

HYPER LOCAL

FILM / TELEVISION



ONTARIO

**A Framework for Accelerating
Creative Hubs in Mid-Sized
Cities to Decentralize, Grow,
and Future-Proof Ontario's
Domestic Production Industry**

Crew and Cast of "DOOM BOOGIE" filming on location at Dog Lake in Battersea, ON (Photography Credit by J. Joly)



KINGSTON
— Economic Development —

KINGSTON
— Film & Media —

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Cast and Crew of "DEN MOTHER CRIMSON" between scenes in studio. West End of Kingston, ON (Photography Credit David Bastedo)

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2024, Ontario's Film and Television industry experienced a 40% rebound over 2023, contributing \$2.6B to the economy and creating 34,836 full-time and spinoff jobs. Domestic production made up 35% of the total spend, while foreign production peaked at \$1.65B.¹

Hollywood service production dominance in the *Greater Toronto–Hamilton Area (GTHA)*, combined with the rising cost of living and doing business, continues to create downward pressure on low- and mid-level domestic producers. While Northern Ontario once offered some relief, its regional incentive is increasingly oversubscribed, and the setting does not suit all projects. To ensure the sustainability of independent emerging producers, there is a need to develop new hubs in affordable, accessible mid-sized Ontario cities like Kingston.

STATE OF THE UNION | The film and television landscape has undergone a dramatic transformation over the past decade, driven by the rise of big streamers. This shift has moved the focus from long-term content value to short-term profit maximization, compounded by macroeconomic threats such as tariffs and disruptive technologies like generative AI.

DESTINATION VS SECTOR | Currently, a *Big Little City* (BLC) — such as Kingston — is viewed by most producers as a filming destination, but with strategic investment into local talent, infrastructure and services, these BLCs can quickly evolve into cost-effective growing production hubs. The *Hyperlocal Ontario Action Plan* (HOAP) detailed within is a tested framework to achieve these goals.

HANDS-ON TRAINING IS KEY | HOAP emphasizes on-set training as the best method to build a local workforce. The model focuses on diversifying talent pipelines via a mix of entry-level and established players to create lasting connections within regional ecosystems. Developing new diverse production sectors in BLCs has the added benefit of retaining youth who often leave to pursue creative industry careers in larger centres.

CASE STUDIES | Far from theoretical, HOAP examines the BLC of Victoria, BC, exploring how it evolved into a sustainable \$50M+ annual production sector. It also breaks down two end-to-end original independent feature films (with average budgets of \$1M), produced by the author in Kingston, to uncover key learnings and demonstrate the effectiveness of this homegrown, hyperlocal training model.

RISKS & THREATS | BLCs risk losing trained crew without consistent production and remain vulnerable to macro-economic pressures. HOAP addresses this through strategic, timely and targeted investment.

GOALS | BLCs like Kingston present a emerging and pressing opportunity to decentralize the province's domestic industry and drive economic growth. HOAP was conceived as a framework informed by learnings and presenting recommendations to help activate and accelerate production hubs in BLCs. Along with helping to expand the potential of local creative clusters, HOAP's goal is to ensure that Ontario's film and television industry remains competitive, growing and more resilient to withstand both current headwinds and future unknowns.

¹ [Ontario Creates — 2024 Film and Television Production Statistics](#)

2.0 ONTARIO FILM BEGINNINGS



Trenton Film Plant (1917-1934) - Trenton, ON (Ontario Archives)

When the public thinks of film and series production in Canada, cities like Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal come to mind. These big centres have studios, crews, equipment and film support services.

But consider that Trenton, Ontario - a BLC just two hours east of Toronto was the nation's first "Hollywood North." From 1917 until 1934, the *Trenton Film Plant* produced over 1,500 original silent films that were exported across North America and Europe - including Canada's first big-budget film "Carry on Sergeant!"² Shot for \$500,000 in 1928 - adjusted for inflation - would be approximately \$8.6M today.

So, what happened to Trenton's booming industry? Silent films fell out of favour as the sound-era was born. The disruption of 'Talkies,' changed the business overnight and the *Ontario Motion Picture Bureau*, who had acquired the Plant in 1923, failed to invest in this new technology. By 1934, Premier Mitchell Hepburn proclaimed that Ontario should not be in the movie

business, shuttered the studio and destroyed most of the film reels.³

Ontario's long cold winter for production lasted almost four decades. The majority of moving images and stories of Canada that the nation's moviegoers experienced during this period were an overabundance of Mountie pictures produced out of foreign studios in Hollywood and the UK.⁴

This changed in 1967, when the Federal Government launched the *Canadian Film Development Corporation (CFDC)*, a \$10M investment fund to develop Canadian features to compete with Hollywood fare dominating the nation's screens. But it wasn't until the 1970's with the emergence of the "tax shelter era" via the *Capital Cost Allowance (CCA)* that Canada's film industry took off.

The CCA - which received royal assent in 1974 - allowed Canadians to deduct 100% of their investment in certified Canadian films from their taxable income. These projects could also access the CFDC, which had grown to \$25M by 1976. In its first year, three features were produced, a number that would grow to 77 by 1979 - unprecedented growth when you consider that Hollywood made 99 films in the same year.⁵ The majority of these productions were genre films, (i.e. science fiction, horror, etc.) and despite public and cultural critique, these features launched the careers of Ontario directors

² "Lights, camera, Trenton: How a small Ontario town became Hollywood North" By David R. Corrigan, *TVO Today*, December 2018

³ "When Trenton - not Toronto - was considered Hollywood North" By Linda Barnard, *The Toronto Star* November 9, 2017

⁴ "The Canadian Film Encyclopedia, a publication of The Film Reference Library/a division of TIFF" By Various Authors (*Bibliography*)

⁵ "Canada's 'tax shelter films' were pretty bad ... or were they?" By Chris Dart, *CBC Online*. April 19, 2023

and producers Ivan Reitman, David Cronenberg, Bob Clarke, Don Carmody, Robert Lantos to name a few.

More importantly, this pipeline of domestic low-budget films trained local crews, financed equipment and built up Toronto to become a world-class production centre. Almost 50 years later, aided by Canada's exchange rate, the *Federal Production Services Tax Credit* (PSTC) and *Ontario Production Services Tax Credit* (OPSTC), the province set a record \$3.15B in production in 2022. This growth was fuelled by the rise of online streaming over the previous decade, creating a production boom in and around the GTHA. Netflix, Amazon Prime, Paramount+ and Disney+ have since opened Canadian offices in the city.

A victim of its own success, in 2025 location permitting in the GTHA has become stricter as neighbourhoods push back, echoing frictions in places like New York City and Atlanta. Meanwhile, GTHA crews face longer commutes⁶, high home prices⁷ and worsening congestion.⁸ All of these factors contribute to downward pressure on independent producers.

Domestic producers increasingly look to Northern Ontario which benefits from the Film and Television funding stream introduced by the [*Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation*](#) (NOHFC) in

2005. The fund is regularly oversubscribed and not all projects are suitable from a creative standpoint. Regions like South-Eastern Ontario — *that share similar economic challenges as the North* — would benefit from sectoral support to better accelerate the industry.⁹

Beginning with the fires in Los Angeles, to tariff threats,¹⁰ to the rapid evolution of Generative AI,¹¹ the global film and television industry in 2025 has faced a series of compounding challenges. These external headwinds underscore the need to identify new 'made-at-home' strategies to protect Ontario's domestic sector.

Consider a BLC like Kingston. Sitting midway between the GTHA, Montreal and Ottawa, *The Limestone City* is ideally positioned to quickly grow and transform into a vital affordable production ecosystem. Furthermore, a new creator class, exemplified by top talents like *MrBeast* based in Greenville, NC (pop. ~73,000) - whose subscribers now surpass Netflix¹² – demonstrates how independents can now fully bypass traditional content models and build profitable businesses in smaller centres. As macro forces in politics and technology continue to reshape Canada's media landscape, investing in BLCs isn't just an opportunity – it's an imperative to ensure sustainability and future-proof Ontario's independent domestic production sector.

⁶ ["How Bad is Toronto's Commute? Study Suggests it's among the Worst in NAmerica"](#) By, Nathan Bawaan, *Toronto Star*, Dec. 11, 2024

⁷ ["Toronto housing is now more Expensive than New York, real estate report finds"](#) By Manuela Vega, *Toronto Star*, April 11, 2024

⁸ ["Toronto Traffic doesn't just seem worse, it is Worse"](#) By Mariya Postelnaya, *The Globe and Mail*, November 12, 2024

⁹ [South Eastern Ontario Production Accelerator Fund](#)

¹⁰ ["Trump orders 100% tariff on foreign-made movies to save 'dying' Hollywood"](#) By Andrea Shalal, *Reuters*, May 5, 2025

¹¹ ["Hollywood's AI Blind Spot: The Fatal Mistake That Will Kill the Industry"](#) By Shelly Palmer, *ShellyPalmer.com*, February 9, 2025

¹² ["The Mozart of the attention economy": MrBeast is the world's biggest YouTube Star"](#) By Mark O'Connell, *The Guardian*, June 3 2025

3.0 ABOUT

The *Hyperlocal Ontario Action Plan* (HOAP) was prepared by J. Joly with assistance from Joanne Archibald and edited by Kate Betts-Wilmott.

J. Joly makes his home on Wolfe Island and first developed a love for the region while attending *Queen's University* in the 1990s. Beginning as a local recording and touring musician, in 1999 he wrote and directed and his first short film that played the first *Kingston Film Festival* in 2000. With no film industry in Kingston, he moved to Toronto where he began his career with *NABET* (film technician's union) and over the last 25 years developed into a writer, producer and financier of independent Canadian features. From the cult hit "WOLFCOP" (2014) to his latest feature "DOOM BOOGIE" (2025), J. has enjoyed producing all across Canada. During the pandemic, he moved back to Kingston and in 2022, co-founded *Branded to Film* (B2F)¹³ a pioneering Kingston-based company with the goal of making original films and growing the local sector. He was recognized in 2024 with an Arts Leader award by the *Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce*. A serial entrepreneur with 30+ years of experience in film, television, music and technology, HOAP benefits from his deep experience and access to top leaders across Canada's media landscape. Both B2F and this paper represent J.'s desire to give back to the BLC that supported his creative development — first in music, then film — and ensure the next generation of creators can stay and build successful careers in their hometown.

Supporting and contributing to HOAP, **Joanne Archibald, PhD**, is a Canadian historian, consultant and instructor at *Queen's University* and the *University of Toronto*. She has worked for *Historica Canada* producing "Heritage Minutes" and now operates *Livy Consulting*, which advises creators needing detailed historical research for their projects, as well as businesses who want to leverage their heritage for greater community impact.

Kate Betts-Wilmott is a writer, editor and consultant. Originally from Toronto, and now based in Kingston, her expertise in public affairs and focus on highly regulated industries was a big asset in helping to refine HOAP's structure and messaging.

On the sustainability front (*Section 16.0*), HOAP benefitted from **Michael Mousa**, who serves as the Chair of the *Carbon Leadership Forum* and for *DIALOG* and recognized as one of *Corporate Knights' 30-Under-30 Sustainability Leaders*.¹⁴

Consulting on the HOAP's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy (*Section 14.0*) is **Sunita Gupta**, a Canadian Certified Inclusion Professional. She is the past *Board Chair for the Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce*, member of the City's *EDI Advisory Committee*, past President of the *India-Canada Association of Kingston* and former Board Director at the *TETT Centre*. Also advising is inter-cultural planner, **Dr. Terri-Lynn Brennan** who combines a 30-year career in education and the social sciences, - from public policy to anthropology - with global

¹³ "*Hyperlocal and Hip: J. Joly's 'Pioneering' Production Model*" By Victoria Ahearn, *Playback Magazine*, September 26, 2022

¹⁴ "*Fired up: Meet 30 youth leaders sparking change*" By Adrai Vasil & Natalie Alocobe, *Corporate Knights*, November 8, 2023

experiences living and working on four continents and 12 countries. Terri-Lynn currently serves as the Executive Director of *LodgePole Arts Alliance* and proudly identifies as mixed Ohnkwéhon:we/ Kanien'kehá:ka/Skaru:re? (Original Peoples/Mohawk/Tuscarora) and British descent from Six Nations of the Grand River, Ireland and England.

Forward-looking in nature, HOAP draws on accepted models, contemporaneous data and insight from industry experts with the goal of building a critical path that any BLC in Ontario can implement at a regional level to build a diverse and scalable production sector that fits their community. A key thrust of HOAP is to retain youth who are drawn to creative industries like film who often leave for bigger centres.

The core tenets of HOAP were implemented and proven out during the production of the first \$1M+ original features developed, produced and delivered from Kingston (*Section 12.0*) along with the second (*Section 13.0*) that build on the learnings from the first film.

The writing style of this plan is designed to be approachable to all readers, especially those who may not be familiar with industry terms. HOAP is designed to educate and inform BLC stakeholders by providing a framework to inspire discussion.

Strategic in nature, HOAP aims to jumpstart sustainable sector growth in BLCs by demonstrating the value of producing that first end-to-end feature that engages regional talent in front of and behind the lens. By initially focusing on supporting low- and mid-level domestic producers to build capacity and scale organically for larger productions to follow.

HOAP would not have been possible without the support of *Ontario Creates*, *Kingston Economic Development Corporation* (regional lead), *Tourism Kingston Film and Media*, *Frontenac Business Solutions* and *Upper Canada Equity Fund* (see Appendix I).



KINGSTON

— *Economic Development* —

KINGSTON

— *Film & Media* —



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Cover & Layout by J. Joly

4.0 STATE OF THE UNION

"Yep, streamers are merging. Pretty soon they're gonna be all on one giant app called cable"

- **Jimmy Fallon** (November 9th/2023 on Disney buying Hulu)

The traditional broadcaster carriage model had one of the best profit maximization models in all of media, but in the last decade it was abandoned as old studios opted to compete with Silicon Valley giants like *Amazon* and *Apple* at their own game. Having launched in 2007, Netflix gained a 10-year streaming head start, prompting Hollywood to aggressively invest in catching up. Even Disney, it wasn't until November 2018 that Disney+ finally entered the market.

The number of original scripted series tripled in a decade from 210 in 2009 to 599 in 2022 – but there is no evidence that the subscriber consumption rose at the same rate. Creating an unsustainable glut and the phrase "Peak TV".¹⁵

Two years after *Disney+* launched, *Netflix* experienced its first-ever subscriber loss in April 2022, resulting in \$50B in value evaporating in a single day.¹⁶ Debt took a back seat to growing subscribers, as Wall Street placed profit above all else.

