



POLITICS | NATIONAL | STATE | BUSINESS | TECHNOLOGY | CULTURE | CALENDAR |

ABOUT |

The Gratis Of Growing a Louisiana Movie and Film Industry

La. Film and Movie Industry

Author: Steve Sabludowsky | 8/11/2005

Home : Politics



[Advertise on](#)

Bayoubuzz received a contributing column from a writer who has taken a strong interest in the film industry and who has been responsible for a couple of Gubernatorial resolutions this past year—even one celebrating the film industry.

The writer, who has a full time job in another field as a Senior Publication Specialist has made a very interesting and passionate point regarding performing work in the industry for credit and for no pay.

The film industry is a fledgling industry with great potential for the state of Louisiana. The gains we have made in the past few years have been startling in part due to efforts such as those performed by Gary Smith the column's author. Some might totally agree with Gary Smith on this issue and others might disagree.

Here is the column in its entirety. What are your thoughts?

INDEPENDENT FILMS

Buying Dinner with Credits

By Gary Michael Smith

Here we go again. I just got another email, this time soliciting for a lead role in a local independent film, and again the work is for credit only. It seems that everyone and their brother/sister are making indy films in New Orleans these days. And this is great; I love to see the latest works by local filmmakers and, with my graduate work in film production, I can appreciate the time and effort required to accomplish such a feat.

But the "work for credit" mantra is getting old. Granted, working in an independent film offers good practice and some semblance of visibility, but filmmakers need to start paying for actors—and even extras. If they have a budget for equipment and crew—which most do—then talent should be budgeted for as well. Telling the waiter that you'll be paying for your meal with a film credit simply is not tolerated. And neither should acting for no pay.

Would you go to your day job for free? Not likely. Would filmmakers consider giving away their movie once completed? Doubtful. Then they shouldn't expect actors to look at free performance only as "an excellent opportunity to hone your skills" even though "while no pay is offered, a screen credit is provided!"

I recently worked on one indy film that starred several major Hollywood actors but I was not paid as an extra, even though the crew was paid as were the actors, plus 2.5 percent of proceeds if there ever are any. The actors are banking on showings at Sundance and Cannes, with subsequent distribution deals.

 Mail  Print

Also By this Reporter:

-  [The Gratis Of Growing a Louisiana Movie and Film Industry](#)
-  [Louisiana Governor Blanco Writes Bill O'Reilly About Jessica's Law](#)
-  [Louisiana Senator Landrieu Leaning Towards Judge Roberts Despite Conservative Push](#)
-  [U.S. Deficit Shrinks As President Bush Pleased With Economy](#)
-  [Louisiana Economic Development Names Technology Industry Director](#)
-  [Louisiana Error: State Will Labor Will Less Job Money](#)

 [BuzzBoard Discussions >>](#)

While this is not the same as local indy films where only crew is paid, I still felt that the extras should have been compensated as well. And since the background actors were not paid, I looked at this experience as practically useless. I made no contacts, gained no new appreciation of filmmaking, and could care less about the credit as "lawyer number 3." Consequently, after auditioning for another role in an indy film—this time as a major player with a number of speaking parts—I declined after being asked for three weekdays at no pay. To me, my vacation time from my day job is more valuable than a credit in an obscure film.

I sympathize with those struggling actors whose day jobs are acting—in whatever roles they can get. While they may choose to participate in non-paying "jobs" (see oxymoron) I choose not to give away my craft (which is writing, not acting), except in cases of charity and for friends. As such, I encourage filmmakers to budget for all actors, to have more consideration for performing artists and their craft, just as they expect distributors to have respect for their finished projects. Who knows, there may come a time when no one wants to work for free anymore.

Gary Michael Smith is a writer and publisher in New Orleans, who no longer works for free or credits.

Acting for kids and teens

Study and train to get work! Job preparation & auditions available.

TV Extras needed

Get audition to be a TV extra by text message to your cell phone

Ads by Goooooogle

[Politics](#) | [National](#) | [State](#) | [Business](#) | [Technology](#) | [Culture](#) | [About](#) | [Advertise](#)
[Privacy Statement](#) - [Service Agreement](#)
(C) BAYOUBUZZ.COM ALL RIGHTS RESERVED