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Written these columns is difficult work, and I admit that I’m sorely tempted to take the easy way out, and make the entire thing a list of thank-yous to the dozens of people who came together to make the Produced By Conference what it is. But for one thing, such an extensive roster of thanks would take up more space than this magazine affords, and for another, all of their names are listed on page 93 of this issue. If you wanted to take a moment to flip to that page and note their essential contributions to Produced By before reading any further in this column, you’ll hear no complaint from me.

I’m incredibly proud of the work we’ve done on this year’s Conference. The 2014 edition of Produced By is absolutely as vital as any that we’ve produced, and very much in the running for the coveted (and, honestly, all but impossible-to-award) title of Best Ever. With a collection of speakers balanced between living legends like Norman Lear and Francis Ford Coppola, and rising storytellers setting the new creative agenda, like the teams of David Fincher & Ceán Chaffin and Seth Rogen & Evan Goldberg, Produced By 2014 offers something for everyone. Whether you ply your craft — or aspire to a career — in film, television or digital media, I’m gratified to tell you that Produced By showcases content that will bring you closer to your career goals.

But the most valuable thing that Produced By delivers is actually something over which we have no control at all. The best take-away we can offer you is, well… you — all 1,000+ of you. It’s an article of faith (and a well-supported one) that networking is an essential aspect of building a producing career. What happens at the Produced By Conference, though, is something beyond networking. It’s not simply a matter of having hundreds of producers in the same place at the same time, and the ease of connection that facilitates. It’s that, for the space of a weekend, the producing profession creates its own community, its own home base.

The paradox of producing is that it’s simultaneously both an intensely competitive and intensely collaborative job. Producing can be a lonely business. When working independently, out of your own office, it’s easy to feel isolated, vying with faceless competitors for your share of the industry pie. But at Produced By, something else happens. The hundreds of producers surrounding you suddenly aren’t your competitors, but your colleagues. That face-to-face recognition, that we’re all in this crazy business together, is the true secret of Produced By’s success; it makes it easy to get excited about your colleagues’ projects, and for them to get excited about yours.

It’s the spirit of goodwill and generosity that you bring to Produced By that makes our Conference what it is.

Maybe your name should be on page 93, too. If you want, go ahead and write it in. I won’t tell anyone.
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PRG is a proud sponsor of the PGA produced by conference.
For some, Francis Ford Coppola is and always will be a director, full stop, end of story. And just as surely, Mr. Coppola is indeed a director, one of the very finest. But of course, he’s also an acclaimed screenwriter, having won no less than three Oscars in that category alone. This is not even to mention his remarkable success as a vintner; even on days when the Coppola name is absent from movie screens, you can find it standing proud in the wine and liquor aisle.

We engage in this exercise only to disabuse anyone out there of the notion that Francis Ford Coppola is just one thing. And we’re immensely proud to count among the many sides of Mr. Coppola, an extraordinarily accomplished career as a producer of cinema.

After graduating from UCLA film school and serving an apprenticeship with Roger Corman, Coppola embarked on his sometimes precarious early career as a writer and director in the Hollywood studio system, winning his first Oscar in 1970 as one of the screenwriters of *Patton*. The landmark success of *The Godfather* in 1972 provided Coppola with increased control over his career, and the writer/director became a producer in earnest. Coppola made good on his promise, producing no less than four Best Picture nominees over the course of the decade, including his own *Apocalypse Now*, *The Conversation* and *The Godfather: Part II* (winning Oscars for writing, directing and producing), as well as good friend George Lucas' studio debut, the influential and much-loved *American Graffiti*. Never short on ambition or idealism, Coppola, with Lucas, founded American Zoetrope, the forward-thinking, artist-driven company that not only continues to serve as the home base of Coppola’s creative output, but also stands as a proud forebear of the companies that comprise the heart of American independent film today.

Over the succeeding decades, Coppola has accumulated a prodigious collection of credits as producer or executive producer, some for films he directed (including *Bram Stoker’s Dracula* and the conclusion to his *Godfather* epic), but just as often providing backing for directors as diverse as Akira Kurosawa, Paul Schrader, Norman Mailer and his children Sofia and Roman Coppola. After a decade-long hiatus from directing, Coppola re-emerged in 2007 with *Youth Without Youth*, the first in a trio of films, including *Tetro* and *Twixt*, that saw the master filmmaker re-invent himself for the digital age.

This is the 66th in Produced by’s ongoing series of Case Studies of successful producers and their work. Produced by editor spoke to Francis Ford Coppola just a few weeks prior to his first appearance at the PGA’s Produced By Conference in June. The man who once directed an entire film about a conversation most definitely knows how to hold up his end of one; Coppola’s characteristic warmth and wit were on full display in a discourse that ranged from the jungles of the Philippines to the joy and terror of taking creative risks, to the today-unthinkable prospect of *The Godfather* set in the 1970s.
So, just talking about producing, and how you came to be a producer as well as a director… What were your first encounters with producers? How did you learn how to put a film together?

Well, I was a theater student originally, and received a very focused training in what it takes to put on a play. I was a techie; I worked in the shop and learned to build scenery and to do lighting. Through that first training, I learned that production was about being familiar with all the aspects of putting on a show — certainly, acting was high on the list, but also all the technical things and scheduling, and then from that, the economic; how to find the money to do it and how to make up for the shortcomings of not having enough money. And then I went to film school, which was a little different. Theater is much more of a “group” experience, a big crowd of friends who work late into the night. In film school, I found it a much more solitary operation. You were typically on your own, and there was little equipment available, Movilas and such. And then there was the skill of how to slip the Movielas out of an older student’s room, after he’d locked it up so only he could use it. [laughs] It was a competition for resources which were very, very scarce. So, from the start, it was clear that making these projects was really about how to get your hands on the resources to do it. Right out of UCLA, I became an assistant for Roger Corman, and of course, Roger Corman was the low-budget, independent producer of the day, who made many films and made them very economically. Roger himself had been an engineer, so he was very practical about how to do these things for the least money possible. So producing was effectively the first skill you had to have, because you couldn’t do anything unless you could figure out how to get all the things you needed despite having, in most cases, no money whatsoever. Production really came first in my education.

So in your time working with Roger, were there things that you learned from watching him work? What made him successful as a producer?

There were many tricks and techniques that Roger had. Suppose we were going to work in Europe, which I once got to do with him. In those days, the big thing was to buy a car in Europe and drive it around, then have it shipped back to you. So he knew that on the production, maybe three or four people would be buying cars. If you bought a car, he offered you a couple hundred dollars to use those cars to transport the actors and the crew from place to place. So for just a few hundred dollars, he had the benefit of all the seats in those cars. Another trick was making really flat deals with people to avoid overruns. If he was going to do a film that, let’s say, American International was going to finance, he knew that after that film, all their resources would be gathered and lined up, so he would slip in a second film using that exact same team and package of equipment, so that he was leveraging one film off of another film. Roger realized that there can be no waste in making motion pictures, that anything that’s wasted is only going to add to the burden of the process of getting your money back. He pretty much eliminated waste.

How did these early experiences as a producer prepare you to deal with producers working in Hollywood? Was it a different sort of game, approaching them as a writer/director looking to make a movie and now dealing with veteran studio people?

In Hollywood, they also tried to be efficient and to save money at every turn, but it was a different style of being efficient. In that case, they had their trusted team and editorial team and the production team, and everything was part of an industrial process that was meant to make 300 movies a year. Some of it was similar. For example, Finian’s Rainbow took place in Kentucky, with sharecroppers and what-have-you. I wanted to take a little unit, as I had been familiar with in the independent world, and go there and actually shoot all these dances and musical numbers and shoot the story in a natural location using the type of equipment and cost-cutting approaches I knew. We were very allowed to do that. We had to shoot it right on the lot, in the studio, and in fact, we had to shoot it on the Cameltt set, which were, at best, only sort of appropriate to the film. So it was a different kind of economy, an economy where you surrendered a lot of the ability to choose what you thought might be best, in return for this industrial process which was designed to shoot any director a movie. In the independent world, you tailored the means that you had to the movie you were shooting. If you were suddenly thrown into a different kind of movie, you usually had to have change your configuration.

It wasn’t that long after you started working in the studio system that you made The Godfather, which by any measure made your reputation as a filmmaker. Perhaps ironically, it’s one of the few movies you didn’t also produce. The real producers of The Godfather were the Paramount hierarchy, which started with Bob Evans. He was the head of the studio and was not a man without talent, but he was extremely opinionated, as maybe you would have to be in that position. The actual credited producers on the movie were more within that hierarchy, just trying to survive the temperamental period of The Godfather. One of those partners, a fellow named Gray Frederickson, was the only one who had real production experience per se; he had made a lot of low-budget films in Italy. Originally, The Godfather was conceived to be a very inexpensive film. The original budget was around two and a half million dollars. And the concept for The Godfather that would have made it possible to make for the $2.5 million was to make it contemporary, to set it in the 70s. The original draft of the script had hippies in it! The 1940s cars, clothes... all the elements that can make a movie cost more would be eliminated. Second, they were very anxious to stay away from an expensive production situation, which in those days, New York was thought to be. So I came on the show and immediately said, “Well, I don’t want to do it in the 70s. I want to set it as the real story is, right after World War II, in the 40s,” which meant period cars and period clothes and period hairdos and period extras, which immediately, they had a fit over. And then I said, “I don’t want to shoot it in Kansas City” which they were planning to double as New York. I said, “I want to shoot it in New York City,” which was actually the production team. As it turned out, The Godfather cost about six and a half million dollars, mostly because of those decisions. I was constantly on the chopping block. Another factor was that I had brought in some incredibly talented people to work, such as Gordon Willis, who’s not necessarily known for speed, and as production designer, Dean Tavoularis, who was not known for compromise. Every week, the rumor was that I was going to be fired, and I’m still not really sure why I wasn’t.

I imagine that an experience like that would lead you, as it did, to become more active as an independent producer and more reliant on your own resources. Even though the film was so successful, I never wanted to make a sequel to The Godfather. I never thought that The Godfather story was one that could be episodic and you could
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Right, Apocalypse Now, of course, was a famously, epically difficult production, the story of which has been covered in all sorts of other media. But looking back, as the film’s producer, what were some of the production decisions at the outset that, if you were doing it again, you might have chosen differently? What were the decisions that sent you down the path that you may have come to regret?

Well, I can’t honestly say that I regret those decisions. First, we went around the world to look for a place to do it. After we chose the Philippines, the Department of Defense — Donald Rumsfeld was the Secretary of Defense then, just as he was under Bush — absolutely decided they would in no way cooperate, and in fact, they would do whatever they could to disassociate from the production. So nothing was available to us for a big movie like that in terms of helicopters and aircraft and uniforms — nothing. We got zero from the Department of Defense. So we went to the Philippines for some of the military props and equipment. And of course, the locale could work as a double for Vietnam. I found the Philippine people wonderful. I was there for close to two years and I can’t think of an instance when I could blame anything on the Philippines other than the weather or stuff like that. The government stayed true to their agreement. They provided all the material that they said they would. What really impacted the production were the typhoons and the heart attacks of certain principal cast. Maybe if there was one problem I could have replaced, it would have been to replace the director, who clearly entered into something so much more enormous than he had anticipated. As
morning, noon and night. You always had a crush on some girl who was in that group, and everyone felt that camaraderie, the feeling of us-versus-them, who were in those days the faculty, and then later became the studio. That was the basis, among this motley group of ex-USC and ex-UCLA students, most famously George Lucas, who was like a kid brother to me. We would sit around saying, yeah, someday we're going to have our own mixing studio and we'll do soundtracks like they never heard before, and we're going to be able to do everything the way we want. All those dreams seemed to point to being more independent. So I sold everything I had. I was slightly older, a few years older than George, and people like Walter Murch and John Milius and Carroll Ballard... and with this group of ex-film students, we all rented U-Haul trucks and drove up to San Francisco. We felt that here, we would be in our own place that was a more bohemian, permissive, artistic environment, where the beats had been and where there was a new music scene happening, and yet we'd be close enough to Los Angeles to be able to use the resources, the props and the costume houses and the genius special effects people and the crews, but we would be sufficiently at a distance to be independent of that. We were just putting our dreams out there, and of course, what we didn't have was money. We had absolutely no money. But we used to theorize and say, "You know, sound is half the experience of cinema, but it costs half as much as picture." So we decided we would have our own mixing studio and that's where the whole San Francisco sound came from, the concept of sound designer, which was a title Walter came up with because he wasn't in the director, I recall just thinking, oh, well, we'll deal with it. The film is largely successful because of the remarkable collaborators I had in every department — certainly the photography of Vittorio Storaro and Dean Tavoularis running the art department — but also the really fabulous special effects team of A.D. Flowers and Joe Lombardi — all that stuff was done without any digital effects whatsoever. In Apocalypse Now, if you see 30 helicopters in the sky blowing up a village, they really were.