Netflix's impact on Hollywood mirrors *Uber's* disruption of the taxi industry. Streaming isn't going anywhere — audiences are hooked. This all came to a head during the SAG-WGA strikes in May

2023, when *Disney+* took a \$1.5B impairment charge by cutting 50 titles to save on taxes; HBO Max, Paramount+, and Hulu purged entire unaired seasons; and a \$200M J.J. Abrams series in development for 4 years was abruptly cancelled.¹⁷ The 2023 strikes could be seen as less about protecting creators and talent from technology like Generative AI and more a strategized force majeure by studios to restore their balance sheets.

At the mercy of shareholders, studios are calibrated to focus on short-term bottom-line, rather than long-term future proofing. In the pre-streaming era, they maximized their hits through box office, home video, syndication, etc. Streaming however operates on a fixed subscription model where a hit show does not generate extra revenue, and new content is prioritized.

With box office still below pre-pandemic levels¹⁸ and more mergers expected, cost cutting will continue to impact budgets. In 2022, *Warner* and *Discovery* laid off 850 workers in tandem with \$3.5B in write-offs.¹⁹ In 2024, *Paramount* laid off 2000 in advance of the *Skydance* merger.²⁰ In this era of accelerated media consolidation, the bottom-line — *not content* — is king.

¹⁵ ["Disney Layoffs Corporate Employees"](#) By Christi Carras, LAT, Sept 26/24 + Rick Porter, ["Peak TV count 599 Shows"](#) THR, Jan 12/23

¹⁶ ["Netflix Earnings"](#) By Frank Palotta, CNN Business, October 18, 2022.

¹⁷ ["Disney Removes Dozens Of Series From Disney+ & Hulu"](#) By Nellie Andreeva Deadline, May 18, 2023 3:43pm

¹⁸ ["Will the domestic box office ever return to its pre-pandemic revenue?"](#) By Phillip Molnar, San Diego Union-Tribune, Jan 9, 2025

¹⁹ ["Warner Discovery Merger Under Fire From Lawmakers Asking Justice Dept. to Revisit Deal"](#) By Winston Cho, Variety April 7, 2023

²⁰ ["Paramount to Lay Off 15% U.S. Workforce, About 2,000 Employees, in Fresh Round of Cuts"](#) By Todd Spangler, Variety, Aug 8, 2024

5.0 AN INDUSTRY IN FLUX

“New platforms and creative concepts are taking hold and consumer behaviour is changing. As long as that continues, you can expect continued M&A in media and entertainment.”²¹

- Edward Lee (Kirkland & Ellis)

Despite cost-cutting, sector contraction from the “Peak TV” era, Canada’s weak dollar, strong production incentives and a mature sector will ensure streamers continue to produce in the GTHA.²² In 2024, *Amazon/MGM Studios* signed a long-term lease for stages, workshops and offices, totalling over 160,000 square feet, at *Pinewood Toronto Studios* to establish a full-time production hub.²³

The rapid rise of inexpensive democratized tools like Generative AI, and tech-savvy producers ready to adopt it, presents an opportunity for BLCs to attract the next generation of creators that require less to deliver more. Consider micro studios like *Staircase Studios AI* that demonstrate how micro-teams using ethical AI workflows are able to deliver “Near-major-studio-quality” at budgets under \$500K.²⁴

In the coming years, independent producers will increasingly harness advanced technologies to deliver high-quality content once reserved for major studios. These producers, based in affordable BLCs, will operate like studios—smaller, smarter, and greener—while cultivating direct relationships with audiences for monetization. As consolidation narrows opportunities, HOAP recognizes that success will favour

those who leverage innovative tools to preserve creative autonomy and increasing reduce the costs of production.

BLCs benefit from lower operating expenses, greater mobility, and the flexibility to create agile, efficient sectors free from the constraints of legacy systems and organizations in expensive, congested media hubs like the GTHA.

By embracing decentralized, hyperlocal models and capitalizing on Ontario’s competitive advantages — such as government incentives and regional bonuses — BLCs will not only support low- and mid-level domestic independent producers but will strengthen and diversify Ontario’s film and television industry.



The Author in Cannes, France to screen a ‘work-in-progress’ of “DEN MOTHER CRIMSON” at Frontières (Self-Portrait)

²¹ *“Wall Street’s M&A Sharks Are Ready for a Feeding Frenzy of Hollywood Deals”* By Winston Cho, *Hollywood Reporter*, Sept 6, 2023

²² *“Massive Layoffs Period in Silicon Valley and Tech,”* By Daria Spizheva, *Turnkey-labs*, June 2, 2023

²³ *“Amazon MGM Plans Toronto Production Hub With Five Stages Leased From Pinewood Group”* By Etan Vlessing, *THR*, Jan 17, 2024

²⁴ *“New AI Player Staircase Studios Formed By ‘Divergent’ Producer Pouya Shahbazian”* By Dade Hayes, *Deadline*, March 4, 2025

6.0 DESTINATION vs SECTOR

*"We need to think of creative financing models to get content made. We don't have the budgets of our competitors... The economics of partnering with Canadians make a lot of financial sense"*²⁵

- Brad Schwartz (President, CW Entertainment)

Film production is a multifaceted, multi-party endeavor, and for a series — *it is that* — plus an often annually recurring endeavour as new seasons are ordered. Most BLCs have already experienced some level of production in their region, generally from a visiting GTHA production. At some planned moment 50+ crew and cast arrive. Hotel rooms are booked. Locals are sometimes hired for menial tasks. Some crew per diem is spent in bars. Only to be packed up and gone within a week. There is no cadence to this activity, only the hope that in the future this activity may potentially return.

This is the typical film experience in communities more than 150 kilometres outside of the GTHA. These stints of "location exploitation" occur more often if there is a unique local location asset, such as the [Kingston Penitentiary](#) - a decommissioned Federal prison, originally opened in 1835 and mothballed in 2013.

Importing a crew can be cost-prohibitive due to the travel, housing and food for the length of the pre-production and production phase which could be several months for features or half a year for a series (see *Appendix IV*). The reason? Film productions that shoot for 5 days outside the GTHA, or a series that shoots the number of remote location days equal to the number of episodes can receive a 10% regional bonus on eligible spend.

Post-production is generally done back in the GTHA where a producer has access to editors and post-production and services needed to complete and deliver a project.

Despite these destination productions happening intermittently and often months or even years apart, a BLC may believe because of these rare bursts of activity it has an industry. Surveying Kingston locals, there are still those in 2025, who brag about when Guillermo Del Toro took over the streets around City Hall in 2014 to film "Crimson Peak" like it was yesterday.

Local hires on these visiting productions typically consist of unskilled labour, including background performers, security and day labourers. In terms of local spend these destination towns can expect hotel bookings, location fees, fuel, permits, etc. — and what the crew spends their per diem on, such as a dinner out or souvenir.

What about the skilled jobs like makeup, set decorators and carpenters? Could they not be hired locally? Potentially in a shadow capacity, but film production is not like other job sectors. A hair stylist with experience operating their own shop cannot simply walk onto a set and get to work given the etiquette and specific process methodology. These core skills are transferable, but require time and experience, apprenticing before they have the acumen to work on the lead actors.

²⁵ *"The CW's Brad Schwartz looks north for network's future"* By Amber Dowling, *Playback Magazine*, March 10, 2023

Finally, a producer avoids any interruption to a department's chemistry and overall crew dynamic that onboarding unproven individuals presents. From the time the production arrives at a remote location the crew have been working together for weeks in the case of a film, to several months or years in the case of a series.

Location exploitation cannot be forecasted and therefore is not a business. In order to change this cycle, BLCs must invest in a trained local crew in every category, i.e., the backbone of the industry. Two crews are preferable to properly staff not just one production – but overlapping projects, much like what Toronto achieved in the 1970s at the height of the Tax Shelter era.

The investment in workforce development is critical, and not something that can be left to schools to solve. If schools built film crews, Kingston should be buried in crew,

as *Queen's University's Film Department* has been operating since 1969.

There is only one way to train a film crew and that is by working on a professional film set through hands-on experience. Only as an apprentice under an experienced head of department and responding to on-set challenges in real time — *from weather, to personal* — that an individual can learn and thrive within this high intensity collaborative sector.

HOAP was conceived to help identify these friction points for BLCs that want to build a sustainable production sector — instead of being a film destination. To grow into a thriving production centre, stakeholders need to invest in a local workforce. It is not meant to be a magic pill, but a solid first shift that works in concert with other community goals for long-term growth and success in BLCs.



Cast and Crew of "DOOM BOOGIE" filming on location, downtown on King Street Kingston, ON / (Photography Credit — J. Joly)

7.0 ALL GIANTS START SMALL

"If a film industry is what you want, then you have to compete. If you want to be in the game, you have to pay. But the numbers have got to stack up. And what these films bring and the employment are formidable figures."

- Sir Peter Jackson (Filmmaker/Entrepreneur)

Consider that even the multi-billion dollar film and television sectors like Toronto were born out of that first local producer and scruffy eager talent pool. What begins as a grassroots movement inevitably collides with local vendors that learn to serve these independent productions. Soon these players become fixtures as their momentum and pipeline grows.

Now a half-century later, the screen-based industry in GTHA is fully matured and able to handle dozens of end-to-end studio productions simultaneously. The producers, crew, actors and providers all live, work and spend their earnings in the region. Like other big media centres, Toronto grew their sector over time, from very primitive beginnings into the sophisticated industries they are today.

But as the GTHA grew, so did competing interests, bringing a new set of pain points for low- and mid-level production.

Between 2010 and 2025 the GTHA population grew from 2,615,060 to an estimate of 2,933,663 — (12.2%).²⁶ This growth is not just the plight of independent filmmakers — but also musicians and artists, as once affordable rehearsal and studio spaces are sold off.²⁷

Initially, Hamilton provided a sanctuary for domestic projects, but as streamers grew and looked to also leverage the regional bonus, in 2022 *'The Hammer'* set new production records with 177 productions. Up 16% from 2021 (152), Hamilton now faces the same stresses as Toronto.²⁸ At the forefront is the matter of crew safety who often commute for an hour or more from the surrounding region, to work a full day (10+ hours) and then head home in traffic that is increasingly congested.

The past decade saw an exodus of Toronto's creator class to Hamilton in search of affordability. Coined by some as *The Big Smoke's Brooklyn*, home prices quickly caught up - and like the Greater Los Angeles Area - the GTHA become the megacity reality. Hamilton is now the third most expensive city in North America, behind Toronto, Vancouver... and more expensive than even New York!²⁹

Independent creators have always gone to where there is the greatest affordability to pursue their work. Like the industrial lofts that once provided cheap space before being redeveloped, to the migration of artists to Hamilton only to face renewed gentrification, now it is increasingly BLCs like Kingston that fill that needed void.

²⁶ [CanadaPopulation.net](https://www.canadapopulation.net/)

²⁷ ["As Rehearsal Factory closes buildings, Toronto faces a practice space crisis"](#) By Richard Trapunski, Now Toronto December 3, 2021

²⁸ ["Hamilton sets a new record for film and TV productions in 2022"](#) By Daniel Nolan, The Hamilton Spectator, January 20, 2023

²⁹ ["Vancouver, Toronto and Hamilton are the least affordable cities in North America"](#) By Bobby Hristova, CBC News, May 20th, 2021

8.0 THE ART OF PRODUCTION

Producers hire the best crew and talent available within their budget. Leading attributes include an individual's credits and track record of performing their job safely and collaboratively with others to accomplish the slated production. In other words — experience and the right attitude is paramount! Days can be long, expectations high, and moment-to-moment challenges intense. Shooting schedules are as short as 10-12 days for ultra-low budget films, and can be up to six months or more for television series.

Key to understanding the nature of professional feature film and series production is that the budget is finite and every decision counts. To contextualize for outsiders, the production process shares the structure, precision and demands of a professional restaurant — which itself draws from the discipline and hierarchy of the military - hence “kitchen brigade.”³⁰ A film day is mission-focussed, where a planned amount of ‘scenes’ are broken down into ‘setups’ or ‘shots.’ Anecdotally, if a producer does not get the shots, then they lose the battle. Lose enough battles and you’ve lost the war, blown your budget and ended up with an inferior film.

Central to understanding why a producer chooses to film in one location over another is cost, availability of skilled labour and key resources. The majority of foreign producers come to the GTHA, not just because of the exchange rate and the

[Ontario Film and Television Tax Credit](#), but because of the experienced labour pool and depth of services that can deliver the quality demanded by major studios.

In 2025, Oakville was identified as an up-and-coming option within the GTHA: “We’re positioning Oakville as a great alternative for productions if they are having issues finding shots that they need with a small-town vibe or simply requiring an aquatic-based scene,” stated Garrett Rodman (EcDev / City of Oakville).³¹

On Hollywood studio films, above-the-line costs (i.e. actors, directors, producers, writers) often dominate the budget, but on independent domestic productions, the crew as an aggregate make up the lion's share of a budget. Unlike actors, whose work is concentrated for a brief period, key crew often begin during pre-production, with some working through post. The cost of moving, housing and feeding a crew - on top of their rate - makes shooting remotely a deterrent for producers with increasingly tight budgets.

As the industry faces mounting pressure to produce more with less in our streaming age, the need for innovative, cost-effective strategies has never been greater. HOAP learnings were developed in Kingston by the author on 2x end-to-end productions, with the goal of achieving quality commercial, low-budget films, that also served as revue generating training platforms for local crews and vendors.

³⁰ [“How The Military Has Shaped The Way Restaurant Kitchens Operate Today”](#) By Danny Jensen, PBS SoCal, November 7, 2017

³¹ [“The Up and Coming Cities Swiping Hollywood's Dollars”](#) By Etan Vlessing, The Hollywood Reporter - March 19, 2025

9.0 HOW PRODUCERS THINK

"They shot a movie once in my hometown, everybody was in it from miles around..."

"Blow at High Dough" — The Tragically Hip

Now put yourself in the shoes of a producer planning an independent feature. The first question they ask when considering shooting in a BLC like Kingston is, *"How easy is it to get to?"* Assuming their homebase is GTHA where the crew can't drive home at the end of the day, the next questions *"Are there any local crew or production resources?"* Once they identify the deficiencies and extra costs of traveling, housing, feeding, etc. they then explore what incentives are available including grants, regional bonuses and other line-by-line savings.

