sound will overlap</li> </ul>	Scene 3 – Tourism 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bus B-roll</li> <li>• MCU interviews</li> <li>• Film clips</li> </ul>	2 minutes

<p>with B-roll and Film clip visuals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music</li> </ul> <p>Scene 4 – Movie Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Natural sound from B-roll</li> <li>• Sound from film clips</li> <li>• Some interview sound will overlap with B-roll</li> <li>• Music</li> </ul>	<p>Scene 4 – Movie Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MCU interviews</li> <li>• Film Clips</li> <li>• Casting call</li> <li>• Impromptu Interviews</li> <li>• Waverly Oaks Golf Course</li> <li>• PRS site plans</li> </ul>	<p>4 minutes</p>
<p>Scene 5 – Small Businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Natural sound from B-roll</li> <li>• Sound from film clips</li> </ul>	<p>Scene 5 – Small Businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MCU interviews</li> <li>• Flowers by Thornton</li> <li>• L Street Tavern</li> <li>• Film clips</li> </ul>	<p>2 minutes</p>
<p>Scene 5 – Tourism 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Natural sound from B-roll</li> <li>• Sound from film clips</li> <li>• Music</li> <li>• Some sound from interviews will</li> </ul>	<p>Scene 5 – Tourism 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MCU Interviews</li> <li>• Impromptu interviews from tour</li> <li>• Film clips</li> <li>• Bus tour</li> </ul>	<p>2 minutes</p>



## Final Script

*Note:* Timing is approximate

Sound	Visuals	Time
Scene 1 – Intro <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I’m Shipping Up to Boston” – Dropkick Murphys</li> <li>• sound from movie clips</li> </ul>	Scene 1- Intro <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16 clips of Hollywood Movies</li> </ul>	45 seconds
Title <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sound of breaking glass</li> <li>• Audio from beginning of Scene 2 under title and black</li> </ul>	Title <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Film clips shatter and disappear</li> <li>• ‘ “Hollywood East” The Story of the Massachusetts Film Industry’ is revealed</li> </ul>	20 seconds
Scene 2 – Introduction to Tax Credits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening Interviews</li> </ul>	Scene 2 – General Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talking heads</li> <li>• B-roll - TBD</li> </ul>	1.5 minutes
Scene 3 – Tourism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural sound from B-roll</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Sound from film clips</li> <li>• Some interview sound will overlap with B-roll and</li> </ul>	Scene 3 – Tourism 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bus B-roll</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Film clips</li> <li>• Landscapes</li> <li>• Footage from Gilded Lillys shoot</li> </ul>	6 minutes

<p>Film clip visuals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music</li> </ul> <p>Scene 4 – Crew and Small Businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Natural sound from B-roll</li> <li>• Sound from film clips</li> <li>• Some interview sound will overlap with B-roll</li> </ul>	<p>Scene 4 – Crew and Small Businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Comparison of businesses in movies vs. real life</li> <li>• Crew working on Gilded Lillys</li> </ul>	<p>4 minutes</p>
<p>Scene 5 – Plymouth Rock Studios</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>	<p>Scene 5 – Plymouth Rock Studios</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Pitch book</li> <li>• Waverly Oaks golf course</li> </ul>	<p>2 minutes</p>
<p>Scene 5 – Portrayal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sound from film clip</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Some sound from interviews will overlap with film clip</li> </ul>	<p>Scene 5 – Portrayal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Film clip</li> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>	<p>1 minute</p>
<p>Scene 6 – End (general)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview sound bytes</li> <li>• B-roll</li> <li>• Music</li> </ul>	<p>Scene 6 – End (general)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview sound bytes</li> <li>• B-roll – TBD</li> </ul>	<p>1 minute</p>

Credits • Music	Credits • Credits	45 seconds
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# Sketch of Opening Sequence

Sketch of Opening Sequence

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**Audio:**  
Sound from clips;  
maybe music

1

Move to corner

Hollywood film  
clip 1

**Angle:**

**Shot:**

**Location:**

**Time:**

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**Audio:**  
Sound from clips,  
maybe music