So what lessons did you take from that experience that you applied to later films? Well, I was always a techie. I knew that one day cinema would be digital. Even then, I was using primitive electronic means to see my dailies, and when I left, I just shook my head and I said, "Well, there's got to be a better way to make a movie than this." There's a famous speech I made at the Oscars when I gave the directing award to Michael Cimino... I just sort of broke into this absurd side monologue telling the audience that there was about to be a new era of show business when cinema becomes electronic and things are going to be possible that you couldn't even imagine. I always knew it was going to happen. A lot of that realization came from recognizing that everything we had attempted in Apocalypse Now was soon going to be possible with little guys working on computer screens. I don't know that it's necessarily better, but it certainly all happened as I predicted, although I was greatly ridiculed for that speech. [laughs] If you get a copy of it, you'll see what I said.

I'll see if I can track it down. So in, terms of founding American Zoetrope, you were at the vanguard of what we now identify as the independent film community; Zoetrope is one of the charter members of that community, in a sense. What led you to that point, and what decisions guided the early days of Zoetrope? Well, American Zoetrope was very much derived from the spirit of the college drama club that I had been so familiar with... I mean, you had a group of friends who were always together...
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At this point, at least one and arguably two generations of filmmakers have come of age in the shadow of that cohort. Certainly, programs like UCLA and USC have established themselves as institutional training grounds in the following years. But it’s a big jump from hanging out with George and Walter and dreaming of someday making movies the way you want to make them, to the place we find ourselves today. What has been the nature of that change?

The motion picture industry, whatever that is, has divided in two. You have the money part of the industry, which is basically large-budgeted, digital effect-intensive movies — in many cases, superhero movies — which represent where the money part of the business is. And that’s sort of disappointing, because those films are tremendously similar, one to the other. But then we have what really is the sweet spot of the film business, the part of the film industry that makes personal films... Paul Thomas Anderson and Wes Anderson and Steve Soderbergh and David O. Russell and James Gray and on and on and on... that cinema that’s being done by those what you might call the descendants of Zoetrope. That’s what makes American film great. It’s not Spider-Man 5 — let alone Spider-Man 6, 7 and 8 — but these rich and creative lower budget films that are lucky if they can gross 20 million dollars. Films like those of my own children, my daughter Sofia and my granddaughter Gia, and women directors like Tamara Jenkins, Sarah Polley. What really makes the cinema alive and wonderful are these independent filmmakers — people who are lucky if they make enough money to pay their rent by doing the film, and are desperate to find a way to distribute them.

Right. In terms of your recent movies like Youth Without Youth and Tetro and Twixt, you worked in the trenches in a similar fashion to any of the filmmakers you just mentioned. How does your producing process work today? How has it changed?

I deliberately made those three pictures very inexpensively. I financed them myself, which was part of the project I set for myself: I had to write an original screenplay and tell a story with a low enough budget that I could finance it myself and not care what happens after that, and just go on and try to become a student again. And I thought the best way of being a student was to have no money! Every producer has a problem that they can solve by throwing a lot of money at it, and that’s often what they do. But there’s usually another solution that involves not throwing money at it. Very often, that’s a more creative...
solution. So I’ve come to be against the industrial method, meaning I don’t believe that you have a unit that can make any movie. I think you need to put together a unit that can make that particular movie best. A method of production that’s cast specifically for the particular movie you’re doing is interesting to me, because we live in a time where one of the worst negatives of movies is its sameness one to another. You come out of a movie thinking, “Didn’t I see that movie before?” And that’s because all the forces of the industrial process push those movies toward sameness. The worst “sin” is when someone makes a movie and the critics say it was a mess. When I hear that, I immediately perk up and look, because when a critic says that a movie is a mess, that means it didn’t conform to what they feel the rules are, and that’s really interesting to me. So what I really wanted out of making those three films was to have a chance to reinvent myself. You know how a plant will grow and it grows its way and it becomes a bigger plant? That’s what happens to a person, too. As a filmmaker, I have become a big old tree, and I thought well, I want to cut that tree down and just become a little sprout and let that sprout grow. It’s hard to cut that down and kill it, but I managed to do that. Fortunately, I was wealthy from another business and I was able to finance my own movies, but I felt that that experiment was worthy. I really loved those movies for many reasons, in large part because they defy genres and did what I wanted them to do. I’m a different person now, and perhaps able to look at things differently than I would have, had I just been that old tree.

I’m curious, what did you learn about yourself through that process? Reinvention takes no small amount of courage. What did you discover about yourself, cutting yourself down to that little sapling?

What I discovered of myself is that I tend to always do too much, and as I look back, I wonder if I had just been willing to do less, I might have been better off. But all artists, no matter who they are, are insecure and frightened. To be an artist means you’re afraid, because you’re venturing out in territory that is frightening, and my response, like nature’s, is to produce too much. If there’s a terrible drought and bad conditions, apple trees make more apples. That’s what I guess I always did. Because of my natural fear of doing it, I have a good imagination. I kept generating more ideas and more characters and more situations and more, more, more. And so my great flaw that I have to look at now is: How can I distance myself from the natural fear that I feel from the creative process and not put myself in that “do more” mode?

That’s fascinating. I think Marshall Herskovitz has said that you kind of have to be a little crazy to even want to take on the challenge of producing. I guess the question is, have you had any success in terms of learning to ignore that fear, how to set it aside and take the creative risks that are going to make the work satisfying for you? Well, when I’m writing — which is the first point of terror — I don’t read the stuff I’m writing. I don’t read it until I have maybe 100 pages and then I read the whole thing. So I try to benefit from a little distance. I always used to say that writers, when they’re working, are secreting a hormone that makes them hate what they’ve written, and consequently you’re constantly fixing it when you don’t even know what it is you’re trying to fix. My granddaughter is only 27, and she’s writing a big, ambitious, original screenplay. She’s always saying, “Oh, it’s all messed up.” And I’ve told her, don’t judge it, just put it in the oven. When you’re cooking something, you know it’s going to be better two hours later. And she asks, well, when do I judge it? And I told her, when you have some perspective and a little time on it, so you can judge it fairly. This is common to the young writer, old writer, any writer. You’re out there and you immediately think the worst. “Oh, it’s terrible.” But then I remember how the reaction now to Apocalypse Now has totally revised since the time it came out. When it came out it was, “What the hell is this? This is weird.” Now they say, “My God… how did he do it?” But it took 20 years for that film to emerge as something of a classic. When I think about what I’m planning now, I find myself asking, why do I need this? I’m 75, I have a beautiful family, my kids and grandkids are carrying on in the film industry. I could just look at the animals out where I live. It’s like living in a park. And then I think, jeez, but on Apocalypse Now, I was terrified also. So what’s the difference? Terror is part of the process, and as Marlon says, you should make a friend of horror. So who knows, maybe I’ll jump into this ambitious project and maybe I’ll totally fail, but by then I’ll probably be gone, and 10 years after I’m gone they’ll say oh, what a mess that was, or oh, how wonderful it was. Who knows?

Ten years after, it’ll be a mess, and then 30 years after, it’ll be a masterpiece.

Yeah. [laughs] It’s ironic what happens after. I mean, poor Vincent Van Gogh and those guys. Or how Bizet wrote Carmen and died, thinking it was a failure. Or Debussy wrote Pelléas et Mélisande and everybody hated it. You can’t care. As Marlon says, you can’t care, or they’ll see it on your face. If I think well, I want to cut that tree down and just become a little sprout and let that sprout grow. It’s hard to cut that down and kill it, but I managed to do that. Fortunately, I was wealthy from another business and I was able to finance my own movies, but I felt that that experiment was worthy. I really loved those movies for many reasons, in large part because they defy genres and did what I wanted them to do. I’m a different person now, and perhaps able to look at things differently than I would have, had I just been that old tree.
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Point Grey Pictures Hits the Big Time
by Jeffrey McMahon
Stoners, slackers and dimwits: those have been the heroes in the films written by the team of Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg over the last decade, including such hits as Superbad, Pineapple Express and This Is the End. However, in addition to their work as writers (and actor, in Rogen’s case), Rogen and Goldberg’s Point Grey Pictures has quietly been making a name for itself as a production entity. And with the release of their newest work, Neighbors, which scored one of the largest R-rated comedy openings in history, the duo, alongside producing partner and fellow PGA member James Weaver, have shown that they’re in this game for the long haul.

Evan Goldberg and Seth Rogen met each other in bar mitzvah classes in Vancouver, where both were born and raised. Both had aspirations to work in comedy, although not necessarily in Hollywood. “I never set out to be in entertainment, I just wanted to be a storyteller,” says Goldberg. “But Mel Brooks movies blew my mind, and really it was Kevin Smith that got me and Seth into the idea that you could make movies with no stars and no special effects, just people at the mall that we could relate to. The world was changing so that anyone could make a movie.” Inspired by Smith’s brand of raunchy slacker comedy, Rogen and Goldberg teamed up to work on a screenplay that, years later, would become 2007’s Superbad, drawing on their teenage fantasies and anxieties.

While Goldberg and Rogen were aiming for writing careers, Rogen’s talents as an actor caught the eye of producer Judd Apatow, who cast him in the TV cult classic Freaks and Geeks in 1999, alongside future stars James Franco and Jason Segel. Even though the series was canceled after its initial season, Apatow kept Rogen on his radar, hiring him again for both the cast and the writers’ room of Apatow’s sitcom Undeclared in 2001. After the cancellation of that show, Rogen and Goldberg found jobs as writers on HBO’s Da Ali G Show, for which they shared an Emmy nomination.

Goldberg and Rogen’s first taste of producing came in 2007 when they were hired by Apatow to be executive producers on a string of films, starting with Knocked Up and continuing with the production of their own screenplay, Superbad. “We were creative producers, helping Judd come up with jokes, all creative stuff, not really hardcore producing,” explains Goldberg. “When we were on Pineapple Express, the producer went off to work on Forgetting Sarah Marshall for a while, and I had to deal with hiring people, firing people… I just looked at a budget and I had no idea what to do,” he laughs. After the success of those films, Rogen’s acting career took off and the duo continued to work as executive producers on Apatow’s Funny People, where they first connected with James Weaver. A native of Bronxville, New York, Weaver knew that he wanted to get involved in Hollywood, but didn’t quite know how. “I worked in advertising for a few years and realized that wasn’t what I wanted to do, so I decided to move to L.A.

“Good PRODUCERS MAKE GOOD NEIGHBORS”

“I knew I had to try it out.” Weaver’s first Hollywood experience was that classic bottom-rung job, a stint in the mailroom at UTA. From there, he found a job as Rogen’s assistant on Funny People and The Green Hornet. “He was just a real go-getter,” recalls Rogen. “Very driven and smart and a big fan of the business side of things, which was valuable to us to have as a part of our dynamic. We got along with him and really shared a sensibility.”