Apart from the aforementioned costs, are the logistical challenges that need to be considered, including establishing a supply chain between the BLC and the

GTHA, along with "fear of the unknown" costs when shooting in an unfamiliar locale. That said, BLCs looking to grow end-to-end production in their region need to consider the following:

1. Prioritizing the Sector?

- *Is there a local film official?*
- *Depth of local crew and talent?*
- *Calibre of film-savvy vendors?*
- *Track record of successfully hosting productions? And learnings from them.*

2. Connectivity Technology?

- *High speed broadband and robust cellular service?*



Crew of "DOOM BOOGIE" filming on location at the Creekside Bar & Grill in Battersea, ON / (Photography Credit by J. Joly)

3. Diverse Accessible Locations?

- *Unique locations are important – but increasingly it is the mundane that are becoming the hardest to find in the GTHA. These include gas stations, motels, hospitals and other everyday settings.*
- *Most BLCs benefit from being able to go from urban to rural in 20 mins instead of an hour+.*
- *BONUS - if a BLC has a location database that aggregates and continues to populate all the potential locations and looks - like the Kingston Film and Media Office continues to develop.*

4. Night Time Economy?

- *Film is creative by nature and those that work within it - from actors to crew - generally have an entertainment and hospitality outlook and are attracted to quality restaurants, music, theatre and sports. Main streets that roll up at 8pm, over a long shoot, affects production morale.*
- *The benefit is mutual — hotels and restaurants benefit greatly from production. Consider that the Kingston Film Office sprung from Tourism Kingston.*

5. Local Practicums?

- *Pre- and post-secondary institutions often have accredited programs that encourage students to gain real experience as part of their education. High schools are a stable human*

resource, as they live at home and have a local connection, where University students — especially those not from the BLC — often leave when they graduate. Partnerships with local schools can deepen pathways for workforce development.”

6. Transferable Skills?

- *Experienced local professionals with real-world skills are a powerful crew-building resource. These include carpenters, transport, hair and makeup, catering, accountants and more. The majority of crew positions — be they on-set or back office — are vocational in nature and the direct experience of being on a production and shadowing a department head will deliver quick up-skilling results.*

The first step for any BLC is for their municipal leaders to identify and deem film and television production a priority sector. Having a local workforce and infrastructure is one component, but developing strategy to position themselves as a competitive, cost-effective production-ready hub with culture and connectivity goes a long way. By considering these common sense principles presented, BLCs can turn challenges into opportunities and areas to invest in, while continually identifying unique and defining regional virtues to drive long-term growth. Consider Victoria, BC³² (Section 10.0), even on an island without a fund like the NOHFC Victoria is a BLC with an enviable sector.

³² *“Victoria’s film industry reels in another big year, readies to go even bigger” By Michael John Lo, Capital Daily, December 28, 2022*



Crew and Cast of "DOOM BOOGIE" filming on location in Marysville on Wolfe Island, ON / (Photography Credit by J. Joly)

10.0 HYPERLOCAL OBJECTIVES

Hy·per·lo·cal ('hīpər,lōkəl) adjective relating to or focusing on matters concerning a small community or geographical area.

Since launching *B2F Media Inc. (Branded to Film)* in 2022, the author has worked closely with regional stakeholders (*Appendix I*) to develop a local crew base by testing and perfecting HOAP principles on two original feature productions, while in parallel securing land, designing and raising financing to build infrastructure to accelerate new growth (*Section 11.0*).

Kingston is the anchor BLC for the region, but the full production catchment extends east to Belleville, west to Brockville and north to Perth - a 100km circle - with Port Hope and Cornwall as extended visits.

Building on the traction and learnings of HOAP to date, the next steps include:

- *Continue to train diverse local crews on original productions;*

- *Bind creative industries and schools to create a cluster effect;*
- *Spotlight the region to attract new production, talent and tourism;*
- *Meet and work with local vendors (i.e. rentals, catering, etc) so that are production ready; and*
- *Attract experienced professionals looking for that BLC lifestyle.*

At its core, HOAP is a revenue ecosystem, where private and public investment come together to launch a new creative sector that flows direct and indirect revenue back into the community for immediate impact. It also fosters future prosperity, by retaining local talent and attracting new talent, entrepreneurs and outside equity into the BLC for continued growth.

11.0 CASE STUDY : VICTORIA, BC

Victoria, BC (est. 1862) is a compelling case study for Ontario BLCs. Like Kingston, Victoria is a government and university town with diverse locations, lively night-time economy and retiree appeal.³³ Most importantly, just as Kingston is 2.5 hours from the GTHA, Victoria is 2.5 hours from Vancouver — B.C.'s major film production hub.

In 2021, Victoria captured 1.4% of BC's \$3.7B production revenue, while Kingston captured 0.2% of Ontario's \$2.2B industry that same year. BC's industry traditionally outpaces Ontario. Between 2015-2022, BC grew from \$1.9B to \$2.3B³⁴ while Ontario grew from \$1.2B to \$1.5B.³⁵

Consider Victoria is on an island, while Kingston is on the 401 — midway between the GTHA, Montreal, and Ottawa — with rail access. It is a 6-hour drive from NYC.

In 2024, Kingston recorded \$2.6M in economic impact from production. For context, Victoria, BC was generating \$3M in 2014 — but by 2019, had grown to \$19M, and by 2021 it reached \$59M with a local crew base of an estimated 1,300.³⁶

So how did the BLC of Victoria — *without the accessibility advantages of Kingston* — build a high eight-figure industry?³⁷

Starting in the 2010s, independent BC producers began relocating to the Victoria. This created a catalytic effect setting the stage for growth in the island:

1. *Youths that would leave Victoria to pursue careers in Vancouver stayed*
2. *Locals with transferable skills latched onto the industry*
3. *Vancouver film professionals, struggling with the high cost of living, moved to Victoria*

Victoria is a model for what is possible in Ontario's BLCs, as rising costs in the GTHA increasingly prices independent producers out, as they did in Vancouver.

Where Victoria continues to be challenged is in building a studio,³⁸ while Kingston, announced a studio proposal in 2024.³⁹

Recently, the BC government announced an increase to its film incentive from 35% to 40% — a move welcomed by domestic producers and a clear commitment to the sector. Ontario would be wise to consider a similar policy — a move that would especially empower BLCs like Kingston, ensuring accelerated industry growth and diversification across the province.⁴⁰

³³ ["20 Best Places To Retire In Canada"](#) By Christopher Liew, *wealthawesome.com*, April 16, 2025

³⁴ ["BC's film industry has more than doubled in size since 2015"](#) 2022 research report from Vancouver Economic Commission

³⁵ [Ontario Film and Television Production Statistics - Ontario Creates](#)

³⁶ ["Victoria's film industry reels in another big year, readies to go even bigger"](#) By Michael John Lo, *Capital Daily*, December 28, 2022

³⁷ ["Shooting for the Stars: The Unstoppable Growth of Island Films"](#) By David Lennam *The Victoria Times*, April 1, 2021

³⁸ ["Lights, camera, action on Langford film studio – pending adoption"](#) By Bailey Moreton, *Vancouver Island Free Press*, July 5, 2022

³⁹ ["Local production company close to building a 20M Film & TV Studio in Kingstons"](#) By Bill Hutchins, *Kingstonist* November 22, 2024

⁴⁰ ["B.C. budget increases tax credits for Canadian television and film productions"](#) By Dana Gee, *Vancouver Sun*, Mar 11, 2025

12.0 PARALLEL 2-TRACK MODEL

Building a robust sector in Ontario's BLCs requires careful planning, long-term vision from both public and private equity partners. HOAP takes an accelerated approach with a full-stack outlook.

- ***TRACK I** — Building a local crew across all categories, with the goal of hiring at least 60% local talent for an initial low-budget film.*
- ***TRACK II** : Activated a plan to build infrastructure for growth.*

Together, these tracks lay the groundwork for a sustainable, self-sufficient hyperlocal sector that can adapt to both present challenges and future industry shifts.

With the Federal Government's Bill C-11 (see *APPENDIX II*) poised to allocate new capital to the domestic industry, models like HOAP must be considered to address current challenges, while remaining agile to adapt to ongoing industry shifts.⁴¹

TRACK I is focused on local hands-on training, recognizing that the ideal to gain on-set experience. Much like roadies for

touring music acts, film training follows an oral real-time apprenticeship tradition.

Drawing inspiration from Ontario's tax shelter era, which laid the foundation for the GTHA's current multi-billion-dollar industry, locally produced low-budget films provide a platform to for locals to learn without risking the success of the project. Even if Track II is delayed, Track I continues to develop the local workforce.

What helped prove out the feasibility of HOAP's assumptions was the execution of Kingston's first end-to-end production. A \$1M independent film (see *Section 12.0*), Produced by the author, that took the model from a theoretical exercise, to a practical plan that achieved its goals.⁴²

Far from a one-off, the author produced a second original end-to-end feature in Q4 2024 (see *Section 13.0*) that built on the learnings of the BETA production. A month after this sophomore production wrapped, a local public and private partnership announced the realization of TRACK II — plans for a soundstage.⁴³



Lining up a shot on "DOOM BOOGIE" filming on location at the Creekside Bar & Grill in Battersea, ON (Photography Credit J. Joly)

⁴¹ "WB, Discovery & Paramount Have Met to Discuss Possible Merger" BY Alex Weprin, *The Hollywood Reporter*, December 20, 2023

⁴² "Kingston-made movie heading to Cannes" By Peter Hendra, *The Whig Standard* April 06, 2023

⁴³ "Local production company close to building a 20M Film & TV Studio in Kingston" By Bill Hutchins, *The Kingstonist* November 22, 2024



Cast and Crew of "DEN MOTHER CRIMSON" between scenes in studio. West End of Kingston, ON (Photography Credit David Bastedo)

13.0 CASE STUDY : HOAP BETA

In late 2022, production began on the end-to-end feature, 'DEN MOTHER CRIMSON' (DMC). It was the first film over \$1M, to ever be developed, pre-produced, produced, and delivered from the region by pioneering local production company (B2F Media Inc). A "proof-of-concept" (POC) for HOAP, the goal was that 60% of the crew would be local – with most having never been on a set.

Shot in 12 days, DMC delivered 29 full time equivalent jobs and spent ~\$500K with over 70 local vendors and service providers. The project delivered an estimated \$1.96M in economic output (direct and indirect) and \$1.27M in GDP. To put this impact into perspective, this is equivalent to constructing 3 new homes or receiving 625 visitors to the area.

Almost 39% of roles were held by women - the majority in leadership roles.

The majority of the department heads came from the GTHA, but local leaders included Lead Hair/Makeup who built her career over decades in Toronto, an emerging Production Designer who leveraged her experience building escape rooms and a costumer who came from Kingston's regional theatre scene.

In terms of diversity, 20% of the crew identified as BIPOC and/or LGBTQ+ with 2 of the 3 leading roles being visible minorities. Although lower than many current GTHA productions, DMC over-indexed when compared to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the Greater Kingston area. Based on a 2021 survey, 82.4% of Kingstonians were white, 13.4%

were visible minorities [South Asian = 3.4%, Chinese = 2.4%, Black 2.0%, Arab = 1.2%, and Latin American = 1.0%].⁴⁴ Although the 2021 Census suggest that the Indigenous population of Kingston is at 4.2%, a more realistic recording of Indigenous Peoples puts the number closer to 15%. *City of Kingston – First Peoples Purposeful Dialogues (2015)*.⁴⁵



Cast of "DEN MOTHER CRIMSON" (Photo Credit David Bastedo)

This diversity extended to its all Canadian cast, including [Daniel Kash](#) ("Aliens", "Bad Blood"), [Enuka Okuma](#) ("Working Moms", "Rookie Blue"), [Sara Mittich](#) ("Star Trek: Discovery", "The Expanse") and [Saad Siddiqui](#) ("Coroner", "From Scratch").

On March 3, 2023, *The Kingston Canadian Film Festival* (KCFF) hosted a "work-in-progress" event for DMC to a packed crowd at The Grand Theatre.

Beyond proving the Hyperlocal model can quickly and effectively train new local workers, it also showed that the content itself can compete on a global scale. DMC was selected as 1 of 7 international projects to screen as a "work-in-progress" at the 2023 *Cannes Frontières*.⁴⁶

HOAP conducted interviews with both local and GTHA crew on DMC and aggregated the following insights:

1. *For the majority of the local crew, working on DMC was the first time they had experienced a professional set. The majority were employed in trades with transferable skills who had aspired to work in film.*
2. *GTHA heads of department were surprised at the local support for DMC. Few crew had seen the potential of Kingston as a film hub, but now having worked on DMC, it seemed obvious. Furthermore, they felt that Kingston reminded them of their hometowns and appreciated the more relaxed vibe and ease of production compared to the GTHA*
3. *Many felt that the BLC of Kingston had enormous potential. Some commented on its central location, the calibre of local talent, the plethora of available locations, the quality entertainment and restaurant scene and the kindness of locals. One participant commented: "The city is designed in a way that it can cater to the big demands of large productions, but has that quality of life that I was looking for - a slower pace and a better commute."*



On-set "DEN MOTHER CRIMSON" (Photo Credit David Bastedo)

⁴⁴ "Profile table, Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population - Kingston, City (CY) February 9, 2022.

⁴⁵ "Making 'invisible' Visible" By Paul Schliesmann, *The Whig Standard* Jan 27, 2017

⁴⁶ "Feature at Ever More Prominent Cannes Frontières Platform" By Callum McLennan, *John Hopewell Variety*, Apr 5, 2023



Cast and Crew group shot from "DEN MOTHER CRIMSON" in studio. West End of Kingston, ON (Photography Credit David Bastedo)

4. *DMC as the first "end-to-end" film for the region had an infectious pioneering spirit. "DMC felt like the start of something — different from other small projects. All productions have constraints, but DMC was more realistic and smarter than I've experienced before. The final product shines because of this."*
5. *Overall the experience was positive - with cited examples from the crew ranging from camaraderie, easy commute and a strong training environment. The few negatives were specific to limited technical issues which were resolved quickly.*
6. *Many crew members appreciated the 10+1 hour days instead of the 12+1 hour days that are common across the country.*
7. *The production team worked diligently to connect and work with as many local companies as possible. Rather than hiring a single restaurant or catering company, they spread the economic benefit around and to showcase the best of Kingston's food scene*
8. *The production team worked hard to instil environmentally friendly practices into each day, including:*
 - i. *Eliminating single use to-go cups and water bottles. All crew were instructed to bring their own reusable bottles*
 - ii. *All cutlery, plates, napkins were biodegradable*
 - iii. *No crew flew to set - everyone drove or took the train*
 - iv. *The production purchased iPads for cast and some crew to cut down on printing*
 - v. *Relied on only 2 shuttles and one PA vehicle - carpooling was encouraged and organized*
 - vi. *Excess catering was delivered to local homeless shelters.*



DMC Sneak Peak Q&A at The Grand Theatre (Photo by J. Joly)

9. *Comments from GTHA crew after DMC wrapped, "I would consider relocating if production increased."*
10. *During the hiring of the GTHA crew, it was made clear of the nature of this DMC - in terms of being a proof-of-concept to prove out it was possible to train 60% locally. These heads of department embraced the challenge of training local talent.*
11. *Lack of local of some professional film equipment (i.e. camera, lights, etc) needed to be sourced from the GTHA and Ottawa. Picking up or swapping malfunctioning gear meant a trip by DMC's transport captain.*

More than written statements, Kingston filmmaker Adrien Benson — who worked full-time in the camera department on DMC, wrote, produced and starred in this short documentary, delivering a first person account of why a hyperlocal approach works and what being a filmmaker in his hometown means:

LONG WAY HOME - A Short Documentary about the Making of DMC (LINK)

Overall, the cast and crew made meaningful professional connections on the set of DMC, developed HOAP principals and prove out the potential for BLCs. The producers noticed that the local crew organically established a network among themselves to collaborate on other potential opportunities to work with each other again in the future. Since DMC, more local end-to-end features with budgets over \$800K+ have popped up including "Kill Victoria" shot in 2023⁴⁷ and most recently the second B2F Media Inc film "DOOM BOOGIE" (DB) in fall 2024.