2

Hollywood film clip

Hollywood film  
clip 2

**Angle:**

**Shot:**

**Location:**

**Time:**

---

**Audio:**  
Sound from clips;  
maybe music

3

Film clip	Film clip	Film clip	Film clip
Film clip	Film clip	Film clip	Film clip
Film clip	Film clip	Film clip	Film clip
Film clip	Film clip	Film clip	Film clip

**Angle:**

**Shot:**

**Location:**

**Time:**

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**Audio:**  
Shatter

4

Hollywood East

**Angle:**

**Shot:**

**Location:**

**Time:**

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**NAME:**

**PAGE:**

## **Lisa Strout Interview**

1. How did you come to your current role at the Massachusetts Film Office (MFO)?
  - a. What were you doing before this position?
2. What is the role of the MFO?
3. What are your primary responsibilities at the MFO?
4. What do you think accounts for the growth in the Massachusetts Film Industry in recent years?
5. What is the purpose of the Film Tax Credits (FTC)?
6. Could you please tell me how the tax credits work?
7. Are they working effectively and yielding what the state expected?
8. What do you think about the criticisms of how the tax credits work?
  - a. Over the holidays, there were some articles criticizing the tax credits – about people abusing the system to essentially steal money and about transferable tax credits. Do you think the tax credits are efficient?
  - b. People complain that the tax credits are too expensive of a program and that perhaps the money spent on the credits should be allocated towards a different policy. Do you think this criticism is well founded?
9. What do you think would happen to MA's film industry if the FTC were eliminated?
10. Do you think there is an economic benefit to having a film industry in MA?
11. Are there other non-economic benefits of having an established film industry here?
12. Do you think there is something special about the state of MA, other than the tax credits, that draws filmmakers to the area?
  - a. For example, there has been an increase in movies filmed here that have stories tied to the location (e.g. The Departed or The Fighter).
13. Could you please talk a little bit about the process attracting a production to film in MA?

14. What are the biggest challenges you face in convincing a production to film here?
15. I took a bus tour last weekend of the TV and movie sites in Boston. Do you think tourism benefits from having a local film industry?
16. How do you factor the benefits from tourism into the analysis of the effectiveness of the FTC?
17. What are some other peripheral benefits to having an established film industry in MA?
18. How does having an established film industry affect the identity of local communities, and of the state in general?
19. How does the recent growth in the industry affect the local crew base?
20. Film (and TV) production has many different components. What does it take to make a film?
21. Which part(s) of the production process does MA have the capabilities to support?
22. What can be done to increase our capacity to complete other phases of the process?
23. Does our inability to see projects through affect our ability to land major productions?
24. What sort of future do you see for the MA film industry?
25. Is there any link between an active film industry and the schools in the area, like BU and Emerson, among others?
26. Do you have an experience you would like to share about how rewarding it can be to attract a production?
27. Is there anything else you would like people to know about the importance of film production for the growing film industry in MA?

## Dave Aspro Interview

1. How did you come to your current role with On Location Tours (OLT)?
  - a. What other work do you do apart from the tour (acting, radio, etc.)
2. Could you please tell me about OLT (ownership, history, other cities?)?
3. What are your responsibilities at OLT?
4. Please tell me about the tours offered through OLT.
5. What sort of training do you go through to lead a tour?
  - a. What sort of information do they give you?
6. How often are the OLT tours sold out?
7. In general, who is taking the tours?
8. An article on Miss A says, "... this isn't your typical sightseeing experience. It's better...Our tour guide, David Aspro, was witty, charming, and most importantly played to the audience, as opposed to sticking to a stale script." What is the purpose of designing the tour the way it is?
9. How do you approach your audience? Is it different every tour?
10. What is generally the reaction of your audience to the tour?
11. Could you please tell me about some of your most memorable tours?
12. Do you think tourism benefits from having a local film industry?
13. What do you think accounts for the growth in the Massachusetts Film Industry in recent years?
14. In your opinion, is there something special about the state of MA, other than the tax credits, that draws filmmakers to the area?
15. You are clearly very familiar with where many TV shows and movies have filmed. How does having an established film industry affect the identity of local communities where productions have filmed, and of the state in general?
16. What do you think about the credits and criticism?
17. As the tour leader, you get to see and experience the end of a very long process/journey...even past the distribution stage. Can you comment on how

much goes into taking a film from start to finish and how many people a single project reaches?