The decisive moment for the threesome’s producing career came with the script for the movie that would eventually become 50/50, written by Will Reiser. Goldberg and Rogen had known Reiser from Ali G, when he contracted a form...
of spinal cancer. Reiser’s battle with the illness, with all the humorous and painful stories it entailed, seemed like perfect script material to Rogen and Goldberg. “Will had an inherently comedic perspective on things, and that script turned into something that we really fell in love with,” explains Rogen. “We knew Will had a great story to tell. It was captivating,” agrees Goldberg. “We make all these dick-joke movies and after a while you kind of get an urge to make something meaningful, something we felt we should do, morally.” As they had done in the past, Rogen and Goldberg took Reiser’s screenplay to their mentor Apatow as something he could produce. “The problem was, Judd was getting ready to make Funny People, and the early drafts of that movie involved Adam Sandler’s character having cancer,” Goldberg explains. “Judd liked the script, but it wasn’t really something he could get involved with, so we decided that in order for our friends to be comfortable doing this, that Seth and I were the best choices to direct. Because we’ve made huge fools of ourselves in the past, so they’d be willing to do the same.” The project eventually became last year’s apocalyptic hit This Is the End, which represented the directorial debut for Rogen and Goldberg, as well as Weaver’s debut as full producer. “For me, it was playing the role of knowing what I was doing even though I had no idea what I was doing,” Weaver laughs. “This was our shot as a filmmaking group, so we had to do things in a financially responsible way.”

While Goldberg and Rogen were occupied with multi-tasking as writers and directors, Weaver absorbed as many of the producing responsibilities as possible. “I wanted to protect them from anything they didn’t need to deal with,” Weaver says. “I saw my job as making as many decisions as possible, and then if there were decisions all three of us needed to make, distilling those down to their simplest forms.”

Rogen was grateful for Weaver’s approach. “A lot of producers will bring every problem to directors, and that can be a nightmare,” he says. “Sometimes things that seem like a problem really aren’t a problem.” Goldberg agrees that the trio really solidified their approach on This Is the End. “With James we
really formed a very holistic troika on that movie. You don’t think you can do something until you do it, and we all did a lot on This Is the End.” Rogen agrees that even though This Is the End was a lot of work, it was worthwhile: “Having more control made things a lot easier than having less control.”

Among the most impressive feats Weaver, Rogen and Goldberg pulled off was to make a complicated, apocalyptic horror-comedy with an effects budget of only $3 million. “We brought vendors to the table when the movie was greenlit,” Goldberg explains. “On the plus side, a lot of them loved the ideas and were invested in the movie. The con side is, when they give you their estimates for what they need to make the movie, you have to hold them to their words.” Weaver agrees about the stressful nature of VFX work. “There was a lot of work on that movie at the end with VFX, there were hundreds of hours of looking at shots and saying to each other, ‘In this shot, is the demon cock swaying the right way? Should it be going this direction instead? Thankfuly, we were able to do whatever we wanted as long as we stayed under budget.”

Thanks to the long hours and patient attention to detail that the three producers put into This Is the End, it became one of the most impressive feats Weaver, Rogen and Goldberg. “This is the demon cock swaying the right way? Should it be going this direction instead? Thankfuly, we were able to do whatever we wanted as long as we stayed under budget.”

The screenplay for Neighbors was written by Andrew Jay Cohen and Brendan O’Brien. “We immediately knew it was a great idea for a movie, a very straightforward concept that seemed like it would be a hit,” says Goldberg. “Our first decision was, who should direct this, and we immediately thought of Nick Stoller. He’s somebody who will make a movie with no ego at all, and is always up to make the funniest damn movie.”

Goldberg explains. “His wife would be more of the sensible character trying to talk them out of being idiots. But then Nick Stoller suggested, what if the wife is just as big of an idiot as everyone else in the movie? And that’s when the movie cracked open.” Several actresses were considered for the role of the wife opposite Rogen, but for Goldberg there was really only one choice. “And (Universal head) Donna Langley, we wanted Rose Byrne. There’s no one else that versatile, she can do everything, she can get chased around by zombies, she can do action movies, and she’s great at comedy. We kind of went through the motions of casting and finally everyone agreed she was the one.” Similarly, there was only really one option for the role of Teddy, the president of the frat. “Brendan and Andrew told us, you have to get Zac Efron for the part, and we met up with him and he was great. He loved being able to make an R-rated film, it really set him loose,” Goldberg says.

Having a trial by fire as directors on This Is the End gave Rogen and Goldberg extra confidence in producing Neighbors. “You just have more productive info on how to shoot things, how to build sets, how to block things,” Rogen says. “The more jobs you’ve had, the more input you can offer.”

Indeed, Point Grey’s next film is a comedy with a more pointed, satirical edge. “Our next film is The Interview, later this year,” says Goldberg. “The Interview reunites Rogen with James Franco as TV producers who are offered an exclusive interview with North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un — only to be coerced by the CIA into an assassination plot. ‘And then down the road is something we’re very excited about,” laughs Goldberg. “We’ve had a script for a long time now called Sausage Party, which is about an anthropomorphic sausage making its way through a grocery store, and it’s raunchy and R-rated, and basically we can make it now because the technology has gotten to the point where we can make this film cheaply enough to make it worthwhile. But it’s going to be very, very exciting.” In addition, Point Grey has numerous other feature and television projects in development, including an adaptation of the graphic novel Preacher for AMC.

As the boys of Superbad mature into the men of Point Grey, they seem likely to have a bright future in front of them, but they don’t want to repeat themselves. “We’re trying not to get stuck making the same kind of movies,” Goldberg explains. “We want to make action movies, horror movies, dramas, we’re capable of a lot more than just that standard model of comedy.” At the same time, Rogen’s approach is very straightforward. “If there’s any idea or people that we want to work with, what’s most important is that you have to love what you’re investing your time and energy in. I’m down to work on any idea that makes me laugh.”
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What makes all of this relevant to the current digital age is that across all of these golden ages, the time span tends to be 10 to 15 years. One commentator recently posited that the conclusions of Breaking Bad and Mad Men bookend the current golden age, which began with The Sopranos. That show is widely acknowledged to have completely changed the game not only in terms of the kind of programming viewers wanted — more challenging, dark antiheroes, seedy underbelly of society — but also because it, along with a subsequent slew of hits, repurposed HBO as a significant player in the original content market and signaled a ‘disturbance in the force,’ which reshaped the television landscape.

Three or four years ago, when the Internet really came of age in its ability to deliver video to many devices in a reliable non-buffering fashion, there was much anticipation around where the next ‘disturbance’ would come from — there were many non-traditional players such as Yahoo!, AOL, Hulu, MSN, Babelgum, Dailymotion, Blip and others which were all making moves in the original content space, while the traditional media entities were trying to work out how to capitalize on their existing back catalogues. Then just more than three years ago, YouTube announced it would be investing many millions of dollars in original channels on its platform to, in Robert Kyncl’s words, put television on YouTube. Many thought this was the game-changer — given its platform to, in Robert Kyncl’s words, put television on YouTube. Many thought this was the game-changer — given Google’s resources, the end was nigh for traditional television. As it turns out, this initiative was significant, but not for the reasons we all thought at the time.

Enter Netflix. From today’s vantage, it is easy to forget where Netflix was at this point in time, when YouTube was unveiling its plans. The DVD and streaming service was still six months away from the PR disaster that would be Qwikster (that misstep bringing many predictions of the service’s demise), and barely an original program to its name at that point. Yet here we are, just 2½ years since that misstep, with Netflix proving more of a disturbance than anyone could ever have predicted, not only because of its success in executing its original strategy, but because of the impact that success has had in influencing the directions of other players and new entrants. Xbox, Hulu, Amazon and Yahoo! are now all chasing similar serial long-form success. With this switch to long-form TV models and budgets, on the face of it, there are now fewer players in the market for the shorter form programming that has defined "digital" content for the last two or three years. This, coupled with the fact that YouTube’s original channels initiative has come to an end (and with it the funding that many of these innovative content creators and producers were relying on to build their business), means we now have to ask where do these new, talented voices go to be heard, or at least get their projects funded so they have a chance of being heard?

Despite the many great successes where groundbreak- ing content is finding an audience on digital platforms, from names such as Freddie Wong, Bernie Su, Shira Lazar, Chester See, Michelle Phan and many others, it remains very difficult for talent to actually earn a living in front of or behind the camera when dedicated to producing for digital platforms. Yes, there are a number of YouTube stars doing very well, and the recent acquisitions activity in the MCN space is at least an indicator of perceived value. However, if these people were plying their trade solely in the world of television, there would be numerous potential buyers for most of their ideas, they might get development money to shape them and then ever be given enough money to do their ideas justice and still pay themselves a living wage. This is a paradigm which has yet to catch on for many of these content creators who are investing in the digital space, but Produced By Conference sessions such as "The Emerging Majors: New Possibilities for Scripted Storytelling" and "Indie City: Finding Your Niche in the Digital Eco-System" are trying to move the ball further down the field.

Ironically enough, one of this year’s Conference headliners, Francis Ford Coppola, predicted the current democratization of the means of production in an interview in 1994 and pontificated that one day "some little fat girl in Ohio" (his words, I promise you; the interview is on YouTube!) would make movies with her dad’s camera and become the “new Mozart.” Many have interpreted this as Coppola predicting YouTube, but unfortunately he didn’t expand on how our little fat girl was going to be able to get the film in front of an audience and make a living out of it. However, without a system to rely on to give them a regular paycheck, she and her fellow creators have actually had to carry their resourcefulness not just through their filmmaking process, but on into how they get things funded and seen.

In his book David and Goliath, Malcolm Gladwell posits that oftentimes people with disadvantages can succeed and excel because of the difficulties they had to overcome, citing Brian Grazer’s tools for dealing with his dyslexia, and the workarounds he had to create, as an example of how difficulty actually might be the root of success. Necessity was very much the mother of invention, and for this new generation of talent, producers and directors, the lack of a coherent reliable funding and distribution infrastructure hasn’t meant they have given up. Rather, they have created their own workarounds to bring their ideas to life. Kickstarter has become very much a fixture in content funding, but Freddie Wong had to spend a significant amount of time and effort building a fan base through quality content before he could get Video Game High School funded and birth his production company RocketJump. He also treated his crowdfunding investors with respect, posting online an infographic which broke down...
AOL is really still in the business of short-form content, but those founding partners that are content publishers, only and Digitas LBI — with attendees mostly drawn from the founding partners — Google, Yahoo!, Hulu, AOL, Microsoft featured presentations from 23 companies including the six which has been evolving over the last couple of years, and this year where, are the new buyers for the new generation of creators earning the name thanks to the series' sponsors, evolved, from content aggregators into content producers — *The New York Times* posted 430 videos in March and announced a number of new series, and Conde Nast said it will have up to 100 original series in 2014 — and what has that kind of evolution portended in the past?

HBO went from being a film library play to a major provider of high-quality original content in the space of three or four years, as have many of our major cable networks throughout their own evolution including USA and TNT, and more recently AMC and IFC, with new entrant WGN diving into high-end scripted dramas this year. Of course, no one remembers the failures — take a few minutes to search online for "Super TV," "CBS Cable" (a channel apparently dedicated to operas and interpretive dance which, funnily enough, only lasted a year), Genesis Storytime (a silent channel which featured pictures from children’s books and expected the parents to read along) and Ted Turner’s Cable Music Channel which, in the face of the already established MTV, only lasted a month. But add to all of the current activity the advent of the much talked about "over-the-top" networks and channels that are in discussion or are already in the works at companies such as DirectTV, AT&T, Chennin, Cinedigm, Fullscreen and Maker, and one can only conclude that, once again, this constant evolving of the space can only be a good thing for content creators and producers. With this year’s NewFront thrusting to the fore of some potential major digital players of today and the future, these new buyers are arguably likely to have more in common with the tastes, appetites and passions of an up-and-coming generation of creators that have only ever produced for digital platforms than they might with established TV producers. Hopefully, this will mean a whole slew of potential new buyers for their ideas.