⁴⁷ "Robin Dunne's Kill Victoria brings cottage horror to Kingston" BY Kelly Townsend, Playback Magazine, August 11, 2023



Lining up a shot on "DOOM BOOGIE" during a night shoot on location at Gilmour Point in Battersea, ON (Photography Credit J. Joly)

14.0 CASE STUDY : HOAP ALPHA

"DOOM BOOGIE" (DB) is the follow-up feature from the author of HOAP, and the second installment of B2F Media Inc's planned film slate for the area. Building on the hyperlocal model pioneered on DMC, the producers introduced new challenges (ie: stunts, water shooting, practical effects, etc) – the biggest being shooting on-location outside of Kingston in Battersea and on Wolfe Island.

Working within an elevated, music-themed genre film provided an opportunity to surface new talent from adjacent creative industries such as musicians, who are natural performers. Consider Kingston-born Hugh Dillon, frontman of the [Headstones](#), whose breakout role in "Hard Core Logo" (1996) launched his acting

career and recently co-create the series "Mayor of Kingstown" for *Paramount+*.

By strategically curating musicians on DB, the hope was to expand their careers. They included Ciara Roberts ([Tiny Horse](#)), Jonas Lewis-Anthony ([The Wilderness](#)) and Hanorah Hanley ([Hanorah](#)), along with other musicians in supporting roles and crew. Also making her an onscreen debut was local Drag artist [Tyffanie Morgan](#).

High-level HOAP metrics on DB, beginning with the production phases:

- *PRE-PRODUCTION DAYS = 21*
- *TOTAL PRODUCTION DAYS = 15*
- *POST PRODUCTION = ~90*
- *TOTAL BUDGET = \$850,000+*

Estimated labour and vendor expenditure as percentage of the total budget:

- *Labour Expenditure = 71%*
- *Non-labour Expenditure = 29%*

Local cast and crew grew from 63% on DMC to 87%+ on DB - a 24% jump!

- *Crew are Women = 49%*
- *Returning Locals from DMC = 60%*
- *New Local Hires = 27%*
- *Out-of-Town Cast & Crew = 13%*

In terms of diversity, 23% of the crew identified as BIPOC and/or LGBTQ+ including the lead protagonist (BIPOC) and the lead antagonist (LGBTQ+).

There was an overall increase in most departments. For example: B2F had four PA's on DMC compared to six on DB, who shifted between departments where they learned new skills and had an opportunity to consider their ideal career trajectory.



Stunt sequence at Gilmour Point on set "DOOM BOOGIE" (Photo J. Joly)



Director & Producer "DOOM BOOGIE" on Day 1 (Photo J. Joly)

Examples of individuals from DMC that were promoted include the Props Master to Prosthetics SPFX and a PA on DMC, became a Principal Cast member on DB.

The soundtrack engaged eight local musicians - two of whom were leads in the film – and three in secondary roles. The engineer and composer learned on-set booming and later sound design. A music video from the film premiered at the 25th Kingston Canadian Film Festival as part of the *Slaight Music Showcase* which was followed by a rough cut of DB that also screened to a sold-out the Grand Theatre.

Differing from the interview process on DMC. to gather individual experiences to inform HOAP, the author asked cast and crew members to write - *in their own words* - their experience on DB that could include what they learned, challenges, new connections and anything else they wanted to express. Below is a sampling of edited cast and crew testimonials that can be found in the entirety in APPENDIX V:

"...The connections I made during this project not only enriched the film but also blossomed into lasting friendships and future collaborations. This experience has greatly contributed to my professional development, teaching me the value of teamwork, adaptability and the importance of fostering a supportive environment

- Godfred Adjei (Cinematographer / GTHA)

"...The skill set you obtain by working on a functioning film set are ones that simply cannot be properly orchestrated in a classroom... ...For some people this was either their first role acting or their first job on a film set ever. I have been fortunate to work on many sets in Toronto during my career and this one was no different. This experience has not only allowed me to further my career but also gave me connections with people who have the same goals as I do in a city where I wasn't sure that was possible..."

- Dillan Grant (1st Assistant Director / Local)

"To say working on DOOM BOOGIE was one of the best experiences of my life would be an understatement. The opportunities given to me were beyond what I could have dreamed of... Aside from falling in love with so many people making this film, I fell in love with the city of Kingston. Experiencing so many incredible restaurants, beautiful locations, and the kindness of the locals was something I will always cherish."

- Tiffany Branton (Lead Actor / GTHA)

"...It was truly one of the greatest experiences of my life. Working alongside professionals from the industry, I was able to make great connections and friendships with both cast and crew members and have now discovered a love of acting, which, until recently, I didn't know I had. Being taken on as a local has opened up so many opportunities to grow both my musical career as well as a career in film."

- Jonas Lewis-Anthony (Lead Actor / Local)

"As a Kingston artist, working on DOOM BOOGIE provided some incredible opportunities that I never thought would be possible in my hometown... ...Since wrapping the film, I have been able to use these relationships to continue to build my career both on the screen, stage, and in the studio. I'm very grateful for the opportunity to have worked on a feature and be trusted with creating the soundtrack for the movie."

- Ciara Roberts (Lead Actor / First-Time / Local)

"Having moved back to my hometown of Belleville in early 2024, I was expecting to have all but turned the page on the film industry I had worked on for 12 years in Toronto.... The local experience along with really feeling like a member of the B2F family was something I'd love to get to experience again... Expecting and sharing a certain level of "Toronto" standards mixed with the small town vibe was something special..."

- John Hanley (1st Assistant Director / Local)

"...I got to work with actors who were also talented musicians... with directors, stunt directors, videographers, audio, lighting, special effects, and hair and makeup artists... Everyone truly supported you. They all want you to succeed and, in turn, you want them to succeed, too!..."

- Tyffanie Morgan (Lead Actor / First-Time / Local)

"...One of the most rewarding aspects of this experience was working with a team of 40+ young and talented individuals from Kingston and the surrounding area. Everyone was dedicated and passionate, all working towards the same goal of making the best film possible. This collaborative spirit and teamwork were truly inspiring and made me realize the immense creative potential within Kingston. It has motivated me to delve deeper into the world of film, and I am excited about future possibilities."

- Søren Gregersen (Camera / Asst Editor / Local)



Principal cast of "DEN MOTHER CRIMSON" shooting on location out on Dog Lake. Battersea, ON (Photography Credit J. Joly)

"...I've spent the last 15 years working in Toronto on some of the largest productions. My confidence was not high in working with a crew that collectively had little, if any experience, but J. Joly put together an excellent team of Kingstonians who were hardworking and eager to learn... I moved away 20 years ago because these opportunities did not exist. I hope that this is the beginning of a long and fruitful industry in my hometown."

- Ryan Cox (Sound Recordist / Local)

"...The exposure to the film industry was invaluable and the fact that it was a Kingston production, made the experience even more important. I had the opportunity to meet and forge great industry connections with talented people, all while being part of an amazing supportive crew. It was a great time from day 1 to wrap, filled with learning and personal growth. I really felt part of a bigger vision, and I can see a future for myself in it."

- Joshua Rawski (Transport Coordinator / Local)

"I was born and raised in Kingston and always dreamed of making movies in my hometown... Spending 15 days shooting in and around Kingston felt like a dream come true... Training crew, creating jobs, and bringing business to Kingston – helping to build a sustainable industry that will hopefully attract more productions...."

- Kelly Hearn (Best Grip / Electric Swing / Local)

"...After getting the opportunity to work on 'Doom Boogie', I'm making a hard pivot into film. As a PA, the producers made it clear to me that they wanted to give us a chance to work in the areas we were most interested in. Within a few days on set, I was holding a boom, and helping with lighting setup. I got a taste of nearly every department and got to know all of the wonderful people within them. By the end of the project I had learned enough to score work as a grip on shoots in Toronto. I've been very lucky to get a string of jobs since the project wrapped, and that string leads right back to "Doom Boogie".

- Braedon Mathers (PA / Swing Trainee / Local)

"...I did not know how many talented people live in this great city, it certainly opened my eyes to all the talented musicians, artists that call Kingston home... The crew worked hard and together each day – whatever was needed! Even if it was a new role/job for someone they got it done. Every night/morning when I got home my wife was eager to hear about my shift and I was excited to tell her about it and what I learned..."

- Kim Hulton (Transport Driver / Local)

"...It was a thrill as my first time acting even...I was very pleased to recognize 90% of the people on set..."

- Bon Evans (Actor / First-Time / Local)

"My first day on set I was so nervous I felt ill, but I was immediately put at ease by the makeup and costume crew. People seemed quite excited that I was on set and made me feel very welcome..."

- Harrison Stewart-Juby (Actor/ First-Time/Local)

"...I am forever grateful to him (J. Joly) that he discovered me downtown and said let's put this young man in a movie. I was weeks away from being homeless and when we shot and thank you."

- Kevin Smith (Actor / First-Time / Local)

"...I found that this method of assisting others gave us the chance to discover a new passion and allowed me to see just how much work goes into every aspect of film production... I had worked with some of the crew members on, DMC, so it was nice to see so many familiar faces, and to be able to work with them once again..."

- Nicholas Santamaura (Production Assistant / Local)

"...Throughout the entire process, the cast, crew, and production team have been professional and great to work with. Since then, I've had the privilege of continuing work on the score and sound design... ... Along the way, I've met many talented individuals, which has opened up new business prospects for me personally."

- Matthew Baetz (Composer / Designer / Local)

"Everyone was really kind and accepting of different people's skill levels. I loved the opportunity to be able to step into larger roles and get that experience!.."

- Keira Wolfe (Production Assistant / Local)

"...As a rookie It was an incredibly valuable experience to work alongside our professional sound recordist Ryan Cox... ...He taught me so much in such a short period of time . His guidance has instilled great confidence in my ability to further pursue this profession..."

- Chris Smirnios (Composer / Boom / Local)

"...I truly did not think working in film was my jam at some moments, but the growth in the challenges I faced personally and with my team made me appreciate and honour even more the learning and team building process during the creation! I just want you to know how much I learned and how appreciative I am for the opportunity."

- Jennifer Bellamy (Hair / Makeup Assistant / Local)

"...This was the first time my small business was able to branch out to become a supplier of artisanal food to the film industry... This wonderful experience has changed the way I see the potential for my business and trained me for the particular ins and outs of catering for film."

- Georgia Reeves (Catering Coordinator / Local)



Cast and Crew group of "DOOM BOOGIE" on inside Portsmouth Olympic Harbour, Kingston, ON (Photography Credit David Bastedo)

15.0 DIVERSITY IS A SUPERPOWER

*"We face a labour shortage and that has to change. We're going to get very vocal, because it's not sustainable. And it's an industry that is growing by leaps and bounds and having to address technology changes. We need some support."*⁴⁸

- John Lewis, IATSE International VP and Director of Canadian Affairs

A 2022 study by the *Directors Guild of Canada* (DGC) found that 82.8% of the membership identified as white and 18.3% identified as Black, Indigenous or People of Colour (BIPOC). Parity is closer, as women now make up 42.4% of membership.⁴⁹ The good news is — according to Statistics Canada — up to 39.9% of the working-age population (15 to 64 years) is forecast to belong to a visible minority group by 2036.⁵⁰

In a report by *POV* titled "Breaking into Toronto's Film and TV Production Sector" a key discovery was how complicated it was to access the GTHA's screen-based sector. Current systems are disconnected, forcing equity-seeking professionals to forge alternative paths of entry, as young people who generally find it especially challenging to gain the experience necessary for steady, on-set work.⁵¹

This is not unique to Ontario's film sector — every industry is facing the same challenges. Labour shortages in 2022 alone, resulted in almost \$13B in losses to the Canadian economy. In a labour survey by *The Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters* (CME), 62% of manufacturers lost, turned down contracts or faced

delays due to a lack of workers, reporting losses of \$1.1B or (\$2.8M/company). To combat these shortages, the CME recommended automation, promoting trades and expanding apprenticeship programs for new Canadians.⁵²



Cinematographer and 1st Assist. Camera "DOOM BOOGIE" (Photo J. Joly)

⁴⁸ *"How the industry is building more diverse crews at all levels"* By Mark Dillon, *Playback Magazine*, September 15, 2022

⁴⁹ *"Canadian Entertainment Industry Largely White and Male, Study Finds"* By Etan Vlessing, *Hollywood Reporter* June 30th, 2022

⁵⁰ *"Study: A look at immigration, ethnocultural diversity and languages in Canada up to 2036,"* Statistics Canada January 25, 2017

⁵¹ *"Breaking In' to Toronto's Film & TV Production Sector"* Report by POV Film, 2020, pp.4.

⁵² *"Manufacturing labour shortage costing Canadian economy almost \$13 billion"* By Denise Paglinawan, *Financial Post*, Oct 26, 2022



Lead actor on "DOOM BOOGIE" one location in Battersea, ON (Photo J. Joly)

In 2022, Canada recorded the lowest number of live births recorded (351,679) with an overall birth rate of 1.33 children per woman⁵³ – marginally better than lowest-of-the-low countries with fertility rates below 1.3. That includes China, Japan, South Korea and Italy. The arrival of skilled new Canadians has somewhat countered, but not solved the issue.⁵⁴

Newcomers, international students and their offspring are emerging as the present, and future workforce of Canada. Millennials and Gen Z are the largest, most diverse cohorts of the population.

To ensure that Ontario's film and television production continues to be a growth sector, EDI strategies need to be part of every conversation around workforce, skills development and storytelling.

HOAP's EDI, Parity and Indigenization strategy has a multidimensional approach:

Opportunity - Establish frictionless entry points for skilled individuals with intersectional identities. Recruiting from equity-seeking groups should not be to improve stats, but to find talent

that has faced barriers given the closed-in nature of the industry.

Training and Retention - HOAP focuses on hands-on training in real time on inclusive productions, to ensure workers immerse themselves in diverse on-set environment.

Practicums + Adjacent + Pros - HOAP recognizes that the workforce will come from a blend of young adults, other industries with transferable skills and experienced professionals from bigger centres that will help train and mentor the two previous categories. The makeup of each of these verticals should reflect HOAP's EDI strategy.