18. On the tour, you mention a few times “I was on set during this shoot.” Were you invited on set as part of OLT or was it through a different connection to this industry?
19. What is your experience with the industry here, outside of your affiliations with OLT?
20. Could you tell me a little bit about what it’s like being in an actor in a state where this industry is up-and-coming?
21. You are a Massachusetts native. As a Bostonian, what do you think about all the activity?
22. What do you think is the future of the Massachusetts film industry?
23. Is there anything else you would like to add?

## Joe DiLorenzo Interview

1. Please tell me a little bit about who you are and what your affiliation is with Plymouth Rock Studios (PRS).
2. How did you come to your current role with PRS?
  - a. What were you doing before this position?
3. What do you think is responsible for the growth in the MA film and television industry in recent years?
4. What was the original vision for PRS?
5. Could you please explain what a sound stage is?
  - a. How is a sound stage used?
  - b. What are some famous productions or TV series that used sound stages?
6. What is the process of taking a project like PRS from an idea to a finished studio?
  - a. What are the steps involved from start to finish?
7. Who is involved in this process?
8. What does it mean for a studio to get commitment letters from companies?
9. What are the biggest challenges of creating a studio?
10. In your opinion, what could a studio do for the film and television industry in MA?
11. Could you talk about the economic impact a studio of this size has on the state of MA?
12. Would the costs and benefits of a studio spill over into other industries?
13. Do you think the local industry can survive without a studio?
14. How would a soundstage/studio affect the local community?
15. Do you think it would affect the identity of that community?
16. If you are comfortable talking about it, what happened to the project?
17. Who are the biggest supporters of the project?
18. Is anyone really against it?
19. How has the vision for PRS changed over time?

- a. Are there other changes?
20. How many people are still involved in the project?
21. Are you hopeful for the project's future?
22. What does it mean to say MA could be "Hollywood East?"
- a. Vs. New York and LA
23. Would having a studio in MA affect the market share of the film and television industry?
24. As you know, there are many colleges and universities in the Boston area.  
Would there be any link between a studio and these schools?
25. What sort of future do you think the MA film industry has?
26. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

## Lynne Viti Interview

1. Please tell me a little bit about who you are and what course you are teaching.
  - a. Why did you choose to teach the Boston on Film course?
  - b. How popular was the class?
  - c. Will you teach it again?
  - d. What sort of work do the students do in your class?
  - e. What topics do you cover in your course?
2. What do you think is the reason for growth in the MA film industry in recent years?
3. In your opinion, is there something special about the state of MA, other than the tax credits, that draws filmmakers to the area?
4. How does a production affect the local community when a movie or television show comes to a town or neighborhood?
5. Are you a MA native?
6. Do you think that the movies and TV shows that film here (or are based here) accurately portray the communities?
7. How do movies and TV shows affect the way others see a community?
8. How do movies and TV shows affect the way a community sees itself?
9. What are the spillover effects after a production has filmed in a location (can be economic, concrete, abstract, good, bad, etc.)?
10. How do you think the film and television industry affects tourism, if at all?
11. Do you think a movie or television show can change the history (perceived and/or real) of that neighborhood?
12. To what extent do you think a location of a film or television show drives the story?
13. Can you speak a little bit about the lack of infrastructure (soundstages, back lots, etc.) in MA? In your opinion, are these necessary for the future of the MA film and television industry?
14. What are the benefits of having a local production industry?