Of course, no one knows who the winners and losers will be, who will be HBO and who will be Super TV, but we do know that, despite the occasional "disturbance of the force," evolution takes time. The advent of a landscape of new buyers with sustainable business models and money to fund content has been slower to develop than many of us expected or would like, but just as when cable itself started, there are certain to be some major winners, one of which will hopefully be our entire creative community of storytellers. Place your bets now. The end was nigh for traditional television. As it turns out, this initiative was significant, but not for the reasons we all thought at the time.

**Three years ago, YouTube announced it would be investing many millions of dollars in original channels on its platform...**

Many thought this was the game-changer — given Google’s resources, the end was nigh for traditional television. It is somewhat ironic that a model that was a staple of content funding when television started out (as we all know, soap operas earned the name thanks to the series’ sponsor-ship by soap manufacturers), but which it has struggled with ever since, is becoming very much a standard fixture of how content is being paid for in the digital space. So where, if ever since, is becoming very much a standard fixture of how content is being paid for in the digital space.

One answer might lie in this more direct relationship between creators and brands, embodied by the IAB NewFronts —— a 200-year-old literary masterpiece into the multimedia millennial cross-platform success that is *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, which is spawning a series of other such adaptations and significant brand partner involvement.

It is somewhat ironic that a model that was a staple of content funding when television started out (as we all know, soap operas earned the name thanks to the series’ sponsor-ship by soap manufacturers), but which it has struggled with ever since, is becoming very much a standard fixture of how content is being paid for in the digital space. Where, if anywhere, are the new buyers for the new generation of creators going to come from?

One answer might lie in this more direct relationship between creators and brands, embodied by the IAB NewFronts which took place in New York a few weeks ago. The event has been evolving over the last couple of years, and this year featured presentations from 23 companies including the six founding partners — Google, Yahoo!, Hulu, AOL, Microsoft and Digitas LBI — with attendees mostly drawn from the advertising and agency world. Interestingly, of the five of those founding partners that are content publishers, only AOL is really still in the business of short-form content, but a look at some of the 17 other participants gives a glimpse of a potentially very exciting and interesting future for those producers specializing in that kind of content. Many companies took the stage to present their digital video strategy, and programs as well as to discuss the future of content and its relationship with brands. BuzzFeed, Crackle, *The New York Times*, Glam Media (Conde Nast), Vice, PBS and POPSugar were amongst those taking part, many of them having served as purveyors of digital video for some time, but taking up this platform for the first time to reach out directly to Madison Avenue. Many if not all of them are evolving or have already evolved, from content aggregators into content producers — *The New York Times* posted 430 videos in March and announced a number of new series, and Conde Nast said it will have up to 100 original series in 2014 — and what has that kind of evolution portended in the past?

Of course, no one knows who the winners and losers will be, who will be HBO and who will be Super TV, but we do know that, despite the occasional "disturbance of the force," evolution takes time. The advent of a landscape of new buyers with sustainable business models and money to fund content has been slower to develop than many of us expected or would like, but just as when cable itself started, there are certain to be some major winners, one of which will hopefully be our entire creative community of storytellers. Place your bets now. The end was nigh for traditional television.
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How did you come to get involved in the Conference? What was it that convinced you that this was a project worth all the time, phone calls, blood, sweat, tears, etc.?

I had served on the Board for six years and had the pleasure of witnessing all of the great work that the PGA does and the wealth of information it has to share with its members and with the producing community. So I was excited when Vance Van Petten approached me about serving as a Produced By Co-chair. I had attended the Conference in the past and was always impressed by the caliber of speakers who participate each year. Every year, Produced By is able to gather a plethora of high-profile and prolific producers and talent who share their experience with all attendees, so I was honored to help co-chair. This will be my third year serving as Co-chair.

What’s something you’ve seen at the Conference that could never have happened anywhere else?

I think that the Mentoring Roundtable sessions present some of the most unique opportunities that cannot be found anywhere else. Attendees are able to join iconic producers in an intimate environment where the producers share their personal experiences and answer questions from the roundtable attendees.

What are some programming areas you’d like to see more of in future Conferences? What questions do you want answered?

While I believe that Produced By covers an incredibly wide variety of TV, film and digital topics, I would love to see even more coverage of content serving the urban/crossover communities. Perhaps one of the questions we can dive deeper into is, how do producers who specialize in diverse content survive in a competitive marketplace where there are only a handful of opportunities? I know that I will be discussing this issue in my roundtable session.

Looking back over the years, what aspect of the Conference are you proudest of?

Each year, I am always proud of the honest sharing of needed information by our Conference speakers. Attendees are able to learn invaluable information and tools that are unavailable from any reading sources or anywhere else.
**RACHEL KLEIN**
(Chair: 2009–2014)

*When did the idea of the Conference first occur to you?*

I first came up with the idea when I was the Director of the CMJ Film Festival in New York City. I saw a great opportunity for the festival to interface with the Producers Guild to screen content, create sessions and participate in our shorts competition. When this was a success, I knew there was a bigger opportunity here. In true producer fashion, I sat down, scripted out a mock conference, then called upon David Picker, Mitzi Roth, Lydia Dean Pilcher, Sarah Green, Mark Marabella and others to collaborate and hone the ideas and content. Once we were downfield a bit, we realized we had something truly special.

**What are your memories of the first Produced By Conference back in 2009? I mean, how hard was that sucker to put together?**

Er... none! Ha ha... maybe I have some memories. It was sheer chaos and joy all wrapped up in one experience. Gale [Anne Hurd] and I knew we had to make the Guild proud of this decision, and there were many sleepless nights because of it. I remember when we walked into the Sony lot for the opening of the first Conference and we were almost in tears! It took years to come to fruition and to see the first PBC banner overhead was quite amazing.

**What’s something you’ve seen at the Conference that could never have happened anywhere else?**

Sheer excitement for the producing profession. Different countries, genres, sectors... you name it! All under one roof... or studio, rather. Where else could you spend a weekend honing your chops, making new relationships, hosting meetings and conversing about the single greatest profession on Earth? Only at the Produced By Conference!

**What’s the single best Conference session you’ve seen over the years?**

There really are so many! To have our conference kick off with James Cameron, participation from legends like Clint Eastwood, Mark Burnett and Francis Ford Coppola? How can you pick just one? Besides, I am a realist in terms of programming. I absolutely love the sessions in which I can’t write stuff down fast enough. I was nuts over last year’s session “Are You Getting Your Fair Share?” Understanding Producer Share Participations.” Pure information on a topic everyone needs to know.

**What’s like to have the conference coming back to New York after all this time?**

It will be a remarkable feat to host Produced By in New York City. The vibrancy of the city combined with the talented producers that call it home will make for a unique, memorable and must-see event!

**GARY LUCCHESI**
(Chair: 2012–2014)

*Back in 2009, you were one of the doubters! Can you talk a little bit about how you came to be such an advocate and champion for Produced By?*

The reason I was nervous about the first “Produced By” was we were in the first few months of a global recession and I feared that members wouldn’t be able to afford the cost of the tickets. It wasn’t an unreasonable fear, but it proved to be wrong. The first conference on the Sony lot was extremely well attended and was undoubtedly a triumph for the Guild. I remember vividly sitting at a Producers Guild meeting when the idea of a “Produced By” conference was formed. Gale Anne Hurd was its strongest advocate, and deserves so much credit for helping the event to grow into what it has become.

**What’s something you’ve seen at the Conference that could never have happened anywhere else?**

One year we had a conversation between Brian Grazer and Pete Berg. It was fascinating watching a great producer and director interact. I don’t believe there is any conference that focuses on the DNA of the creative process as well as the Produced by Conference does.

**What is the single best Conference session you’ve seen over the years?**

I will never forget James Cameron talking about 3D right before the release of Avatar. Also, Christopher Nolan discussing the growth of his career right before the release of The Dark Knight Rises. And Mark Cuban’s interesting analysis of the business, and how technology was influencing it.

**Produced By makes its east coast debut later this year. Is Produced By ready for New York? And is New York ready for Produced By?**

New York is on fire! They are absolutely ready. The New York tax incentives have brought production back to New York in a big way. I shot a TV pilot at Silvercup Studios in January; the studio was bristling with activity. New York has always been a haven for creative talent. I can’t wait for the New York Produced By. I hope it will be the first of many.

**What are some programming areas you’d like to see more of in future Conferences? What questions do you want answered?**

I believe that the future will all be about various distribution formats. Audiences will continue to devour entertainment content. The key question will be: How to reach the broadest audience? How...
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There are lots of two-generation media dynasties, and a few that span three generations, but for PGA member Jorge Granier — part of the fourth generation of his family to be involved in radio and television — broadcast is practically part of his DNA. Whatever mental image you have of the fourth-generation heir to an empire, Granier doesn’t fit it. He’s worked hard to obtain a comprehensive education in every aspect of television and film production, even as political upheaval in his home country of Venezuela threatened his family business. Now, as the CEO of Spanish-language digital content company GOTV, Managing Director of RCTV International, and most recently, U.S. television producer with a show about to premiere on the CW, he’s constantly learning more. For Granier, television is a family tradition — one he’s bringing from his home country of Venezuela to the rest of the world, one show at a time.

Jorge Granier’s family story actually begins in the United States, where his great-grandfather William Henry Phelps studied ornithology at Harvard. In the 1890s, on a research trip to Venezuela for his thesis, Phelps fell in love with both the country and a woman he’d met there. After finishing his degree, he returned to Venezuela to marry, and there began the family business. Now, as the CEO of Spanish-language digital content company GOTV, Managing Director of RCTV International, and most recently, U.S. television producer with a show about to premiere on the CW, he’s constantly learning more. For Granier, television is a family tradition — one he’s bringing from his home country of Venezuela to the rest of the world, one show at a time.
RCTV’s shutdown as “a piece of history that was lost.” But beyond the cultural and political importance, the shutdown had a personal impact. RCTV’s corporate culture was built around internal training and promotion, and many of the 3,000 people who lost their jobs had been working there for years. Granier had known them his entire life — as he puts it, "it was a true family atmosphere." But even scattered to the winds, Granier says, former RCTV employees still stay in touch; they still see the station as a family.

While government action stripped the station of its broadcast license, RCTV continued to distribute programming via cable and satellite, shifting focus to its RCTV International division and pushing aggressively for non-Venezuelan markets. Traditionally, RCTV International had simply sold the rights to broadcast their programs in other countries. Granier, rejoining the family business in Miami, started out negotiating these sorts of deals, beginning with a package of telenovelas he helped sell to Argentina. But he saw new opportunities with digital distribution, and as RCTV lost access to cable systems in Venezuela and went completely off the air, Granier shifted his focus in this direction, work he described as “building a company from scratch, based on the library.” This wasn’t as simple as signing deals with Amazon, Hulu and Netflix — though RCTV did all of these things. Part of the problem was volume — RCTV’s library comprised 50,000 hours of footage over nearly 60 years. Digitizing all of it would take years, so the most commercial footage had to be identified and then scanned and prepared for digital distribution. To date, 15,000 hours have been digitized for streaming deals.

In addition to simply selling RCTV’s shows, Granier began working on what are called format sales. In this kind of deal, a foreign network buys the rights to produce their own local version of a series. Well-known examples include such diverse titles as Ugly Betty, The Office, In Treatment and Homeland — foreign shows that were successfully adapted for American audiences. Format sales offer television net-works the rare opportunity to purchase something that’s already proven it can attract an audience. It was an opportune time to be selling formats, as Granier explained. “We saw an opportunity in the world where a lot of these markets had matured enough to have their own production capabilities and they were looking to do fare that had more of their taste. They were looking for stories.” RCTV may no longer have had access to television screens in their home country, but they definitely had stories.