Content - Overall themes, perspectives and characters that are culturally informed. Mainstream content has a history of propagating stereotypes, exploitative appropriation and/or villainizing marginalized groups. The Black Screen Office's "Being Seen" published directives to "... strategies for change, and enact real, systemic and long-lasting transformation."

As audiences become increasingly diverse, the film and television industry must evolve to reflect these changes, particularly as global streaming platforms like Netflix expand their content offerings. According to the 2024 UCLA "Hollywood Diversity Report", half of the leads in the top 100 streaming films were actors of colour, and women accounted for 61% of leading roles. This shift underscores the need for content that speaks to a broader, more inclusive audience.⁵⁵

⁵³ "Births 2022" - [Statistics Canada](#)

⁵⁴ "40 million strong: Canada reaches a new population milestone" - [Statistics Canada](#)

⁵⁵ "[Diversity Boosts Streaming Success as Box Office Releases Fall Behind, UCLA Study Finds](#)" By Tess Patton, *The Wrap*, June 18, 2025

Advancements need to begin at the top. An example is the *CBC*, which in 2021, mandated that 30% of key creative roles on new commissioned series need to be held by BIPOC or persons with disabilities.⁵⁶ In 2022, the CRTC made it a condition of the *CBC*'s license renewal that at least 30% of *CBC*'s programming budgets go to producers identifying as minority or Indigenous.⁵⁷

The federal and provincial government granted *xoTO Screen Industry Pathways* stream \$800K in 2021, to training of 200 BIPOC participants via programs run through the *Toronto Film Office* and *Employment & Social Services*.⁵⁸ The *GTHA*'s film unions, *IATSE Local 873* and *NABET 700* partnered with the *Centre for Young Black Professionals* for their "Entertainment Trades Training Program" for grip, electric, construction and sets.

An example of the importance of diversity for skilled crew is demonstrated by the *Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists'* (ACTRA) grievance against the *Canadian Media Producers' Association* (CMPA) and *Association Québécoise de la Production Média* (AQPM) in 2021 around too many productions not having hair and makeup artists who are properly trained for BIPOC performers, which sometimes results in altered skin colour and damaged hair.⁵⁹

HOAP recognizes that implementing the recommended EDI strategies in BLCs will be slower compared to the *GTHA* with strong established minority communities and more focused programs and support structures. Regardless, establishing a model and reputation early on, will lay the foundation for a BLCs to attract skilled, diverse workers going forward.



Scene from "DEN MOTHER CRIMSON" in studio. West End of Kingston, ON (Cinematography Credit Michael Jari-Davidson)

⁵⁶ "[CBC commits to 30% diverse key creatives in its programming](#)" By Amber Dowling, *Playback Magazine*, June 18, 2021

⁵⁷ "[How the industry is building more diverse crews at all levels](#)" By Mark Dillon, *Playback Magazine*, September 15, 2022

⁵⁸ "[Toronto adds \\$800k to screen sector training programs](#)" By Kelly Townsend, *Playback Magazine*, September 13, 2021

⁵⁹ "[Unions await arbitration in ACTRA grievance over hair, makeup inequities](#)" By Victoria Ahearn, *Playback Magazine*, March 11, 2022



Pre-visualizing the next set-up on "DOOM BOOGIE" on in Marysville on Wolfe Island, ON (Photography Credit J. Joly)

These barriers to entry for BIPOC youth is solvable given that the industry needs more below-the-line skilled workers, which traditionally is a great way for any young person to get into the industry and rise up. Case in point, the author of HOAP got his foothold as a film electric/grip through the *NABET* permittee program in 2000, and that allowed him to climb the ranks over 25 years and is now creating, financing and producing original Canadian films.

The most in-demand production positions - *especially for new workers* - are carpenters, grip, lighting, transportation and locations.⁶⁰ Among experienced workers, the highest demands are for individuals with skills like hair and make-up (especially BIPOC), costume and technical positions like audio and VFX.⁶¹

Rapid production growth over the last decade, coupled with baby boomers retiring is creating a perfect storm as skilled individuals in critical roles, including production accountants, drivers and art department workers, leave. The growth of high-budget shows that require large crews is leaving domestic producers struggling to find experienced talent that they can afford for their budgets.

By embracing EDI strategies and creating pathways for equity-seeking groups, HOAP ensures the next generation of filmmakers can thrive. As the demand for skilled workers increases and demographics shift, BLCs are well-positioned to drawing in diverse individuals to ensure Ontario's film sector is inclusive and equitable.

⁶⁰ *"Toronto Screen Industry Workforce Study Final Report" pg. 32.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

16.0 EMBRACING TECHNOLOGY

*"We should look at AI as 'augmented intelligence,' rather than 'artificial intelligence'. This will let filmmakers work faster, more efficiently and make movies that are more compelling."*⁶²

- Sunny Dhillon (Managing partner at Kyber Knight Capital)

George Lucas famously stated that, "The story of Hollywood is the story of technology." It is conceivable that in the very near future an independent Ontario producer with a small team will be able to achieve with \$3-5M, what it takes big studios \$100M to achieve today. Driving this shift are rapid advancements in tools like virtual production — from pre-visualization to real-time cinematics — with the most profound impact coming from Generative AI, now influencing every stage from script to screen.

Like all technology over time it gets faster and more accessible. To put in context, from a consumer perspective, consider that in 1999, for \$15,000 a home theatre enthusiast could get an 852x480 pixel flat-screen that had inferior image quality to the average CRT at the time. Today, an LED HD flat-screen with better colour, contrast and dozens more advanced features can sell for as little as \$200.

Currently, Augmented Reality (AR) walls - first pioneered on "The Mandalorian" - require a platoon of technicians to set up and operate⁶³. Like the rich neighbour who could afford a plasma screen in 2000, it's

AR technology is currently only accessible by big budget shows... *but not for long.*

The need for expensive professional film camera packages is continually being challenged by the 'prosumer' market. In 2023, filmmaker Gareth Edwards ("Godzilla", "Rogue One") was able to shoot "The Creator," an \$80M IMAX film, using a Sony FX3 that retails for around \$4,999 at Best Buy.⁶⁴ The *Apple 16 Pro Max* landed in September 2024 with specs to compete with Netflix-approved cameras, with added spatial capability.⁶⁵

This smaller, faster, cheaper is a common trend in the progress of all hardware, but the newest and most transformative technology facing creators and the world at large - is Generative AI. The "*genie-out-of-the-bottle*" moment occurred on November 30th, 2022, with the arrival of *ChatGPT*, sparking a level of public anxiety unlike previous tech before it.

Fuelled by media hyperbole, seemingly overnight, AI became a hot topic of conversation amongst creators. Lisa Holdsworth, Chair of the *Writers' Guild UK* stated at the time AI was "...a fairly blunt instrument in its current form."⁶⁶

⁶² ["This Is an Existential Threat": Will AI Really Eliminate Actors and Ruin Hollywood? Insiders Sound Off"](#) By Todd Spangler, *Variety*, August 16, 2023

⁶³ ["How 'The Mandalorian' and ILM invisibly reinvented film and TV production"](#) By Devin Coldewey, *TechCrunch*, February 20, 2020

⁶⁴ ["Shooting 'The Creator' on a Sony FX3"](#) By Shiv Rajagopal, *Red Shark News*, October 17, 2023

⁶⁵ ["The iPhone 15 Pro Max Is Finally A Filmmaking Tool"](#) By Yaroslav Altunin, *No Film School*, September 12th, 2023

⁶⁶ ["What are the pros and cons of AI for the independent film sector?"](#) By Geoffrey MacNab, *Screen Daily*, September 14th 2023

In 2025, authors like Vauhini Vara are increasingly leveraging *ChatGPT* in their writing, sparking new conversations around AI-assisted creation of human authorship and the IP that results.⁶⁷

The true impact on the creative as it relates to *Intellectual Property* (IP) is being tested, as many current AI models were developed by scraping unlicensed content.⁶⁸ New studios are leveraging ethical AI-powered models trained exclusively on licensed data, ensuring it complies with expected legal standards.⁶⁹

Where AI is helping to take the slog out of boring tasks so more energy can be concentrated on the creative. Emerging AI editing software now reduces hours spent logging footage, giving editors more time to focus on the crafting of the story.⁷⁰ James Cameron recently teamed up with *Stability AI* and declared if movies are going to survive, "...we've got to figure out how to cut the cost of them in half."⁷¹



Editor and Blender (CGI) artist on "DEN MOTHER CRIMSON" (Photo J. Joly)

HOAP accepts that Generative AI, game engines and camera-less workflows are inevitable and only going to grow. Capabilities that were speculative a year ago – such as *Google Veo*'s text-to-video generation – are now here and at a quality and accessibility that is increasingly compelling and usable.

Forward-thinking Ontario independents that embrace these new technologies will optimize efficiency and expand creative possibilities, allowing smaller teams to produce higher-quality content at a fraction of traditional budgets. Even audience engagement will be transformed, as AI-driven analytics will reshape how content is marketed and distributed.

On the flip side, Mark Cuban recently coined the term the "*Milli Vanilli Effect*" speculating that within the next three years, as AI continues to blur the line between real and artificial – especially in streaming video – genuine human connection will become more valuable than ever.⁷² Similar to vinyl's resurgence amidst the rise of music streaming platforms like *Spotify*, the saturation of AI-created video could result in a backlash to hand made in camera storytelling – maybe even a celluloid renaissance – as the demand for authentic in-person experiences are the affordable luxury pursuit that AI cannot be trusted deliver.⁷³

⁶⁷ "[Can A.I. Writing Be More Than a Gimmick?](#)" By Anna Weiner, *The New Yorker* April 9, 2025

⁶⁸ "[Hollywood Writers Say AI is ripping off their work. They want studios to sue](#)" By Wendy Lee, *Los Angeles Times* February. 12, 2025

⁶⁹ "[Asteria and Moonvalley Introduce Marey, An Ethically Sourced AI Video Model](#)" By Charlie Fink, *Forbes*. March 12th, 2025

⁷⁰ "[The Very Boring ways AI is actually changing the world](#)" By Murad Hemadi, *The Logic*, June 3, 2025

⁷¹ "[Everyone Is Already Using AI \(And Hiding It\)](#)" By Lila Shapiro, *New York Magazine / The Vulture*, June 4th 2025

⁷² "[Mark Cuban Just Made a Bold Prediction About the Future of AI](#)" By Kit Eaton, *INC*. Jun 6, 2025

⁷³ "[Appetite for 'authentic sound' pumps up demand for vinyl records](#)" By Santiago Arias Orozco, *CBC News*, Mar 22, 2025

17.0 GREEN IS GOOD BUSINESS

The global entertainment industry generates “millions of metric tons of carbon dioxide a year” more than the “aerospace, clothing, hotel, or semiconductor industries.”⁷⁴ The *Sustainable Production Alliance* reported that a major studio production had an average carbon footprint of 33 metric tons per shooting day. Roughly half of that is fuel consumption from air travel and utilities like electricity.⁷⁵

Flying talent, and executives to different locations is often the bulk of the carbon spend, so the HOAP methodology focuses on training new crews with green best practices from the outset to help reduce environmental impact, with the goal of achieving a net neutral sector over time.⁷⁶

This growing movement is exemplified in initiatives like [BAFTAs ALBERT](#) certification. From limiting printed documents, to locally sourced food, to diesel generators powered by waste vegetable oil, to hiring locals to reduce air travel — every activity is rethought to achieve higher levels of sustainability.⁷⁷

Disney’s remake of “The Call of the Wild” honoured Jack London’s legacy by diverting more than 82% of its waste from landfill and while generating significant savings. One example was partnering with [Earth’s Oceans Foundation](#) that recovered

4.75 tons of used plastics from the set. The crew used 100% recycled paper saving 1,044 pounds of CO₂.⁷⁸

HOAP’s model for BLCs to focus on the full production stack as they grow their regional sector, it is possible to achieve a sustainability from green solutions that extends from behaviour to buildings.⁷⁹

When looking at designing a sustainability plan for HOAP, *DIALOG* (see *Section 2.0*) Designs took a two-step approach.

First is a *Sustainable Development Strategy* to track and measure progress across a range of areas, and second is a *Sustainable Design Concept* that outlines the strategies required to meet those goals. DIALOG’s high-level strategic approach begins with these core tenets:

- *Mobility - Vehicle and air travel represent a large portion of greenhouse gas emissions for a production. Through a hyperlocal focus, travel needs can be reduced.*
- *Health, Wellness and Equity - Designed and landscaped with purpose, a studio can enhance the health and wellbeing of production teams, and support equity within the surrounding community.*

⁷⁴ “[Can a Start-Up help the film and TV industry reduce their carbon footprint?](#)” By Farah Nayeri, *New York Times*, August 25, 2022

⁷⁵ “[The Race to Net-Zero is on for big studios](#)” *Entertainment Partners*, April 20, 2022.

⁷⁶ “[The Environmental Cost of Filmmaking](#)” By Laina Demasi, *Atmos.Earth*, October 26, 2021

⁷⁷ “[How Big Budget Film 1917 Achieved Certification](#)” *wearealbert.org* January 10, 2020.

⁷⁸ “[Go Behind the Scenes to See How “The Call of the Wild” Went Green on Set](#),” *DisneyCompany.com*, June 5, 2020.

⁷⁹ “[Can a Start-Up Help the Film and TV Industry Reduce Their Carbon Footprint?](#)” By Farah Nayeri, *The New York Times*, August 25, 2022

- *Resilience and Adaptability - Studios can prepare for future impacts like power outages, extreme heat, flooding, etc. by incorporating adaptability into the design.*
- *Water and Ecology - Studios are good candidates to reduce potable water consumption with large roof areas that can be used to harvest rainwater for secondary uses such as toilets or vehicle washing. With typically large parking lots, it is possible to incorporate green infrastructure to manage stormwater runoff, which can also enhance local biodiversity in industrial areas.*
- *Waste and Circular Economy - Productions require materials for sets, props, food waste, etc., much of which are used for one production and sent to landfill. Smart procurement of production materials can reduce virgin material consumption and embrace a circular economy in the production.*

On DMC, for instance, being an idea-driven genre film meant it was possible to achieve 100% Ontario cast and crew. Informed by DIALOG's concepts, the producers realized that the best way to limit the production's carbon footprint was to eliminate air travel. Consider that 50% of a production's emissions are from travel and when comparing per passenger-hour traveled versus, aviation's climate impact is 6 to 47 higher than automobile travel.⁸⁰

The most effective strategy for low- and mid-level independent producers to reduce their carbon footprint is through educating cast and crew to simply be

mindful of every decision throughout their workday. When you multiply these small actions by the entire crew over the length of a production, the results can be profound. It is more challenging to retrain legacy behaviour, than instilling new green training with sectors in growing BLCs.

