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Founder: Launchpad Pictures

I spent 20 years playing music and living life on the road, living in 3 different states along the way. When I decided to settle down and go back to school, I thought it was going to be temporary. My music career had run its course and I wanted a new challenge so I stepped into the world of film. In 2015, I registered for Cleveland State University, and eventually at a local acting school. At the time, I knew little about the film industry in Cleveland beyond what the general public knew. I saw the Avengers sets. I saw the Fast 8 cars. Now, those were both really cool but I had no idea about how they got there or why or even what went into that. But, I was curious.

For the next three years I worked extremely hard to learn everything I could about the film world from the inside out. I took classes, worked on projects, got an agent (here in Columbus) worked with the Acting School and even with a Talent Manager in Los Angeles.

In May of 2018 I graduated from Cleveland State with a Film degree. Upon graduating, my wife, my two small boys and I were on a plane to Southern California, because, that's where the work was and that's what I was told by multiple people that I needed to do. Moving to LA would be pretty easy, I had both friends and family there that could plug me into work and now I had a connection to a talent manager. I could make this work.

But as we were planning our cross-country move, we had a family emergency. We had to stay in Cleveland to save the lives of two little children. They were distant family, but still family. They had been abused and needed a place to go. We were not going to shut them out.

So, we stayed.

I spent the fall working odd jobs, working on commercials both in front of and behind the camera. It felt like this would be the way things go for me, which was fine, but I needed more. Many of my classmates were doing the same as me since graduation but not creating anything. Just working. One classmate who I'm close to had to take jobs in other states just to keep up with the industry. This new career seemed like a dead end.

I needed to create something bigger.

Before I could create something bigger, I had to figure out what was needed. I started talking to everyone I could to understand everything I could. Why doesn't Avengers shoot in Ohio? Aren't those guys from Cleveland? Why isn't anyone talking to them? Oh, someone is? Oh, there is a tax credit? What's that all about? Who gets it? Oh there are a ton of filmmakers in Cleveland that don't even qualify for it? Then who does? Visiting films? But they bring their own crew? Not all the crew? So why not just get a ton of movies to come all the time? No infrastructure? Lets build one? We cant? What? Tax credit? and so on and so forth.

There was so much I didn't understand but the more people I talked to, the more I figured it out. I soaked up every piece of info I could. I annoyed many people with my persistence, including my local film commission, because I kept asking questions about what was happening. But they could see my determination. Then this spring after working with the CIFF I finally had a clear vision of what I needed to do.

The reality of our situation is that many people do not understand the tax credit like I do now. There is a very large disconnect between the small independent filmmaker, and the film commissions. Not to the fault of either, just more of a misunderstanding. Also, in Cleveland, there is a lack of community because everything is very limited. Paying work is limited. The younger generation has to leave Ohio to get jobs. They have to do exactly what I was going to do. So many people I have spoken to outside of Ohio, from Ohio, working in the moving picture industry have said they would love to come back if the work was there.

So, I decided to take it upon myself to change that. I started a business called Launchpad. Launchpad consists of three parts. The first part is a content incubator. It would allow younger filmmakers, recent film school graduates and independent filmmakers the opportunity to create content and build a stronger community by working together. The second part of Launchpad is to build up enough revenue brought on by the content to build a motion picture studio in Cleveland. The third aspect is tech solution aspect that ties the first two parts together. The tech solution is currently being constructed, and the content production is being curated.

For Launchpad to be successful, and for all of the people Launchpad will help become successful, we need the Film Commission to be successful. We need the tax credit to be raised. We need the work to come in. We need the multi-million dollar projects to come in to help train our filmmakers, our crew workers and the future of the industry in Ohio.

Along with losing the millions of dollars the big films would bring that would be pumped back into the local economies, we lose that bigger job training that would be able to help the budding filmmaker or crew member receive, helping them develop and grow to the Hollywood standard. The Hollywood standard is a real thing. If the Ohio film industry is going to be successful, we need to learn from the best of the best. But at the same time, we have to show the Hollywood standard that we have exactly what it needs to be successful. We have the landscapes, sure, and the cost of good and services is well below the national standard but the most important thing that Ohio has is its people. It's resilient, fighting people. I can only speak for Cleveland but if you haven't noticed, Cleveland absolutely rules. The filmmakers, crew, actors and everyone else involved in the Cleveland Film industry are doing great things and I just want to be able to help them continue to do amazing things by giving them every opportunity to do it here, in Ohio. I want a recent CSU Film School graduate to be able to work on the next "Avengers" type film

with the Russo Brothers and not have to drive back to their hotel in Atlanta but instead drive home to their families.

The tax credit is just one of the many puzzle pieces of the Film Industry in Ohio. But all the other pieces are in place. If the tax credit is removed completely, we would be wounded badly. If it stays the same we are just running in circles. BUT, if it gets to where we hope it does and what we have been advocating for, you will have a living, thriving, consistent industry here in Ohio and this BOB BUCKEYE be able to go home after work to my wife and boys in Shaker Heights every day.