When I met Granier for breakfast in late February, he was packaging several shows he thought might work in the United States. There was an hour-long cable drama, El Cartel, about the drug trade, as well as Mi Gorda Bella, a show he described as a telenovela version of The Count of Monte Cristo with a female lead, and several projects in other countries. Granier, rejoining the family business in Miami, started out negotiating these sorts of deals, beginning with a package of telenovelas he helped sell to Argentina. But he saw new opportunities with digital distribution, and as RCTV lost access to cable systems in Venezuela and went completely off the air, Granier shifted his focus in this direction, work he described as “building a company from scratch, based on the library.” This wasn’t as simple as signing deals with Amazon, Hulu and Netflix — though RCTV did all of these things. Part of the problem was volume — RCTV’s library comprised 50,000 hours of footage over nearly 60 years. Digitizing all of it would take years, so the most commercial footage had to be identified and then scanned and prepared for digital distribution. To date, 15,000 hours have been digitized for streaming deals.

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Produced in Miami, in back-to-back meetings all day. On the last day of the conference, walking from one meeting to the next, he got a text message from one of his partners simply reading “Congratulations,” with a link to a The Hollywood Reporter story. Brad Silberling, veteran of several other CW pilots, was hired to direct, and the casting process began.

It wasn’t until the table read that Granier realized the show’s potential to be something that hadn’t been done before and that spoke to a big part of America, to U.S. Latinos and everybody that has come from somewhere else to build a life here.” Besides Jennie Snyder Urman’s script, Granier observes, “A major factor… is that the casting was done superbly and the chemistry is amazing.” The show will star Gina Rodriguez as Jane and feature Jaime Camil, star of several Mexican telenovelas. But more than any particular cast member, Granier was most impressed with the cast’s chemistry, a constant surprise during the production of the pilot.

Although the show is set in Miami, where Granier lives, the pilot was shot in Los Angeles, and he was on hand for as much of the shoot as his schedule allowed. Granier was particularly impressed at the ability of Los Angeles crews to make local buildings look like his adopted hometown, dressing a hotel in Huntington Beach to resemble South Beach. He has nothing but glowing things to say about his first experience with Los Angeles production values.

“Most producers talk about time pressures, but Granier is hard to phase; compared to telenovelas, the speed of U.S. productions are practically glacial. “In Venezuela, we shoot at a really different pace — when you’re shooting telenovelas — 150 episodes, airing every day — it usually catches up to you about 60% of the way down the line, so you’re shooting in the morning, shooting in the afternoon, editing in the afternoon and night and then airing… it gets hectic.”

Even at the more leisurely pace of production of an American television pilot, things weren’t always smooth sailing, but Granier was sanguine about the experience. “That’s part of the fun of the producer’s job — every day posed challenges and opportunities for us to learn and make a better product,” he says.

Granier had returned to Miami by the time the pilot was complete, but seeing the finished product for the first time at home, instead of in an editing bay, was ideal, because, as he notes, “I got the real feeling of what people will see in their homes.” He was happy with the results, which he described as “truly the best adaptation, the best version of Jane the Virgin from Juana la Virgen.” The executives at the CW must have agreed — only minutes before he spoke to me about the production, he had received a phone call letting him know that the show had been picked up to series. He had less than a week before the show would be presented at the upfronts. After that, the show would make a rapid transition, ramping up from the pilot to a weekly series shooting schedule. Granier, used to the pace of 150-episode productions, isn’t planning to miss a beat. “Now we get back to work,” he tells me, with obvious relish. “Now we’ve got to get ready to roll up our sleeves and get going.”

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In the last installment, I shared how Kim’s illness nearly shut down development and production. After darkness, there is always light… right? Trying to avoid the darkness is a fool’s errand, and will just hold you in the dark, making it easy to fall victim to doubt. But just when you think you should stop, the light pours in.

And pour it has. There has been a flood of activity of late, fueled by both my own doggedness and an improvement in Kim’s constitution. But never underestimate the impact of clarity. It is the aqueidt in which good things flow.

Content Creation & Production Methodology
kimTV

KimTV shows, audience development for the Aging Ungracefully series, Kim’s blog and social media all carry a unified message. All of the shows explore anti-aging/longevity through Kim’s humorous point of view. So a cooking segment is not just a recipe and preparation instructions — the ingredients used will be altered to improve life expectancy in a process we affectionately call “kimplification.” Product reviews, interviews, monologues and digital shorts will do the same.

The end goal of kimTV becoming a variety/talk show remains strong. I think of individual shows on the YouTube channel as segments in the variety/talk show. We are currently exploring creating a live streaming show that will have three or four segments within an hour-long show to use for a crowdfunding campaign. More on that shortly.

In my drive to learn more, I had the pleasure to speak Jim Louderback, GM of Discovery Digital. His insight was invaluable to me, and I hope for you as well.

Discovery Digital is 100% focused on programming on the Internet itself. In the United States, that consumption saw for Web-native programming was 13–34, but now video consumption is nearly balanced between the 18–29, 30-49 and 50-64 age groups, and balanced between men and women, according to the Pew Research Center.

With most of the programming on YouTube still aimed at 29 year olds and younger, the 35+ female demographic is particularly underserved. Women have tremendous spending power in America today — and it’s still growing. Market estimates of their total purchasing prowess varies, ranging in Kim’s constitution. But never underestimate the impact of clarity. It is the aqueidt in which good things flow.

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I was planning on a pre-sale strategy creating a sizzle from our existing footage. But crowdfunding has opened a new angle to evaluate. Perhaps I’ll do both.

“naked kim”

As you might hope, “naked kim” is on the cusp of becoming self-sufficient, both in production and marketing. The new copywriter is repositioning “the offer” for better target resonance and expanding the product with bonuses to enhance sales. The goal is to turn it all over to marketing. I’m now considering a host to “cover” the happenings within the “naked kim” video releases, numbering more than 100 by now. This would enhance the programming experience for members within the private viewing area and span a new YouTube channel and social media to support marketing.

Audience Development

I now feel ready to push hard on both with subscribers and views development, and move a strategy into action. Audience development or marketing is a holistic endeavor… a collection of seemingly disparate touch points that create a “center” that is perceived or created by the viewer. It requires a degree of restraint… often difficult, because you know the end game but you can’t rush too fast.

The touch points, each with revenue opportunities, can be activated using Kim’s central message and will encourage the audience to form:

- Paid subscription for “naked kim” (leveraging her business-oriented audience and “super fans” as they emerge) - in process
- Advertising on the kimmTV YouTube channel - in process
- Paid speaking for keynote or events - in process
- Affiliate income from both the kimmTV YouTube channel and www.kimcastle.com website from reviews and mentions - in process
- Advertising on the www.kimcastle.com website - next
- Sponsorship/Brand Integration on the kimmTV YouTube channel - next
- Sponsorship/Brand Integration for the Aging Ungracefully series - next
- Licensing of the Aging Ungracefully series - next
- Paid spokesperson - next

When all are active, we can invest in paid advertising knowing that conversion will be predictable since we have an “owned and operated” Web presence.

We will also use press release sites, media appearances, corporate speaking, blogs (hers and others), article sites and social media using Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest (the ones that work well in her demographic) to seed the message… plus aligning with a Multi-Channel Network (MCN).

In the last installation, we ended with something that emerges. It is easy to navigate and offers an online “Success Process” (more on that next).

Business Development

There are always ideas that are counter-intuitive. As my preliminary research has suggested, crowdfunding succeeds when there is an authentic audience connection, transparent purpose, a clear “why and how” and the campaign is led by at least four community leaders. My continued research showed amazing success for cool ideas with loyal adopters, canceled shows with a devoted artistic leadership and fans, and talent and stories with an existing following.

But sometimes I also found was starting artists with large “Q” and successful creative projects with strong presences had crowdfunding projects that failed miserably. Why? They thought crowdfunding was just an ask for money. Outside of a few best-practice missteps, they had not developed their audience in such a way that the audience would in turn support them.

Ergo, crowdfunding can be used for audience development, and once developed, that audience will support your project. But be warned, there are two different parts of the puzzle: the campaign and the crowdfunding platform — don’t mistake one for the other.

With a full-featured “owned and operated” e-commerce-enabled Web backend at our disposal, we technically do not need a crowdfunding platforms to take money. But there are other significant logistical advantages — campaign communication automation, traffic and an audience with proven behavior of funding campaigns. The platforms’ revenue split is well worth it.

According to Kate Taylor of Forbes, Kickstarter has become synonymous with crowdfunding since it is the most popular site to find creative projects.

As of March 3, 2014, Kickstarter passed $1 BILLION in pledges by 6.0 million people. 1.8 million of them have backed more than one project and 202,000 people have backed 10 or more projects. Kickstarter keeps 5% of funds raised, plus 3%–5% transaction fees. Their all-or-nothing model builds urgency but leads to the loss of all funds if the goal isn’t met.

They have name recognition and the highest site traffic, allowing for best project visibility. Some drawbacks are that they are very selective, with a “secret” approval process, and only allow projects based in the US and UK.

Indiegogo is a flexible crowdfunding site that is open and accessible option for campaigns worldwide. Indiegogo features two plans. On the all-or-nothing plan, 4% of the funds of successful projects go to Indiegogo. On the flexible funding plan, Indiegogo charges 4% if you reach your goal, 9% if you do not. Transaction fees for refund credits result in an additional 3% on both methods.

I spoke with Emily Best, founder and CEO of Seed&Spark, which is a niche crowdfunding platform for filmmakers. She has had a 70% crowdfunding success rate for films, and shared these gems with me:

- You should fund other projects
- You must develop an email list you own
- Sell it. Don’t ask for money — ask to “join us”
- Take steps to hit 30% of your goal in the first five days
- Use press releases, customized, high-quality promo materials and podcasts to encourage core backers
- Constrain yourself to 90 seconds on the offer video, focusing on the impact of your project with an engaging tease or cliffhanger
- No T-shirts, no mugs!

There are large number of platforms, but the top three crowdfunding platforms are Kickstarter, Indiegogo and RocketHub.

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1 First amount is paid if you make or exceed your goal, second amount is paid if you do not.

They have no application process, so all projects are accepted, but it does charge more if you don’t reach your goal. Freddie Wong chose Indiegogo instead of Kickstarter for his third and final Video Game High School season for three reasons. First, Indiegogo uses PayPal and with Freddie’s large international following, PayPal is a priority. Second, you can embed your campaign on your own website, which served Freddie’s goal of diversifying where his content is viewed. So if they came to Freddie’s site to participate in funding, they would begin the habit of using his site versus YouTube for viewing. Finally, since this was Season 3, flexible funding made more sense and seemed a little more genuine in terms of representing what his project is. This is not a brand-new movie; Seasons 1 and 2 are on Netflix. Freddie didn’t need this money to make Season 3 happen, but it sure made things easier. So, using Indiegogo worked just fine for him.

Indiegogo offers a unique type of visibility through a recent partnership with A+E Project Start Up. It is similar to Indiegogo, just a bit less expensive — 4% for completed campaign or 8% for partial campaign, with 4% in transaction fees.

It is easy to navigate and offers an online “Success School” with tools for building better projects and businesses. Unfortunately, it is a significant step down in terms of traffic from Kickstarter and Indiegogo.
Clearing crowdfunding is not a lock. I think it will be like any creative endeavor, a better than 50% chance given a great plan and team. I’m happy to share that we have partnered with Innova Global, the team behind the www.crowdfundingplanning.com family of sites. They’ll provide digital marketing and Web services to develop and run our crowdfunding campaign which will fund the completion of Season 1 of Aging Ungraciously. We are working with David Khorram, founder of the largest global Crowdsourcing think tank and the architect of Crowdsourcing and Crowdfunding platform and engines.

In addition to the funds raised, the campaign’s purpose is to expose Kim’s message to millions and build a community populated with relevant parties using data mining, then build a targeted crowd email list and social media accounts to have them help drive the campaign. The process has just begun; more in the next installment.

I was quite excited to have one our “naked kim” experts, Kaleb Nation (yes, his real name), introduce me to Claude Shires, co-founder of TubeStart. TubeStart was founded in mid-2013 by Josef Holm and Claude to solve a problem that most video creators have in common with other independent content producers: lack of funding to improve the content of their projects due to limited revenue streams. Mainstream crowdfunding platforms offer a wide range of products and projects, while their startup is exclusively focused on serving YouTube channels. They also have a new type of campaign — anything that serves their business model and seek advertisers and sponsors… the folks with the money. But there is a scale problem… advertisers and sponsors will not search for and engage with individual channels except in rare cases.