Far from a "feel-good" goal, sustainability delivers economic benefits especially as provincial and federal funding bodies increasingly reward carbon tracking and mitigation as part of their funding models for production. Like diversity and parity, going forward sustainably will simply become part of doing business.

The leading organization of industry stakeholders addressing this is *Ontario Green Screen* ("OGS") - formed in 2019 by Ontario Creates and consisting of industry trade associations and companies focused on identifying tools, training and resources for sustainable practices to lower carbon emissions, reduce waste and achievable individual change that leads to better stewardship for film and television production in Ontario. Practicing what is preached author of HOAP is a local *Green Screens Ambassador* for OGS.



Actors rocking out for Mother Earth on "DOOM BOOGIE" (Photo by J. Joly)

⁸⁰ *"Evolving Climate Math of Flying vs. Driving"* by John Wihbey, Yale Climate Connections, September 2, 2015

18.0 THE NEW CREATOR CLASS

The rise of creator-led studios like those being pioneered by [MrBeast](#) in North Carolina, [Dhar Mann](#) in Burbank, and Alan Chikin Chow in Texas signals a dramatic shift in the entertainment industry.⁸¹ These independent creators have built full-stack production environments that are lean, agile and able to deliver a pipeline of self-produced content to an audience they've built. These new creators thrive on decentralized platforms where the focus is on presence, raw creativity and relevance. With access to over 2.5B active users on [YouTube](#),⁸² it's clear that members of this new creator class are not just challenging Hollywood – nor are they asking for permission — they're rewriting the rules.⁸³

Ontario's BLCs, like Kingston, present an ideal environment for this new breed of creator to thrive. Smaller cities with affordable living and proximity to major urban centres can offer the flexibility and support needed for independent brand and personality driven creators to launch their channel and build their audience.

The entertainment industry is undergoing a profound shift. Audiences are demanding something different and the opportunities for independent creators are now vast. The new era of entertainment isn't on the horizon – it's already here. Those who embrace emerging tools, decentralized distribution platforms and new formats

have positioned themselves for success. For creators, investors and communities, the choice is clear — *adapt to this seismic shift now, or risk being left behind.*⁸⁴

HOAP envisions a future where BLCs become the breeding grounds for the next generation of storytellers. Just as the creator economy on platforms like YouTube has proven that independents can build successful careers from their bedrooms, HOAP offers a pathway for Ontario's next wave of creators to build sustainable careers in a smaller community-focused environments. This isn't just about making more affordable content – it's about empowering individuals to craft original new work on their own terms for their own audience.

By investing in BLCs, Ontario has the opportunity to become a global leader in the next wave of independent production. Just as [Creator Camp](#) has demonstrated that micro-budget features can thrive in theaters thanks to digital-first fan communities, BLCs can become the needed launchpads for the next wave of local creative entrepreneurs.⁸⁵ By building flexible, digital-friendly spaces and workforces tailored to these new creators – BLCs can empower these emerging new diverse story voices to deliver content — devoid of traditional gatekeepers — from every corner of the province.

⁸¹ ["Top YouTube Creator Alan Chikin Chow Launches 10,000 sqft Production Space in LA"](#) By Rachel Seo, *Variety*, November 22, 2024

⁸² ["23 Essential YouTube Statistics You Need to Know in 2025"](#) By Jack Shepherd, *Social Shepherd* June 5th, 2025

⁸³ ["YouTube is Killing Hollywood"](#) By Taylor Gunn, *Medium*, May 20, 2025

⁸⁴ ["Sleeping Through a Revolution"](#) By Stephen Murray, *Medium*, May 29, 2025

⁸⁵ ["Creator Camp Is Doing What A24 and Neon Can't: Building from the Bottom Up"](#) By Ben Odell, *Open Gardens*, May 12, 2025

19.0 FILM ECONOMIC IMPACT

The strength of the film and television industry is the fact that it is not an unknown quantity in terms of the economic effect locally, provincially and federally. The business is diversified in terms of each phase in production impacts the economy in different ways, that include:

- Direct - Jobs, GDP and tax revenue created directly by HOAP spend
- Indirect - Jobs, GDP and tax revenue created by HOAP purchasing goods and services from local suppliers
- Induced - Jobs, GDP and tax revenue created by those directly or indirectly employed via HOAP spending on local goods & services
- Spill-over - Outside individuals spending locally, like fan tourism as experienced in Greenwood, ON from the series "Schitt's Creek".



Executive Producer of "DEN MOTHER CRIMSON" tracking the day. (Photo J. Joly)



Cast & Crew of "DOOM BOOGIE" out spending money in Kingston (Photo J. Joly)

To put this in perspective, for every dollar refunded through the *Ontario Film and Television Tax Credit (OFTTC)*, \$3.40 is added to the province's overall GDP.⁸⁶

In 2024, Ontario's Film and Television industry contributed \$2.6B to the economy and created 34,836 full-time equivalent and spinoff jobs.⁸⁷

With its favourable exchange, secure labour incentives, mature sector (i.e. crews, services, studios, etc) and diverse locations and settings, Ontario will continue to be a draw for domestic and foreign productions alike. Agile, cost-effective BLC's like Kingston with grow so long as decision makers continue to prioritize creative industries within them. The increased stress on low- and midlevel independent producers is not unique to the GTHA, this trend is happening in Vancouver, Montreal and Hollywood.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ "FilmOntario Study Measures Benefits of Provincial Tax Credits" By Kelly Townsend, Playback, February 15, 2023

⁸⁷ Ontario Creates — 2024 Film and Television Production Statistics

⁸⁸ "Hollywood At Risk of Becoming the "Next Detroit Auto." By Boris Kit, Katie Kilkenny, Hollywood Reporter, April 15, 2025

20.0 RISKS & THREATS

Like all new models, HOAP comes with potential risks. These identified high-level challenges and their potential solutions include, but are not limited to:

1. *Until a local crew approaches 80%, it will be difficult for BLCs to achieve the kind of sustainable growth experienced in Victoria, BC (see Section 10). A municipality must prioritize this sector, and strike partnerships that result in public and private investment.*
2. *The threat of the locals moving to the GTHA once trained, as experienced in Northern Ontario is a concern. However, the desirability and affordability of BLCs will help mitigate this risk and potentially help accelerate hubs like Kingston.*
3. *Generally there is a lack of specialized equipment and local vendors fluent in serving film and television production in BLCs. Although a friction point, this is far from insurmountable. Proximity to established centres — as Kingston has with the GTHA and Ottawa - can easily mitigate in the short term.*
4. *Pandemics and industry disruptions like strikes are a concern for all industries.⁸⁹ Decentralizing the industry to independent BLCs will only strengthen the sector and ensure better preparedness.⁹⁰*
5. *In May 2025, President Trump proposed a 100% tariff on foreign-produced films. Although not yet implemented, the threat sparked uncertainty and renewed calls by US producers for a Federal tax incentive.⁹¹ Time will tell how this plays out, but these macroeconomic forces are an example of why new sector strategies like HOAP need to be considered by Ontario leaders.*
6. *Technologies like Generative AI have evolved dramatically in the last six months - far more than industry experts predicted.⁹² The future will be determined by those who can adapt quickly. That said, this threat is not unique to film and television production – every industry is undergoing this seismic technological transformation.*

While HOAP comes with risks, the bigger upside with activating BLCs is to support Ontario's domestic producers. Furthermore industries like film and television help retain and entice back the region's youth. By considering and planning for these potential risks, BLCs can better develop and grow a local ecosystem that supports production and also fosters the growth of adjacent media industries like animation and gaming. Ultimately, HOAP serves as a roadmap to lay a path for BLCs like Kingston to become global players.

⁸⁹ ["Lights, Camera, COVID Compliance: How film, TV sets tackle pandemic shoot safety"](#) By Hadyn Watters, CBC, September 27, 2020

⁹⁰ ["Canada's Film, TV Labour Force Feels sting of twin Hollywood strikes"](#) By Cassandra Szklarski, The Financial Post Jul 17, 2023

⁹¹ ["Lights, camera, tax credits? Sagging Hollywood draws attention of California, Trump."](#) By Ali Martin, The Christian Science Monitor, June 17th, 2025

⁹² ["Stacked Exponential Growth: AI Is Outpacing Moore's Law And Evolutionary Biology"](#) By John Nosta, Medium, April 14, 2023

21.0 VETERANS : A FIT FOR FILM

There are over 461,000 Canadians veterans (VETS). Serving Canadian Armed Forces personnel are younger on average than the employed population, 1-in-5 are women, 1-in-3 are of core working age (25-54). Furthermore approximately 5.2% are First Nations and 10% are from racialized groups.⁹³

Along with local youth and individuals with transferable skills in BLCs, there is an untapped opportunity to retrain VETS.⁹⁴ The range of transferable skills developed during military service make them particularly well suited to various crucial production roles in film.⁹⁵ Specifically:

Teamwork - VETS are trained to rely on each other to achieve a common goal (mission focused). Similarly, production requires collaborative team efforts among departments in order to complete each day's schedule.

Leadership Skills - VETS guide and motivate their team under pressure. This experience is invaluable on-set, where departments need to be in sync.

Problem Solving and Adaptability - VETS often face challenges that require quick thinking and solutions with limited resources. These skills are invaluable on-set, where the unexpected can arise at any moment from equipment failure to harsh weather conditions, and more.

Detail and Discipline - Military training emphasizes attention to detail, which is a crucial film trait. From ensuring continuity, to scheduling, to anticipating problems — disciplined thinking is essential for maintaining a quality, safe and efficient working set.

Fitness and Endurance - Military service demands fitness and endurance, which is beneficial in physically demanding production situations. Whether it's assisting with equipment setup or performing stunts, being physically fit and mentally conditioned is an asset for success.

In addition to VETS, HOAP also identifies first responders, given how deeply these professions like firefighters, police officers, and paramedics encounter similar issues when they leave their intense line of work for jobs in the civilian world.⁹⁶

Running along the Macdonald-Cartier Freeway (401), the combined Belleville-Quinte West and the Greater Kingston region represents the highest concentration of serving military in Canada.⁹⁷ By tapping into the valuable skills and experiences that VETS possess, BLCs with military roots can establish career pathways that strengthen the local industry with a workforce that is ready to rise to any challenge — accelerating crew needs for Ontario's creative economy.

⁹³ ["Statistics Canada: Canada's Veterans: By the numbers"](#) November 10, 2023

⁹⁴ ["How military veterans bring skill, focus, and perspective to the workplace"](#) Bloomberg, November 08, 2019

⁹⁵ ["5 Ways Military Service Prepares you for Hollywood"](#) By Tracy Thompson, Stage 32, 2022

⁹⁶ ["Statistics Canada: Life After Service Survey \(LASS\)"](#) January 16, 2020

⁹⁷ ["Statisc Canada: Belleville-Quinte West and Kingston have the largest share of military personnel among Canada's census"](#)

21.0 IN CLOSING

As we move forward, BLCs like Kingston will play a pivotal role in driving not only Ontario's, but also Canada's economic growth across all industries. HOAP aims to activate these high-potential hubs for domestic production by harnessing the inherent cost advantages — with the added bonus of retaining local talent, attracting new Canadians and providing an alternative for established film professionals looking for an alternative to big cities... or even just return to their hometowns.

Urbanization in Ontario is imbalanced, with most of the population concentrated in major centres like the GTHA. Research from the *C.D. Howe Institute* suggests that empowering BLCs will alleviate housing pressures, create economic upside and spark regional innovation. BLCs don't need to be large to thrive — they simply need to be strategic.⁹⁸

By investing in talent, infrastructure and partnerships, BLCs like Kingston can only help position Ontario at the forefront of a national movement toward more equitable regional development. HOAP's suggested decentralized approach will not only reduce stresspoints, but transform BLCs into dynamic, sustainable creative clusters for domestic film and television.

As every sector - not just media - enters this new climate of smaller, smarter, greener and more diverse practices, HOAP is a scalable framework for BLCs to expand their local creative industries. Key will be remaining nimble in our quickly-

evolving technological landscape and avoiding the fate of Trenton, which failed to evolve from its silent-film roots due to a lack of foresight and willingness to adapt in the face of industry change (talkies)

Global political and macroeconomic forces that kicked off 2025, meant Canada needed to embrace a new era of independence in an increasingly uncertain world where old alliances and existing ways of doing things are now shifting. Ontario's creative industries stand at the threshold of mapping out what this future may bring and how to prepare for it.

By capitalizing on the power of BLCs and investing in local creators that populate them, the province can continue to advance its stature as a global centre of excellence for film, television and media production. HOAP is not simply about enriching our local landscape — it is about better amplifying our distinctly regional voices and authentic points of view on the international stage.



Lead Actor on "DOOM BOOGIE" looking out on the St. Lawrence. (Photo J. Joly)

⁹⁸ ["It's time to End our obsession with Bloated Big Cities, Like Vancouver and Toronto"](#) By Douglas Todd, Vancouver Sun, Jan 30, 2025

APPENDIX I : HOAP STAKEHOLDERS

HOAP would not have been possible without the backing and support of the following provincial, municipal and regional partners. They include:

ONTARIO CREATES - An agency of the provincial government whose mandate is to be a catalyst for economic development, investment and collaboration in Ontario's creative industries. Through targeted programs and services, support for innovation, and by leveraging public and private partnerships, ON Creates builds the capacity and competitiveness to deliver award-winning content that is enjoyed by audiences worldwide.

KINGSTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION - Is committed to the key issue of long-term economic sustainability for the Kingston region. The organization's success is based on the attraction of new business, the growth and retention of existing companies and fostering a vibrant ecosystem for startups and entrepreneurs. The organization, established in 1998 is governed by a Board of Directors with representation from industry and municipal council. Kingston's economic development strategy focuses on the development of clusters in sustainable manufacturing, life sciences and health innovation and creative industries.

TOURISM KINGSTON FILM & MEDIA - Part of Tourism Kingston, the office is dedicated to attracting and supporting media production within the Kingston and Southeastern Ontario

region. In addition to overseeing film permitting within the city, Kingston Film & Media connects industry to local talent and resources including locations, crew, accommodations, and other suppliers.

FRONTENAC BUSINESS SERVICES - Established in 2003, and run by a local volunteer board of directors and staffed by experienced professionals, Frontenac Business Service's objective is aptly expressed by its tag line "building business" growing communities". FBS is one of 37 CFDCs in rural eastern and southern Ontario that is funded by the Federal Development Agency of Southern Ontario (FedDev).

UPPER CANADA EQUITY FUND - An early stage equity investment fund headquartered in Prince Edward County that invests in pursuit of financial and social returns. The fund deploys patient capital through a unique private-public investment model with the goal of building enterprises that boost rural economic diversification and contribute to sustainable development goals.