15. What are the costs (monetary or otherwise) of having a local production industry?
16. I know you are also a lawyer. Are you familiar at all with intellectual rights laws? How do these affect the MA film industry, if at all?
17. We have a number of colleges and universities in MA. Do you think there is or can be a connection between the MA film industry and higher education?
18. How have your students' attitudes towards the course topic changed over the course of the semester?
  - a. Has the course increased excitement about the industry?
  - b. Do your students view film in a different way?
  - c. Do they view MA in a different way?
19. How has teaching this course changed your attitude towards the topic?
  - a. Has it increased your excitement about the industry?
  - b. Do you view film in a different way?
  - c. Do you view MA in a different way?
20. Can you speak or speculate about the jobs the industry creates?
21. How are the jobs (and the people who fill them) of film and television crews perceived?
22. What do you think is the future of the MA industry?
23. Is there anything else you would like to add?
24. As an academic, why do you think people are saying we're on the verge?  
What's keeping people from investing in Boston?

## Stephen Bruno Interview

1. Please tell me who you are and what your relationship is to the film industry.
2. Where are you from?
3. Please tell me a little bit about what your experience has been in the industry.
4. What is your favorite moment working in the film industry?
5. Do you work on both Hollywood and independent productions? What is the difference between the two, if any?
6. What are your thoughts about where the industry in MA is now and where you think it's going?
7. Do you think we are losing business to other states? If so, why?
8. Do you think that MA's lack of formal infrastructure affects our business?
9. What is the state doing to attract films right now?
10. What is it like being on set? (number of departments, people, community).
  - a. What is it like being part of the film community?
  - b. Please tell me about the different personalities in the different departments.
  - c. How do the different departments interact, if at all?
11. What is the hardest part about working in the industry?
12. Does working in the film industry affect your normal business as a hairdresser?
13. How did you originally get into styling hair for motion picture?
14. Is working in this industry just a job?
15. Why do you love film?
16. What is the process of coming up with different hairstyles for the productions?
  - a. What preparations go into this?
17. Could you please explain the hiring process?
  - a. There are a number of different departments on set. How are they organized?

18. How do you go about training the next generation?
19. What is the process of becoming a union member?
20. What are your most memorable days (best and worst experiences) on set?
21. In your opinion, what are the benefits and costs, monetary or otherwise, of having an established film industry here?
22. In your opinion, what's missing in the MA film and television industry?
23. What is the biggest obstacle that you think MA as a whole has to overcome?
24. How do you think Hollywood portrays Boston and MA in general?
25. How do you think these portrayals change people's perception of our state?
26. What do you think is the future for the MA film industry?
27. Is there anything else you would like to add?

## Angela Peri Interview

1. How did you come to your current role at Boston Casting?
  - a. What were you doing before this position?
2. Why did you choose Boston?
3. What is the role of Boston Casting?
4. What are your primary responsibilities?
5. What do you think accounts for the growth in the Massachusetts Film Industry in recent years?
6. What do you think about the criticisms of how the tax credits work?
7. What do you think would happen to MA's film industry if the FTC were eliminated?
8. Do you think there is something special about the state of MA, other than the tax credits, that draws filmmakers to the area?
9. Could you please talk a little bit about the casting process?
10. What do you look for when you're called to cast extras for a movie like The Fighter? (authenticity)
11. What are the biggest challenges you face as a casting company?
12. Do you have an experience you would like to share about how rewarding it can be to cast a production?
13. What types of projects do you cast?
14. When you cast a project, who is your main contact on the project? (Producer? Director? Someone else?)
15. How does having an established film industry affect the identity of local communities, and of the state in general?
16. I saw in my inbox that BC is casting actors as tour guides. Can you say which company? What is involved in auditioning for a tour?
17. Do you think tourism plays a role in the impact of the film and television industry in MA?
18. Can you speak a little about the actor unions?
19. What does the local industry do for local talent? (showcase? "big break?")

20. How does the recent growth in the industry affect the local crew base?
21. Film (and TV) production has many different components. What does it take to make a film?
22. You were on the board of the Mass. Production Coalition. Could you please explain what this organization is/does and what your role is/was?
23. I spoke to Joe DiLorenzo of PRS the other day. Do you think we need a studio in MA?
24. What sort of future do you see for the MA film industry?
25. Is there anything else you would like people to know?