How will YouTube bring revenue to themselves and their Creators more aggressively than their AdSense algorithms?

As there is no barrier to entry to create a YouTube channel, the clear majority of YouTube Creators are (I say this lovingly) amateurs, with limited skills in performance, production and business. For YouTube to be monetized, channels become partners to use advertising and YouTube shares the revenue with them. To grow revenue faster, they need pros to improve the content and build relationships with advertisers and sponsors… the folks with the money. But there is a scale problem… advertisers and sponsors will not search for and engage with individual channels except in rare cases.

As they launched, they were accepting all campaigns, but now are curating so they can fulfill their goal of improving the quality of content. They are wisely avoiding the appearance of just taking money or panhandling, an orientation that has undone so many others. As Kim’s channel leans toward premium and knowing that crowdfunding goes hand-in-hand with audience development, we are working together to create a newsworthy campaign and perks. As shared earlier, we are considering a one-hour live show showing off the new sets and formats we will be adding to the channel, supporting multiple releases per week. Remember, I’m keeping my eye on the prize… a daily variety/talk show.

Multi-Channel Networks

While this is another long installment, I promised to cover Multi-Channel Networks or MCNs. And it is a good time to do so for a couple of reasons, particularly as they are evolving with breakneck speed. I’m sure you’ve noticed a lot of interesting news of late.

Google has some very smart folks. They have YouTube generating billions of dollars and use their technology prowess to build systems that self-propagate. As there is no barrier to entry to create a YouTube channel, the clear majority of YouTube Creators are (I say this lovingly) amateurs, with limited skills in performance, production and business. For YouTube to be monetized, channels become partners to use advertising and YouTube shares the revenue with them. To grow revenue faster, they need pros to improve the content and build relationships with advertisers and sponsors… the folks with the money. But there is a scale problem… advertisers and sponsors will not search for and engage with individual channels except in rare cases.

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A layer between the Creators and the advertisers/sponsors was needed, a layer to serve both up and down stream. YouTube created the MCN layer. This new ecosystem, once trained and certified, can offer assistance such as products, programming, funding, cross-promotion, partner management, digital rights management, monetization/sales and/or audience development in exchange for a percentage of the ad revenue from the channel.

This new “pro” layer can aggregate channels together in any way that serves their business model and seek advertisers and sponsors to deliver highly targeted results for their brands. Brilliant.

Millions of dollars from angels, entertainment companies and VCs have flooded MCNs. Several have already been purchased this year: Maker Studios sold to Disney for $500 million-plus performance bonuses and Big Frame was sold to DreamWorks through AwesomenessTV for $15 million.
I sat down with Dan Weinstein, President and Founding Partner of the Collective Digital Studio (CDS). (There was that word again, studio.) I thought they were an MCN. Yes, he said, they are both... and more.

CDS was born out of the The Collective, which is the current incarnation of The Firm, a music and talent management agency created by talent manager, entrepreneur and movie producer Michael Green.

As an MCN, they have aggregated about 300 or so channels, making the selections using their talent bias. Notables they signed include Freddie Wong of RocketJump Studios, Lucas Alan Cruikshank (known as “Fred”) and Annoying Orange. They used deficit financing to co-own the IP and move the programming into other platforms, like the live-action/animated series The High Fructose Adventures of Annoying Orange on Cartoon Network, and Fred: The Movie, Fred 2: Night of the Living Fred, and Fred 3: Camp Fred, and a series Fred: The Show all airing on Nickelodeon.

As any company of three employees who pass the exam can be certified as an MCN, you encounter a wide range of companies. Some are focused on talent, some on demographic niches, others just aggregating channels as a funding mechanism for their own initiatives, or have the purpose to develop content and produce. We’ve met with a wide range of MCNs for Kim.

Maker Studios was founded by YouTube Creators Lisa Donovan, Kassem Gharabeh, Shay Carl Butler and Philip DeFranco, added professional management, raised tens of millions and is now the largest MCN with 55,000 channels.

Last year, the Head of Video for Yahoo!, Erin McPherson, moved to become the Chief Content Officer at Maker Studios. “The Maker audience sits at the center of the transformation of media,” she says. “I’ve got this amazing pool of 55,000 creators globally that serve as a giant piloting center.” Maker operates on a number of levels with in-house studios, and technology, advertising, sponsorship and branded entertainment departments to create content, shows and its own channels as well as operate the RPM Network (Record, Promote, Monetize) which serves the channel creators with tools and data.

As we’ve heard from a number of other digital executives, she recognizes that you cannot market down to this new audience. While traditional media decides in a top-down fashion what shall be created and distributed, in the digital sphere, it’s the emerging audience that’s the actual source of what gets created. As McPherson describes, “It’s not a ‘push’ system, it’s a ‘pull’ system, opening to opportunities to serve viewer passions at massive scale.” She describes her team at Maker as “next-gen casting agents.” These “agents” will search for creators that meet audience demand, as well as for creators who might fit the profile of someone the company needs for a new video or series.

And do you want to hear something completely refreshing? It’s true. It had nothing to do with my connection with Erin. But one of Erin’s team members that we met networking at the YouTube Space researched Kim and recruited her to join a Maker accelerator program. So after a few meetings and a tour, they really stood out as a company that could expand her YouTube presence. More than any other MCN we met, they seemed to align with her ability and desire to connect with sponsors to make branded entertainment. So, Kim has joined the Maker Studios family.

So... we’re poised for a full assault on audience development... see you next time! 🍊
Alaska

“On Location” is Produced by’s regular department providing essential information, both pro and con, regarding the experience of producing on location in both domestic and international venues.

Authentic locations are often impractical or expensive, and for any particular story, producers may find an excellent alternative that effectively doubles for the original setting. Spend any time in Alaska and one thing keeps resonating everywhere you visit: there’s no substitute for the real thing. Likewise, for imagined worlds, Alaska is full of natural wonders that could be that icy planet in a science fiction epic, or that fantasy realm of never-ending rivers and snow-capped mountains.

So why are so few theatrical features shot in Alaska? Misconceptions may provide part of the answer, as well as an incomplete understanding of the substantial benefits.

Alaska is hardly remote — just over five hours from Los Angeles to Anchorage on a direct flight (Alaska Airlines offers a daily non-stop flight, and has recently expanded its service). Since tourism is one of Alaska's biggest industries, transportation and accommodations are readily available in most places, especially in the low season (October –May). During the summer months, parts of Alaska have up to 24 hours of daylight, and the coveted “magic hour” can last up to four hours! The opposite is true of winter with its endless nights.

There are also increasingly more production resources, including a growing base of experienced crew. A whole new group of young Alaskan filmmakers are coming up through the state university film program, based at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and directed by associate professor Maya Salganek. According to Salganek, many of her students are paying their way through college by taking jobs on commercial and television shoots. “By the time they graduate,” said Salganek, “some of these students have a lot of professional credits.”

Others, like Carolyn Robinson and Steve Rychetnik, are longtime industry professionals who came to Alaska years ago and forgot to leave. SprocketHeads, their Anchorage-based production company, produces commercial, industrial and documentary films. In addition, Rychetnik is an ASC cameraman and DP.

There’s no state sales tax in Alaska, and city taxes are relatively nominal.

Together with Alaska’s generous tax incentive program (set forth in more detail on pg. 73), producers should look seriously at Alaska for filming, especially for stories set in Alaska, but also for any other productions that could make effective use of the astonishing glaciers, ice caves, wildlife and wilderness Alaska has to offer.

The jagged outcroppings of Colony Glacier.

A good place to Anchorage

Juneau may be the capital of Alaska, but Anchorage is its biggest city and the hub for Alaska’s growing film industry. Many productions use Anchorage as a base, and most of Alaska’s industry professionals are located there.

Like a lot of Alaskans, Matt Szundy wears many hats — philosopher, mountain climber, stunt coordinator, locations manager and eco-tourism entrepreneur. A native New Yorker, his company Glacier Productions recently partnered with United Talent Agency to represent Alaska in the film industry.

“There’s a big misconception that Alaskans are stuck here and can’t wait for the opportunity to get away,” says Szundy. “The truth is, when I’m away for any length of time, I can’t wait to get back. Spending time anywhere else just reminds me how lucky I am to live in Alaska!”

Anchorage is a port city with a population of approximately 300,000. Downtown Anchorage is home to a number of large oil and gas corporations, as well as several Alaska Native Corporations (ANCs). Small family businesses abound, but there’s also Walmart, Costco and Best Buy — and like anywhere in America, a Starbucks is never more than a few miles away. The production infrastructure in Anchorage is still growing, and large-scale productions will be challenged with respect to soundstages, post-production facilities and equipment rentals. But find a group of industrious Alaskans in the film community, and a workaround is probably just a brainstorming session away.

The Alaska Film Group is one such organization — a non-profit founded to represent the collective interests of Alaska’s film professionals. They are committed to building a film industry infrastructure, and the Alaska film incentive is a result of their consulting and lobbying efforts. Szundy is among the members, as are his friends and colleagues, Bob Crockett and Deborah Sholdt of Pikask.

Pikas, LLC is a production services company based in Anchorage — a subsidiary of NANA Development Corporation, which is the business arm of an Alaska Native Corporation called NANA Regional Corporation, Inc.

ANCHORAGE

Local Film Liaison: Visit Anchorage/Kara Stowell

Average Temperatures: 64°F (Summer)/4°F (Winter)

Accommodations: Fine Dining: Crow’s Nest (Hotel Captain Cook)

C marginal and international venues.

May - June 2014 73

ALASKA NATIVE CORPORATIONS

The fascinating history of Alaska Native Corporations began with the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971, pursuant to which the United States Congress granted millions of acres of land and millions of dollars in cash settlements to 12 regions in Alaska, and established ANCs to administer those holdings for the benefit of Alaska Natives in each region, who are the sole shareholders.

Since the shares are not publicly traded, they have no value, and the income produced by shareholders takes the form of relatively modest annual dividends. If the corporations were ever liquidated, the shareholders would be millionaires, but that is not likely to happen. Instead, the ANCs and their extensive subsidiaries take advantage of preferential treatment to win huge government contracts, most of which are subcontracted out to third-party, non-Native companies. It is a relatively complex system and hotly debated both inside and outside Alaska.
Pikas (an Iñupiaq word meaning “to jump up, rebound or spring back”) is just one layer of this multifaceted industrial conglomerate, which recently started investing in the film industry. (The parent company also owns 50% of LA-based Evergreen Films.) “[NANA] saw an opportunity to take a lot of the services they provide for oil, gas and mining — catering, transportation, engineering, security, payroll — and cross over into the film industry,” says Bob Crockett, Pikas’s general manager. Their offices in suburban Anchorage provide a broad range of production services, including office space, camera and equipment rentals, crew development, location scouting, permitting and logistical support. “It’s not a huge piece of infrastructure,” Crockett acknowledges, “but nonetheless, it’s a piece of infrastructure designed for the film industry.”

Within the Anchorage film community, there is a strong desire to remedy some common misconceptions about the perceived challenges of filming in Alaska. “Most people see Alaska as a dark place full of snow and ice,” says Deborah Schilt, Pikas’s production manager. “Yes, we can get people on snow and ice 365 days out of the year, but the animals belong to the state of Alaska, the Center has been granted guardianship — in some cases, permanent. It’s not a jigsaw puzzle of land management,” Crockett acknowledges, “but nonetheless, it’s a piece of infrastructure designed for the film industry.”

Schilt underscores a striking aspect of Anchorage, in a valley along the scenic Seward Highway, is the resort town of Girdwood, home of the Hotel Alyeska and Alyeska Resort, Alaska’s only organized ski resort. (Thrill-seekers consider any mountain with snow a potential ski resort.)