The authors would also like to acknowledge all of the regional stakeholders that helped inform HOAP within the Greater City of Kingston, Frontenac and the Islands, The Kingston Canadian Film Festival, The Downtown Kingston BIA, The Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce and the region's cultural, educational and business communities — too many to name, but all appreciated for their continued support.

APPENDIX II : WHAT IS BILL C-11?

*"...(the Bill) will require that foreign tech giants play by the same rules as Canadian companies... and ensure that Canada's indie producers have a fair opportunity to negotiate with content buyers to own, control and monetize the intellectual property that they develop and produce."*⁹⁹

Reynolds Mastin (Associate President / CMPA)

Also known as the *Online Streaming Act* ("OSA"), Bill C-11 received its first reading on February 2, 2022 by the Minister of Heritage, for the purpose of amending the Broadcasting Act (last updated pre-internet in 1991) with a focus on foreign streamers that are being asked to contribute a percentage of their Canadian revenue back into Canadian content as do domestic broadcasters (i.e. *Bell, CBC, Hollywood Suites, TVS*, etc).

OSA empowers the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications (the "CRTC") to impose conditions on "online undertakings" to: support the creation of Canadian content; fair and equitable treatment of similarly situated broadcasting undertakings; and diversity, equity and inclusion. The OSA applies only to commercial content distributed on social media services. Posts by individual independent Canadians are exempt. The Bill's objectives have 5 main themes:

1. *Inclusion and definition of "online undertakings" under the Act.*
2. *Expansion of broadcasting policy to serve the needs of all Canadians, including "racialized" and "diverse ethnocultural backgrounds."*

3. *Enables the CRTC to impose binding expenditures by online undertaking, to develop, promote and finance Canadian Programs and training programs;*
4. *Modernize so the CRTC will have the authority to issue administrative monetary penalties for the violation of certain provisions of the Act*
5. *New approach to Social Media that focuses on fairness for programs consumed on different platforms, regardless of transmission.*

OSA received Royal Assent on April 27, 2023, and the CRTC is working on the framework to implement it, but the effect will be that foreign streaming services, such as *Netflix, Spotify*, etc will be regulated and required to invest in Canadian cultural funds to support original IP creation.¹⁰⁰ The initial draft of the policy was issued in June 2023 for public consultation. On Nov. 20, 2023, the process of determining the implementation of this new regulatory framework began.¹⁰¹

In 2024, members of the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee expressed concerns to the U.S. Trade Representative, stating that OSA discriminates against Americans by

⁹⁹ *"Online bill covers streaming giants, promotes Canadian content"* By Marie Woolf, *The Toronto Star*, February. 2nd 2022

¹⁰⁰ *"Bill C-11 to Regulate Canada's Online Streaming Services"* By S. Zolf and Al Turnbull, *Air & Bearliis*, February 8, 2022

¹⁰¹ *"Canadian Heritage issues final policy direction to CRTC"* By Kelly Townsend, *Playback Magazine*, November 14, 2023

creating trade barriers. The Canadian government maintains that an exemption in the [USA–Mexico–Canada Agreement](#) protects its cultural sovereignty, including in the online environment.¹⁰²

As of June 2025, the CRTC is moving forward with the regulatory process to implement the modernized Broadcasting Act, with a series of public hearings and consultations. Key areas include ensuring the creation and accessibility of high-quality Canadian content, fostering a sustainable broadcasting system and establishing clear rules for all stakeholders. Additional consultations will address the discoverability, diversity and tailored conditions of service for traditional and online platforms.

As the CRTC finalizes these consultations in late 2025, the regulatory framework is expected to support Canadian producers and strengthen the nation's media ecosystem, ensuring that it remains competitive, innovative and adaptive to face the ever-evolving future.¹⁰³



¹⁰² [“Congress say Canada’s online streaming act discriminates against Americans”](#) Steven Chase, *Globe & Mail*, May 16, 2024

¹⁰³ [Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission](#)

APPENDIX III : NOHFC OVERVIEW

Introduced in 2005, the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (“NOHFC”) reallocated some Economic Development funding from Forestry and Mining to kick start the local sector — *which was practically non-existent at the time* — with the objective to ‘advance the development of a successful film and television production industry in the North’.

The initial structure provided 50% of eligible costs, up to \$1M, with half in the form of a repayable loan, half in the form of a grant. The bank-ability and stackability of the NOHFC film stream attracted productions \$3-\$6M.

The fund was revised in 2012, from the “50/50 grant/loan” to a funding formula that eliminated the loan portion, but kept the 50% matching grant up to \$500K (exceptions for series that offer longer term of employment), it had the effect of reducing larger budget productions (over >\$3M) to favour a smaller budget films (<\$3M) to attract domestic producers.

By strategically increasing the number of productions they created more opportunities for local entry-level jobs for locals and accelerated the training for technical jobs (ie: camera, lighting, etc.) as individuals move from one production to the next to gain broader experience. This would not have occurred with the NOHFC’s original plan to cater to bigger budget shows.

Since June 2018, the NOHFC has invested more than \$432M in 4,025 projects in Northern Ontario, leveraging more than \$1.4B in investment and creating over 6,200 jobs.¹⁰⁴

In 2015, Greater Sudbury became Canada's fourth largest production centre, generating \$194M in GDP and 3,011 FTE jobs between 2012 and 2016. In 2025, the Ontario Government announced another \$10M annually for the NOHFC and expanded the catchment to include the Muskokas in the Parry Sound region.

¹⁰⁴ [“Ontario Building Stronger Northern Film and Television Industry”](#) Published February 23, 2022 via [Ontario.ca](#)

APPENDIX IV - INSIDE A PRODUCTION

From the moment financing is secured, the entire process—from hiring and shooting to delivering the film (excluding development, distribution, and marketing)—can be summarized in the following outline of the key phases of an average domestic film production.:

- PRE-PRODUCTION PHASE - *Armed with a script, director, actors and the financing, the producer assembles their design, management and logistics team (production designer, PM, accountant, location, etc). Next is the heads of departments that will do the filming, including, camera, hair/makeup, lighting/grip, props, etc. along with the post-production team that will log and edit the footage. Once the department heads understand the scope of the project, they hire their crew. During this phase all planning and scheduling takes place. Further activities include scouting, construction, wardrobe fittings, camera tests, casting and more.*
- PRODUCTION PHASE - *This is the most workload intensive phase, that sees peak staffing and the greatest amount of local spend. Every department is in full swing as cameras roll. Every asset required arrives just in time and is immediately returned to protect cash flow. Given the mobile nature of this phase, there is a flurry of transport, permits, catering, location fees, and more as the unit moves from location to location to hit their daily*

targets. Contingency and backup planning is a big part of this phase as unknowns surface regularly, but the schedule and budget needs to be preserved

- POST-PRODUCTION PHASE - *The gear is returned and sets are strikes and the post production staff ramps up their activities. As they cut the picture (edit), license and/or compose music, create VFX, etc to complete the film.. Once the picture is locked, the sound design and mix, along with colour timing gets underway to provide the final high-fidelity image and audio polish.*
- DELIVERY PHASE = *With the picture complete and conformed to prescribed industry standards and formats, there is a list of agreed deliverables as part of the contractual obligations associated with sales. Examples include screening files, clearances, contracts, publicity materials, etc.*

For a series, the length of the production is typically longer than a film given that is episodic and also multi-seasonal. Pre-production, production, post-production and delivery happens continually to the network or streamer, as one episode is being filmed, another is being prepared and yet another is being posted.

APPENDIX V - THEIR OWN WORDS

If you had asked me at the beginning of 2024 what my year would look like, I certainly wouldn't have expected that I'd end up in a movie. Being a part of Doom Boogie has changed my life in so many ways. I started working with J and B2F as a musical collaborator, helping write, record and perform original material for the film's soundtrack. This work was incredibly rewarding and an amazing opportunity as a local musician and music producer. To my surprise, I ended up being cast for a lead role in the movie, despite having very little acting experience. The cast and crew on the "Doom Boogie" set were fantastic. It was truly one of the greatest experiences of my life. Working alongside professionals from the industry, I was able to make great connections and friendships with both cast and crew members and have now discovered a love of acting, which, until recently, I didn't know I had. Being taken on as a local has opened up so many opportunities to grow both my musical career as well as a in film.

- Jonas Lewis Anthony (Lead Actor/First-Time)

I was born and raised in Kingston and always dreamed of making movies in my hometown. I first met J. Joly about 20 years ago when we worked together on a TV show in Toronto—he was a grip, and I was a camera trainee. I was thrilled to find out he was back in Kingston and still making films. We reconnected, and I got the chance to work on his latest film, "Doom Boogie". Spending 15 days shooting in and around Kingston felt like a dream come true, made possible by Branded to Film. They're training crew members, creating jobs, and bringing business to Kingston—helping to build a sustainable film industry that will hopefully attract more productions in the future. Since then, I've taken producing courses at the Kingston Film Office, hoping to one day produce something with J. I know his crew will keep going strong, and I fully believe in the work Branded to Film is doing. It's an exciting and valuable part of Kingston's film scene, and I wish it every success.

- Kelly Hearn (Best Boy Grip/Electric Swing)

To say working on "Doom Boogie" was one of the best experiences of my life would be an understatement. The opportunities given to me were beyond what I could have dreamed of. Having the opportunity to work with incredible musicians like Hanorah, Ciara and Jonas, learn about songwriting and actually write lyrics for a piece and then perform it?! This was not something I ever had expected to do. Truly a thrill. Now, of course, I want to join a band. In turn, I had the opportunity to mentor these musicians in their first acting jobs. The give and take, the support and encouragement with this cast, I have never experienced on this level. We truly became family. Not to mention the crew that I had the absolute pleasure to see and work with every day. Our Hair and Makeup team, and it was a huge team, led by Sarah Fairbairn, I relied on not just to help me become Joanne, but to also be cheerleaders and stand-in sisters/therapists when needed. Also a shout out to Kayla Craig, undoubtedly the effortlessly coolest and most energetic and positive Stylist I have ever known. Working with George, our director, was a joy. He believed in me from the very start and always knew that I could bring the character of Jo to life. Aside from falling in love with so many people making this film, I fell in love with the city of Kingston. Experiencing so many incredible restaurants, beautiful locations, and the kindness of the locals was something I will always cherish.

- Tiffany Branton (Lead Actor)

As a Kingston artist, working on "Doom Boogie" provided some incredible opportunities that I never thought would be possible in my hometown. Throughout the experience, I was able to hone in on my skills as an actor, as well as a songwriter. It was one of my first experiences as a performer where I was compensated for my time. Being a part of the production granted me the opportunity to form new relationships with other Canadian actors, producers, music supervisors, and sound engineers. Since finishing the film, I have been able to use these relationships to continue to build my career both on the screen, stage, and in the studio. I'm very grateful for the opportunity to have worked on a feature film and be trusted with creating the soundtrack for the movie.

- Ciara Roberts (Lead Actor/First-Time)

On my last day of filming, I was emotional. I always believed I may be an extra on a TV or movie set in Kingston, Ontario. Our little city is used often for period pieces because of our historic feel. Maybe a walking-past-a-shop-window scene or something. But I would have never guessed I would have an active acting role in a feature film called Doom Boogie. This gift is something I will forever appreciate and never forget. You better believe, years from now I'll be starting conversations with "well, when I did Doom Boogie... the movie... I can't tell you how magical and energizing this adventure was. And it was an adventure, for sure! I got to work with actors who were also very talented musicians. I got to work with directors/producers, stunt directors, videographers, audio technicians, lighting experts, special effects magicians, and hair and makeup artists. All these arts, talents and skills.. I was overwhelmed with joy. I felt like we could make another movie instantly. Although, my energy levels were so very low. Filming took everything out of me. But I'd do it again, in a heartbeat. Let's not forget the support and love! It was refreshing to know in your heart that everyone around you truly supported you. They all want you to succeed and, in turn, you want them to succeed, too! You don't often get to experience that. Thank you, everyone!

- Tyffanie Morgan (Lead Actor/First-Time)

Working on "Doom Boogie" as a local filmmaker was a deeply rewarding experience that allowed me to connect with a vibrant creative community. Collaborating with talented individuals like J. Joly, George Assimakopoulos, Mark Alleyne, James Doran and Soren Gregersen infused the project with unique energy that was both inspiring and motivating. Their passion and dedication created an environment where ideas could flow freely. I particularly enjoyed working with George, the director who challenged me to push my creative boundaries, helping me grow as an artist and cinematographer. A highlight of this experience was creating a welcoming atmosphere for first-time local actors and crew, where I could witness their growth and enthusiasm firsthand. This reinforced my belief in the power of storytelling and the importance of nurturing local talent. The connections I made during this project not only enriched the film but also blossomed into lasting friendships and future collaborations. This experience has greatly contributed to my professional development, teaching me the value of teamwork, adaptability, and the importance of fostering a supportive creative environment. I am grateful for the lessons learned and look forward to applying them in my future projects.

- Godfred Adjei (Director of Photography)

My first day on set I was so nervous I felt ill, but I was immediately put at ease by the makeup / costume crew. People seemed quite excited that I was on set and made me feel very welcome. The director George was intense, but perfectly clear about what he wanted and what we were aiming for. He always dealt with me in a calm manner - he might have been picking up on my insecurities, but if so he responded with empathy. He always made me feel like I was an important part of the team, and that my contributions were valued and that made a big difference. Overall, I absolutely support this venture. I love the idea of making this company a hyper local experience and product. I had a great time throughout and I think it was obvious that everybody around me also had a great time. I 100% support the vision and I hope they can continue and keep growing until the reality matches the dream.

- Harrison Stewart-Juby (Supporting Actor/First-Time)

Well last night was the biggest moment of my life. It was the premiere that's my first movie "Doom Boogie" and what I hope will be many more and big thank you to J. Joly. I am 100% am forever grateful to him that he discovered me downtown and said let's put this young man in a movie. I was weeks away from being homeless and when we shot and thank you to the director George Assimakopoulos that man keeps getting asked if the director is nice and the simple answer is 100%. Yes, he's an amazing fun factor me guy And he's great to work with and you have never been in a movie before you want it to be with George and thank you to Katalina Kövecses-Coulter for being kind like a mom to me and for your amazing katalina is like the fun proud mom i was the youngest on cast but that just means I have enough life left in me to do more and thank you to the Kingston Canadian Film Festival for a amazing right and a big thank you to the production company Branded To Film fuck ya everyone my first premiere is in the books and it was a amazing experience and thank you Ryandale Transitional Housing for supporting the event i hope I am back on set with the whole "Doom Boogie" because, trust me, these people, I worked with too many to name, but in between takes in particular, you should do stand up on the side that man is funny

- Kevin Smith (Supporting Actor/First-Time)

Congratulations on the recent screening of "Doom Boogie" at the 25th annual Kingston Film Festival! It was inspiring to see such a large and spirited crowd in attendance. Thank you for bringing me on board to be a part of this film. It was an ambitious script to make in such a short period of time, with a limited budget and with a largely inexperienced crew (and cast for that matter). It shows what can be accomplished when a team of positive, like-minded people are brought together under strong guidance and hard work. J. Joly and George were integral to keeping this project on track and pushing the cast and crew forward through the process. George helped to build confidence and trust among the cast and crew when they needed it. I've spent the last 15 years working in Toronto on some of the largest productions in the country. I admit that my confidence was not high in working with a crew that collectively had little, if any, experience but you put together an excellent team of young Kingstonians who were hard working and eager to learn. This film could not have been made without their dedication and positivity. It was such a joy to work in my hometown. I moved away 20 years ago because these opportunities did not exist in Kingston. I hope that this is the beginning of a long and fruitful industry in the Kingston area.