Girdwood is also home to the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center, a nonprofit sanctuary for rescued wildlife. Each resident has a unique story, and while the animals belong to the state of Alaska, the Center has been granted guardianship — in some cases, permanent — of a variety of eagles, moose, bears, wood bison, elk and other animals. Founder and Executive Director Miller Miller is involved in every aspect of the Center, and he is surrounded by experts in animal sciences. Since for various reasons some of the animals will never be re-introduced into the wild, the Center is also a resource for filmmakers who are looking for a safe way to film wildlife for their project. The Center works with certain animals to acclimate them to human interaction, and the Center itself has amazing views and wilderness locations with mountain backgrounds. Among many film and television productions to contract with the Center, Sean Penn’s Into the Wild is a standout. Producers shooting in Alaska with wildlife would be well served to engage the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center for locations and wrangling. All of the proceeds benefit the Center, Sean Penn’s Into the Wild and conservation activities.

While filming in and around Girdwood, cast and crew members will be thankful for their stay at the Hotel Alyeska, with its 304 guest rooms and suites, AAA Four-Diamond Seven Glaciers Restaurant (with panoramic views from 2,300 feet), and the best sushi in Alaska at Sushi Asian Bistro. In addition to Alyeska, Stelene Flynn at The Bake Shop might be available for craft services or catering (sandwiches are made on their famous homemade sourdough — one of the oldest cultures in Alaska).

Alpine Air, with its experienced pilots and fleet of helicopters and small aircraft, can provide location scout, charter and aerial photography support for all sizes of projects. From Girdwood Airport, the experts at Alpine Air can take filmmakers directly into the Chugach Mountain Range, land on a glacier, or airlift them in. Visitors will be tempted to scribble a message on a dollar bill and pin it to a wall or ceiling beam, as hundreds of others have done.

The best way to take advantage of the tax incentive is to utilize as many locals as possible, and potentially receive 100% of resident wages and 80% of in-state transportation back. These tax credits are relative easy to sell without brokering, with an estimated return of approximately 85-90 cents on the dollar.

Because Alaska is so big — it is the largest of the 50 states in terms of land area, and twice the size of Texas — permits a challenge. According to Dave Ward, a development specialist with the Alaska Film Office, “Alaska is a jigsaw puzzle of land management,” so producers would be wise to take advantage of agencies like the Department of Commerce, companies like Pikas, or individual location scouts to assist in finding locations and identifying the appropriate federal or state land management agency, Native tribe or private owner.

Homer’s Odyssey

About 255 miles south of Anchorage, along the Kenai Peninsula, is the fishing village of Homer, known to reality television viewers as the home port of the F/V Time Bandit (Discovery Channel’s Deadliest Catch). Homer is also famous for its halibut, and the quality of food in this most unlikely of places is as surprising as it is delicious.

An eclectic mix of artists and fishermen, Homer is a place where truth and fiction collide. Putting from the mainland into Kachemak Bay, the Homer Spit represents a healthy dose of kitschy tourism mixed with a working fisherman’s wharf. There’s simply no way to pass by the Salty Dawg Saloon, with its Hobbit-like entrance, without going in. Visitors will be tempted to scribble a message on a dollar bill and pin it to a wall or ceiling beam, as hundreds of others have done.

The centerpiece of Alaska’s effort to expand its film and television industry is the Alaska tax incentive program — a transferable tax credit administered by the Department of Revenue.

While the specifics can become complex depending on the size of the production, the highlights of the Alaska tax incentive are as follows:

- Minimum eligible spend is just $75,000
- 30% base rate on Alaska ground spend (including non-resident below-the-line wages)
- 50% on Alaska resident wages
- Above-the-line non-resident wages receive 5% off of resident wages + 50% of in-state transportation
- Additional 6% on rural spend
- Additional 2% on winter spend
- Additional 6% for the first episodic scripted television production that completes sixteen (16) episodes

The best way to take advantage of the tax incentive is to utilize as many locals as possible, and potentially receive 100% of resident wages and 80% of in-state transportation back. These tax credits are relative easy to sell without brokering, with an estimated return of approximately 85-90 cents on the dollar.

Homer’s Solly Dawg Saloon

A world-class chef, having studied at Le Cordon Bleu Paris, and her husband Carl is an expert adventurer and knowledgeable guide. Together, they provide their guests with a culinary and wilderness experience that is instantly epic, and profoundly Alaskan. In fact, the entire staff at Tutka Bay Lodge is so authentic and spirited, cast members may not want to leave after they’ve wrapped!
The Gold Rush brought prospectors to Alaska, and it all started in Juneau. Alaska’s capital began as a mining settlement, and was the first town founded after the United States purchased Alaska from Russia. Cruise ship tourists arrive by the thousands almost every day during the high season, but their one-day visit to the Mendenhall Glacier, followed by a whale-watching tour, provides only a surface view of this historic seaside city. Juneau has some of the mildest temperatures in Alaska, although the weather is more unpredictable since it is essentially a rainforest. Downtown Juneau is set against a mountainside, and locals like to compare the steep, narrow streets to San Francisco. There’s a strong Native influence, which creates an eclectic mix when combined with the historic downtown buildings, the tourist-driven boardwalk, and the natural wonders (glaciers, mountains and fjords) just a short drive (or long hike) to the east and west. Dolphin Tours is a great way to travel to the various nearby islands, and their boats are fast and large enough to carry crew and equipment. Location scouts will want to take the Goldbelt Mount Roberts Tramway, with its panoramic views down the Gastineau Channel, across to Douglas Island, and north into the Tongass National Forest. Where else on earth can you see glaciers, humpback whales, sea lions, orcas, black bears, eagles, 10,000 tourists and the Governor in the same day? Big Miracle, starring Drew Barrymore, John Krasinski, Ted Danson and Kris-

You don’t know Juneau

The Gold Rush brought prospectors to Alaska, and it all started in Juneau. Alaska’s capital began as a mining settlement, and was the first town founded after the United States purchased Alaska from Russia. Cruise ship tourists arrive by the thousands almost every day during the high season, but their one-day visit to the Mendenhall Glacier, followed by a whale-watching tour, provides only a surface view of this historic seaside city. Juneau has some of the mildest temperatures in Alaska, although the weather is more unpredictable since it is essentially a rainforest. Downtown Juneau is set against a mountainside, and locals like to compare the steep, narrow streets to San Francisco. There’s a strong Native influence, which creates an eclectic mix when combined with the historic downtown buildings, the tourist-driven boardwalk, and the natural wonders (glaciers, mountains and fjords) just a short drive (or long hike) to the east and west. Dolphin Tours is a great way to travel to the various nearby islands, and their boats are fast and large enough to carry crew and equipment. Location scouts will want to take the Goldbelt Mount Roberts Tramway, with its panoramic views down the Gastineau Channel, across to Douglas Island, and north into the Tongass National Forest. Where else on earth can you see glaciers, humpback whales, sea lions, orcas, black bears, eagles, 10,000 tourists and the Governor in the same day? Big Miracle, starring Drew Barrymore, John Krasinski, Ted Danson and Kris-

FAIRBANKS

Local Film Liaison: Explore Fairbanks/Amy Geiger

Average Temperatures: 69°F (Summer)/3°F (Winter)

Accommodations: Pike’s Waterfront Lodge (208 rooms)

Fine Dining: Bobby’s Downtown/Lavelle’s Bistro

Casual Dining: Lemongrass Thai Cuisine/ Silver Gulch Restaurant

Notable Locations: Creaners Field/Chatanika Lodge

Film/TV Productions: Ice Road Truckers

JUNEAU

Local Film Liaison: Travel Juneau/Elizabeth Arnett

Average Temperatures: 63°F (Summer)/34°F (Winter)

Accommodations: The Westmark Baranof (195 rooms and suites)

Fine Dining: The Gold Room (at The Westmark Baranof)

Casual Dining: Twisted Fish Company/ Tracy Crab Shack

Notable Locations: Ted Stevens Marine Research Institute/ Alaskan Brewing Co./Tracy Arm

Film/TV Productions: The Amazing Race/Top Chef
Produced by ten Bell, was one of the biggest feature films ever to shoot entirely in Alaska. Only two department heads on the production were local hires. Not surprisingly, they were Bob Crockett (Locations) and Deborah Schildt (Local Casting). In fact, almost everyone in the professional film community of Alaska worked on Big Miracle in some capacity.

Since the story was set in Alaska, director Ken Kwapis was committed to authentic locations. The needs of the script combined with the tax incentive made Alaska the obvious choice. The unit production manager was Robin Le Chanu, and as a non-resident hire, her perspective on the experience provides some context and objectivity.

While she acknowledges the obvious challenges, Le Chanu was also happy to recommend Alaska to other producers. She cited equipment rentals and shipping as significant costs (trailers and other equipment were shipped to Alaska on a barge), and noted some difficulties finding crew with major studio film experience.

“The commitment is there to help this industry grow,” says Roberta Graham, assistant commissioner of the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development. “We know that Alaska will attract a certain type of film and a certain type of television and documentary production, but we’re committed to telling the world our story.”

The Alaskan experience, so powerful and unique among the 50 states, is also surprisingly under-represented on film. There’s never been a better time to change that.

—SCOTT SORRENTINO
Your PGA Health Benefits

PGA members have a variety of healthcare options available to them. While none of them represents a "perfect plan," many members will be able to improve their coverage or the cost of their coverage through their PGA membership. Members may take advantage of two options: Employer-paid coverage and self-pay coverage.

Qualifying for Employer-Paid Coverage Through the Motion Picture Industry Plan

Am I eligible?

To be eligible for the program, you must:
- Be credited as an executive producer, producer, associate producer or post-production supervisor;
- Work for a company that is an AMPTP signatory, or signatory to Motion Picture Industry Health Plan;
- Work on a theatrical motion picture or primetime network television program; some primetime cable and syndicated series also qualify, as do productions for which an AMPTP member agrees to make contributions; and
- Work on a production that utilizes a West Coast IA Crew.

How many hours do I have to work to qualify for coverage?

To qualify for the Industry Health Plan, a producer must be credited with 600 hours (automatically computed at 60 hours per week) within a six-month qualifying period.* To maintain coverage, he or she must be credited with at least 400 hours for each subsequent six-month period. If a member becomes ineligible, his or her eligibility for benefits will be reviewed every month until he or she accumulates enough contribution hours within a six-month span to re-qualify for benefits.

I’ve determined that I qualify; how do I get my coverage to start?

Contributions are not automatic; they must be directly requested by the producer. Producers request contributions by signing and submitting a participation form within 60 days of starting eligible employment. If the producer does not submit a signed participation form, he or she will be deemed to have waived his or her right to contributions with respect to the job. Participation forms should be provided by the employer upon request. If you have difficulty obtaining a form, contact PGA National Executive Director Vance Van Petten at (310) 358-9020 x104.

My company isn’t an AMPTP signatory. Am I out of luck?

Not necessarily. If you are employed by a company that is a signatory to both the IATSE Basic Agreement and the Motion Picture Industry Health & Welfare and Pension Plans, you can request that they make voluntary contributions, even if they are not members of the AMPTP. This request has been granted many times, but can be difficult to secure. A good way to know if your production has signed on to the IATSE Basic Agreement and the Motion Picture Industry Health Plan; to check if the camera, grips, or sound providers are union.

If I qualify, is my employer required to approve my coverage?

Unfortunately, no. However, the cost to the employer is reasonable enough that many employers will approve the coverage.

Additionally, standard practice has dictated (though again, not required) that once a production begins making contributions to the Health Plan for one producer, it will make those same contributions for any eligible producer on the show, provided coverage is requested in a timely fashion.

*If the producer is also an owner of the signatory company, qualifying hours are computed at 56 hours per week.
Self-Pay Plans: Producers Health

In a perfect world, every PGA member would qualify for employer-paid coverage. For those who do not qualify, the PGA offers self-pay options which, because of our group status, are likely to offer better rates than what members can find on the open market.