- Ryan Cox (Sound Recordist)

Having moved back to my hometown of Belleville in 2024, I was expecting to have all but turned the page on the film industry I had worked on for 12 years in Toronto. It was very bittersweet. My time in Toronto had me constantly thinking of how if I could only live back home and work in film I'd be able to have my cake and eat it too. In the summer I got a call from Mark and George which piqued my interest and presented an opportunity to do just that. It was incredible. I was then introduced to J. Joly and the rest of the B2F group and was brought into the world of Doom Boogie. Aside from the project itself sounding fun (who wouldn't want to work on a music based slasher?) what really hooked me was the fact that it was going to be shot and crewed up locally. This allowed for a uniquely immersive experience for me as an assistant director. Understanding ahead of time that growing pains and learning curves for a lot of the crew that came from varying degrees of experience levels was what made it all the more satisfying. Aside from this, it was truly a great experience building personal relationships from the professional collaborations. The local experience along with really feeling like a member of the B2F family was something I'd love to get to experience again. Working with George and Dylan in prep and on the floor was a perfect balance of professionalism and camaraderie. Expecting and sharing a certain level of "Toronto" standards mixed with the small town vibe was something special. I'm thrilled to see where this goes next.

- John Hanley (1st Assistant Director)

Three years ago I found myself moving away from Toronto to the illustrious small city of Kingston. Not only was I moving away from my friends & family, I was also leaving behind a film career that I had been building for years prior. Whilst adapting to the Kingstonian lifestyle, finding like minded individuals and working on big budget film projects again became faint or improbable. That was until I met the folks from Branded To Film. After being hired as an assistant director on a feature film in the limestone city, it seemed as though my prayers to continue my dream to make films had been answered. Everything I have ever learned about the film/ television business has been consumed or taught to me by doing. The skill set you obtain by working on a functioning film set are ones that simply cannot be properly orchestrated in a classroom. From the outdoor elements you may work through, to the fast paced environment, or even the never ending communication happening over walkie or face-to-face. The success of shooting a film is entirely predicated on what people do in those moments and how the team is being guided by those with more experience. In my particular department the two individuals who guided me most during filming were John (First Assistant Director) & George (Director). Their readiness & willingness to use their experience to teach me on set during the filming of the movie "Doom Boogie" has not only helped me grow in my profession but also allowed me to then help other actors or crew members with their own struggles throughout the process. John and George both answered any question I had and happily picked up the phone whenever I called. For some people this was either their first role acting in anything and for some it was their first job on a film set ever. I have been fortunate to work on many sets in Toronto during my career and this one was no different. This experience has not only allowed me to further my career but also gave me connections with people who have the same goals as I do in a city where I wasn't sure that was possible. I am thankful to both Branded to film and the city of Kingston for reassuring me in my choice to move here permanently.

- Dillan Grant (1st Assistant Director)

I had the incredible opportunity to work as a camera operator on the movie 'Doom Boogie' from the production company B2F. Working closely with Director of Photography Godfred, Director George Assimakopoulos and Producer/Writer J. Joly, I was involved in various tasks, from setting up shots to operating the camera during principal photography. I also received the opportunity to work on the first cut alongside George and B2F's head of post-production/CTO Steve Cross, delivering a first assembly to B2F's CEO J. Joly who was impressed with my choices on the sound and picture given it was my first feature. One of the most rewarding aspects of this experience was working with a team of 40+ young and talented individuals from Kingston and the surrounding area. Everyone was dedicated and passionate, all working towards the same goal of making the best film possible. This collaborative spirit and teamwork were truly inspiring and made me realize the immense creative potential within Kingston. It has motivated me to delve deeper into the world of film, and I am excited about future possibilities

- Søren Gregersen (Camera operator + assembly editor)

My involvement with B2F and J. Joly has been an incredibly rewarding experience. Our collaboration began in February 2024, when I began working with a talented team to prepare original music for Doom Boogie, and continued on-set during filming in September 2024. Throughout the entire process, the cast, crew, and production team have been professional and great to work with. Since then, I've had the privilege of continuing work on the score and sound design. The experience has been both fun and challenging, pushing me creatively and offering valuable learning opportunities. Along the way, I've met many talented individuals, which has opened up new business prospects for me personally.

- Matthew Baetz (Lead Composer / Sound Designer / Boom)

While I came to Kingston for college. I originally thought that I wanted to work in music, but after getting the opportunity to work on the set of Doom Boogie, I'm making a hard pivot into film. As a PA, the producers made it clear to me that they wanted to give us a chance to work in the areas we were most interested in. Within the first few days on set, I was holding a boom mic, and helping the lighting crew set up for shots. I got a taste of nearly every department, and got to know all of the wonderful people within them. By the end of the project, I had learned enough about the lighting department to score work as a grip on shoots in Toronto. I've been very lucky to get a string of jobs since the project wrapped, and that string leads right back to "Doom Boogie".

- Braedon Mathers (PA / Swing Trainee)

Working on the set of "Doom Boogie" this past fall for B2F was an immeasurable experience. As transport captain, I was tasked with overseeing the transportation of crew, vehicles, and equipment, and although I had never worked on a movie set before, I was encouraged to dig into my particular skill sets, and entrusted to rise to this challenge. The exposure to the industry was invaluable, and the fact that it was a local Kingston production, made the experience even more important. I had the opportunity to meet and forge great industry connections with talented people, all while being part of an amazing supportive crew. It was a great time from day 1 to wrap, filled with learning and personal growth. I really felt part of a bigger vision, and I can see a future for myself within it. I'm so grateful for the belief put in me, and hope to be involved in all B2F projects. Thanks J — I'm ready for the next one!

- Joshua Rawski (Transport Coordinator)

What an intense and epic journey it has been. I'd like to extend my gratitude to you for taking a chance and offering me the opportunity to work with you on the film. In two departments nonetheless!!! Wow! As we both know I have never worked as a boom operator. I showed interest and you took a chance. As a rookie It was an incredibly valuable experience to work alongside our professional sound recordist Ryan Cox. It was an extremely physically demanding job.! He taught me so much in such a short period of time . His guidance has instilled great confidence in my ability to further pursue this profession. Secondly, you chose to hire me as a composer for the score. Music has, and will, continue to be a big part of my life. I can't thank you enough for offering me my first opportunity to be a part of scoring a film. It's been a fantastic learning experience to be working with the other composers. Something I've always dreamed of doing. And I must say, it's going to look great on my resume. Working with George was an absolute pleasure. His passion for film is infectious. His guidance is clear. I always felt respected and heard. Looking forward to working with you all again soon.

- Chris Smirnios (Composer / Boom Operator)

As this was my first movie to be a part of, I was not sure what to expect. Day 1 , was fast paced with lots of moving parts and people and I was just trying not to be in the way . Josh , David and yourself were so helpful and put me at ease and took the time to explain what was to happen each day and what I was to do .Watching everyone come together for this project was incredible. I did not know how many talented people live in this great city , it certainly opened my eyes to all the talented musicians, artists that call Kingston home J.Joly , George , Katalina created a group that put in the effort to be a part of something bigger than all of us .Each day getting to know everyone and share a meal or laugh was a highlight. Learning about someone and their background and what brought them to this movie was informative. The crew worked hard and together each day , whatever was needed! Even if it was a new role/job for someone they got it done. Every night /morning when I got home my wife (Kate) was eager to hear about my shift and I was excited to tell her about it and what I learned about a movie set. I want to thank you for the opportunity to be a part of "Doom Boogie" and for meeting so many new friends . I would love to be a part of the next production team.

- Kim Hulton (Transport Driver)

I struggled hard during the filming process but always strove to be attentive and do my best to perform and create at 100% , I truly did not think working in film was my jam at some moments, but the growth in the challenges I faced personally and with my team made me appreciate and honour even more the learning and team building process during the creation! I just want you to know how much I learned and how appreciative I am for the opportunity.

- Jennifer Bellamy (Hair/Makeup Assistant)

I had a great time working with all of the crew and actors on Doom Boogie. It was a thrill as my first time acting even if it was a role that plays a polar opposite to my own personality. George Assimakopoulos directed the production like a pro and everyone was very supportive throughout the process. With a super hyperlocal production team I was very pleased to recognize 90% of the people on set. Even more pleased to meet some true gems that will always be appreciated. I look forward to seeing what the future holds for this movie and everyone involved with it.

- Bon Evans (Supporting Actor/First-Time)

I'm incredibly grateful for the opportunity to have catered for and served as the head crafty on the set of "Doom Boogie". As the owner of Ciao Wolfe Island, the opportunity to cater for this film was the first time my small business was able to branch out to become a supplier of artisanal food to the film industry. Additionally, when not catering myself, working craft services was a highly valuable training experience, serving a fantastic cast and crew. I enjoyed every moment on set. I also formed key connections and am ready to collaborate with B2F on future projects. This wonderful experience has changed the way I see the potential for my business and trained me for the very particular ins and outs of catering for a film crew. Thank you sincerely B2F!

- Georgia Reeves (Craft/Catering Coordinator)

J. Joly guy approached me regarding my habit of collecting old cars and trucks. I feel sorry for them just sitting there in the wild forgotten. Joly was glad to have them in the shape they were in. Josh - their head of transport - was a great fellow to work with, he floated the F100 pick up with the 3-wheeler, I drove the 59 Ford galaxy and J drove the 78 Econoline out to Battersea. Everything went like clockwork including having arranged a ride back to the dock to catch the 8pm ferry back to the island, including a lift back to my place on the Wolfe Island side. I was thinking they got us there together and had it all well under control. The next day of course I got a call the F100 won't start, just happened to be going on the next ferry over and quickly started troubleshooting. Turned out to be a bad rotor/distributor cap. Got it cleaned up and it started -- that was my first taste of mild pressure... I say mild compared to what roughly 30+ people on-set and off-set were doing at the same time to get the shot. Everyone involved made a Swiss watch out of it. Things happened. Things got dealt with. Things got done in a very efficient friendly manner. Hats off to J. Joly and all involved are very very well done!!!

- James Lacusi (Picture Car Wrangler)

The cast were all amazing to watch and work with, and very respectful with wardrobe pieces. Dylan Grant felt like a well oiled, reliable gear that kept things moving with positive enthusiasm. He was always available for support and genuinely appreciative of those around him. I would love to work with Dylan again. I felt he was a wonderful leader. Grace is clearly an incredibly well rounded support system. From ensuring nutritious and thoughtful meals at Craft, to her connections pulling through to help at every corner. Grace puts out fires before they become just that, ensuring the team reaches the end goal. Another amazing firefighter would be Kat Kövecses-Coulter. She was a very compassionate guide for anyone learning the ropes of film sets like myself. She's a great listener; a soundboard for concerns and solutions. Deb Hamilton, Hair and Makeup. My experience working with and learning from Deb is something I would not trade for the world. She is an absolute powerhouse with enhancing beauty and aesthetic concepts. Courtney Page. Makeup, Hair, AND special effects was not only a talented professional but also a great energy on set. She knows how to execute a plan with a rare creative spirit. Melissa Eapen and the Visual Menace Team she absolutely earned that and the respect of the entire cast and crew from what I experienced. She is a powerful creative force who employs diverse and inclusive talent. Her discipline for detail is something to be admired.

- Clare Palmer (Wardrobe Assistant)

I had a great time on set for "Doom Boogie"! I enjoyed getting to collaborate with so many talented people, and learning about a variety of departments on set. Due to the nature of my role as Production Assistant on this shoot (where it felt like we were almost on rotation, which allowed us to help out other departments if needed). For this reason I was able to work in areas of film production that I've never had the chance to. For example, before this shoot, I hadn't had much experience working with lighting, but there were many opportunities here to help the grips tear down the setup, pack up all the lights and c-stands into the trucks, and even unload everything the very next day. I also noticed some of the other PAs impressed the department heads so much that they ended up staying with them for the entirety of the shoot! I found that this method of reaching out and assisting others gave us the chance to discover a new passion for this industry, and allowed me to see just how much work goes into every aspect of film production. Additionally, everyone involved with Doom Boogie was wonderful to work with! I had worked with some of the crew members on the previous film, Den Mother Crimson, so it was nice to see so many familiar faces, and to be able to work with them once again. Working as a PA, I had the chance to work more closely with the cast for the first time, as one of my tasks was to monitor them and keep them updated on when they were needed on set. Each and every one was so nice and understanding, and being able to observe how they prepare for their roles was interesting to see. I also feel like I should mention that the Hair and Makeup team, as well as the Costume department (who would always be close by with the cast) were really friendly and pleasant to talk to, and they all seemed to be understanding and appreciated my role as a PA. Overall, I would say that I'm very grateful that I was able to work on Doom Boogie. I moved to the GTA shortly after production wrapped, which means that this was the last shoot I was involved with before leaving Kingston. While my departure felt bittersweet, I'm so glad that I was able to stick around long enough to work with so many wonderful and talented people. Even though I am no longer a true 'local', I hope I can come back one day and work with everyone again.

- Nicholas Santamaura (Production Assistant)

I loved working on "Doom Boogie". Everyone was really kind and accepting of different people's skill levels. I loved the opportunity to be able to step into larger roles and get that experience! One thing I would like to have was to be able to step into different departments a bit more as a PA. I understand that when someone is doing a job consistently, it makes sense to keep training them so they get better and better (also the crew are used to them), but I would have liked to step into some different departments that I didn't get a chance to. Honestly, other than that, everything was really great! I loved this experience and I'd love to help out on the next one :))!! Thank you doll! Yes, having PAs able to train in many departments is always our goal - on this one we were just so stretched, but for next time will build more movement into the plan. Let me know how your Script Supervisor training is going - a very important role, and I think you'd be great! It totally makes sense. I do appreciate you guys getting us into different roles as much as you could! It was a cool experience.

- Keira Wolfe (Production Assistant)