The Producers Health Plans are available nationally. If you’re currently without health insurance, we encourage you to call immediately to see if you qualify for a plan that suits you. Even if you currently have coverage (particularly other self-pay coverage), it would be worth your while to investigate the options you may have through the PGA self-pay plans.

Do you have health insurance?
Is it employer-paid?
Call Scott Brandt at (888) 700-7725.
Request a quote for Producers Health Insurance.

Is the coverage equal to or better than your current coverage?

Questions? Contact:
Scott Brandt  (888) 700-7725
Buoyed by the success of the PGA’s Weekend Shorts Challenge, which dared producing teams to write, shoot, and edit an original short film in the space of a weekend, the Guild has embarked — with the essential help of partner Cadillac — on its biggest competition yet.

Now called Make Your Mark, the contest raises the stakes for winners. Among 10 semi-finalists, an all-star panel of judges will select three finalists, each of whom will be challenged to produce a second short film, this time with the aid of a PGA mentor and a $30,000 production budget. The grand prize-winning film will be featured in Cadillac’s 30-second spot during the 2015 Oscars telecast, with the winning producer cited by name.

The first stage of the contest will continue to hew closely to the model created by the Weekend Shorts Challenge, with the specifics of the filmmaking “assignment” drawn from the work of a celebrated producer. This year, the contest elements will be drawn from the filmography of the great Saul Zaentz, who passed away in January. Mr. Zaentz is one of only four producers in history to win three Oscars for Best Picture, and the only one to do so in three different decades, with One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest (1975), Amadeus (1984) and The English Patient (1996).

With the contest now comprising two rounds of judging, the PGA and Cadillac have solicited the services of an all-star jury composed of acclaimed producers and stars who worked with Saul Zaentz. Newly-elected PGA Presidents Gary Lucchesi and Lori McCreary will be joined on the jury by President Emeritus Hawk Koch and fellow PGA member Chris Moore, as well as stars Kathy Bates (a veteran of Zaentz’s epic At Play in the Fields of the Lord), Danny DeVito (for whom Cuckoo’s Nest provided his breakthrough role) and Michael Douglas, who made his own debut as a producer alongside Zaentz on One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest, and took the stage alongside him to collect his Best Picture Oscar.

To take part, producers must register for Make Your Mark prior to June 26, 2014. The contest’s initial filmmaking period begins the next day, with the specifics of the filmmaking assignment slated to be released at 5 p.m. on Friday, June 27. The filmmaking period will conclude on the evening of Sunday, June 29, by which time contestants must have completed and submitted their films.

To register and view official rules, point your browser to www.MakeYourMarkCompetition.com. Good luck in the competition, and we’ll see you at the Oscars…
New Members

The Producers Guild is proud to welcome the following new members, who have joined the Guild since May, 2014:

### PRODUCERS COUNCIL
- ALLEN BAIN
- WAYNE BARRIN
- RENATO BASILE
- DAVE BECKY
- ELLEN BLUM
- ERICK BRYANT
- TIMOTHY BUL
- IAN COLLIE
- MOLLY FOWLER
- BRADLEY GALLO
- ALEX GARCIA
- ZAHEER GOODMAN-BHYAT
- MIAN GULAS
- JOSEPH INCAPARRA
- ADAM KAPPEL
- WARREN LITTLEFIELD
- APAL MAKGOING
- TOSCA MUSK
- JANE NOWAK
- PETER OLLATAGUERRE
- JIN A PANE
- BOB PARR
- JASON PRESTON
- KEITH RESNICK
- ADAM SAUNDERS
- CASEY SCHREINER
- ANDREA SCHWARTZBERG
- REBEKAH SINDORIS
- JEFF SPANGLER
- RUDY VEGLIANTE
- TIFFANY WARD
- JAMES WEATHER
- SANDRA ZWEIG

### NEW MEDIA COUNCIL
- JOSEPH INCAPARRA
- ADAM KAPPEL
- WARREN LITTLEFIELD
- APAL MAKGOING
- TOSCA MUSK
- JANE NOWAK
- PETER OLLATAGUERRE
- JIN A PANE
- BOB PARR
- JASON PRESTON
- KEITH RESNICK
- ADAM SAUNDERS
- CASEY SCHREINER
- ANDREA SCHWARTZBERG
- REBEKAH SINDORIS
- JEFF SPANGLER
- RUDY VEGLIANTE
- TIFFANY WARD
- JAMES WEATHER
- SANDRA ZWEIG

### AP COUNCIL
- JULE ANDERSON
- ANGELA BOSWERT
- KIM COLLINS
- TOBY LOUIE
- JENNIFER MAGEE-COOK
- ALEXANDER “SASHA” PAPPY
- A.J. RIEBLI
- DAVID ROGERS
- NICOLE ROSEN
- DENISE ROTTMA
- JARED WEISFELNER
- PETER OILLATAGUERRE
- JINA PANEBIANCO
- BOB PARR
- JASON PRESTON
- KEITH RESNICK
- ADAM SAUNDERS
- CASEY SCHREINER
- ANDREA SCHWARTZBERG

### Segment/Field/ Story Producer
- JIM SPANGLER
- RUDY VEGLIANTE
- TIFFANY WARD
- JAMES WEATHER
- SANDRA ZWEIG

### Production Coordinator
- ALLISON EWART
- DJUNA MYERS
- STACY RING
- SARAH SPEARING
- KRISTIN STANS

### Visual Effects
- GREGORY RUSLING

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[www.filmMississippi.org](http://www.filmMississippi.org), 601-359-3297

---

**THE TOOLS YOU NEED TO GREEN YOUR PRODUCTION.**

OVER 2,000 WAYS TO GO GREEN

The Green Production Guide Mobile App features a searchable database of vendors with information about their green products, services, their production experience, and what locations they serve. Featuring over 2,000 companies that provide sustainable and energy saving products and services for film, television and commercial productions, The Green Production Guide Mobile App aims to take all media green one set at a time.

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**TRACK YOUR IMPACT WITH EASE**

Our Carbon Calculator lets you assess your environmental impact based on information about utilities, transportation and waste management so you can see the effect your green initiatives have had on your production’s carbon footprint:

- Developed by film industry professionals with scientific and environmental expertise.
- Assesses carbon emissions of your production based on transportation, fuel, utilities, hotel use and more.
- Generates reports that show just how much your production saved on emissions.
- **FREE** to download from [GreenProductionGuide.com](http://GreenProductionGuide.com) and use for your production.

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PRODUCERS GUILD 1/4 page vertical.indd   1
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Member Benefits

- Discounted registration for Produced By Conference
- Vote on Producers Guild Awards and receive discount tickets to the event, as well as DVD screeners for awards consideration
- Access to PGA Job Board, online résumé search, employment tools and job forums
- Full access to PGA website including events, calendar, social networking tools
- Eligibility for individual, family and small business healthcare options through Producers Health Insurance Agency
- Participation in the Motion Picture Industry Health, Welfare & Pension Plan
- Eligibility for PGA Mentoring Program
- Listing of contact and credit information in searchable online roster
- Admission to special PGA pre-release screenings and Q&A events
- Free attendance at PGA seminars
- Arbitration of credit disputes
- Wide variety of discounts on events, merchandise, travel
- Complimentary subscription to Produced by

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- Stock Footage Library

Sound Services by technicolor at Paramount

Logistics Services
- Offices
- Transportation
- Dining and Amenities

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mentoring matters

Michael Knowles

My uncle told me years ago, “if you want to know how to make $100,000 a year, don’t ask someone making $10,000 a year.” So when I became aware of the PGA Mentoring Program, I jumped at the chance to apply. An opportunity to meet with a seasoned working producer seemed like the perfect way to gain insight and knowledge to help me along my path to world domination. I’ve produced a dozen or so short films and just finished producing my fourth feature film, with budgets ranging from $30K to $800K. I’ve worked with wonderful actors like Oscar winner Melissa Leo and nominee Peter Fonda, and Emmy nominees Michael C. Hall and Lucy Liu. Although I am happy with all of the work I’ve done so far, with all of my features having secured distribution, at the end of the day, we all have to pay the bills, so I’m getting to a point in my life where producing bigger budget films and/or episodic TV seems to make sense.

I was paired with mentor Brad Fischer. I actually had seen Brad speak on a panel at the Produced By Conference and knew that he produced White House Down. But while doing my research, I found out that Brad’s done a lot more, including Shutter Island, Black Swan and Zodiac— and he’s younger than I am! (Yes, I had to deal with my insecurities about being older than my mentor.)

Brad and I met roughly once a month for six months and talked openly about all aspects of production. It was great to hear his perspective and experiences, since his path has been very different from mine. Hearing other people’s journeys to becoming a producer is informative and a great reminder that in this business, there are many paths to get you where you want to be.

One of the biggest surprises of my mentorship was finding out that Brad’s company, Mythology Entertainment, was actively developing and selling scripted television projects. Brad ended up reading one of the pilots I had been shopping around — and he liked it! Full disclosure: Mentees are not allowed to pitch their own projects directly to mentors. But ours was a very organic process; during a conversation in which I was looking for advice about the project, Brad asked about the story and luckily enough, I hooked him!

I took away two major insights from my mentoring experience: First, a big part of this business is relationships. Second, creating or acquiring great scripts is key to making great movies or television.

Thank you Producers Guild and the Mentoring Committee for taking the time to put this program together. I hope to do another mentorship in the future and, someday, to give back as a mentor myself.

MENTORING ROUNDTABLES

One of the most treasured features of the Produced By Conference is its Mentoring Roundtables — small-group sessions (no more than 10 participants) that allow emerging producers to ask questions of established industry veterans in an intimate, conversational forum.

We’d like to take this space to thank our guests who shared their time in a Roundtable session. At the PGA, we believe that face-to-face mentoring is an invaluable element in building a career, and we’re gratified that the individuals named below share our commitment to mentoring the next generation of media storytellers.

Melinda Arons
Josh Astrachan
Cameron Bailey
Sarah Barnett

Jason Constantine
Tracy Edmonds
Mark Gordon

John Heinsen
Marshall Herskovitz
Marc Juris
Gary Lucchesi

Chris Moore
Lydia Dean Pilcher
Hal Sadoff

Cathy Schulman
Sanjay Sharma
Scott Stephens

Conference Co-Chairs
Tracey Edmonds
Marshall Herskovitz
Rachel Klein
Gary Lucchesi

Conference Producers
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Teresa Taylor

Program Director
Madelyn Hammond

Program Coordinator
Javier Infante

Technical Producer
Kenneth Shapiro

Website
Websiders
Tino Persicó

Publicity
42 West
Julie Cloutier
Leslee Dart

Volunteer Manager
Margaret Schrader

Production Manager
David Hendrick

Production Coordinator
Luke Richmond

Security & Gate Coordinator
Niki Hankins

Speaker Logistics Manager
Jason Roberts

Production Logistics Producer
Evan Grey

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The Producers Guild proudly salutes the following producers whose credits have been certified with the Producers Mark. This list includes both recent releases and those scheduled for release through June, 2014.

Certification via the Producers Mark indicates that a producer undertook a majority of the producing duties on the motion picture.

**22 JUMP STREET**
Neal H. Moritz, p.g.a.
Jonah Hill, p.g.a.
Channing Tatum, p.g.a.

**THE FAULT IN OUR STARS**
Wyck Godfrey, p.g.a.
Marty Bowen, p.g.a.

**GODZILLA**
Thomas Tull, p.g.a.
Jon Jashni, p.g.a.
Mary Parent, p.g.a.

**HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON 2**
Bonnie Arnold, p.g.a.

**JERSEY BOYS**
Clint Eastwood, p.g.a.
Graham King, p.g.a.
Rob Lorenz, p.g.a.

**MALEFICENT**
Joe Roth, p.g.a.

**THINK LIKE A MAN TOO**
Will Packer, p.g.a.

**X-MEN: DAYS OF FUTURE PAST**
Lauren Shuler Donner, p.g.a.
Simon Kinberg, p.g.a.
Hutch Parker, p.g.a.

Make certain your next credit carries the Producers Mark. See producersmark.com for details.