

2017

# An Outsider's Glimpse into Filmmaking

AN EXPLORATION ON RECENT OREGON FILM & TV  
PROJECTS

BY THEO FRIEDMAN



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## Introduction

From the outside, staring at the giant that is Hollywood can be quite intimidating. There's no shortage of stories about market saturation and how hard it is to break in. Even for film school graduates, or those with connections within Hollywood, it's difficult to retain the optimism needed to create opportunity. Perhaps more common, one's ideas and connections lie within a small group of friends. So where does one go? What can be done? What is "step one" in the process behind getting something produced for film and television?

I endeavored to find out with the help of the Oregon Governor's Office of Film and Television and the University of Oregon's Film Organization. Looking at everything from financing, filming, to distribution, I interviewed the creators and supporters of around 10 Oregon projects with 2016-2017 releases. What I found is not a go-to-guide, but a list of ad-hoc prototypes based off the varying motivations and backgrounds of project creators.

Contained in this report you will find the story behind these projects organized into three categories: Doing it Yourself, Doing it Mostly Yourself, and The Standards.

Throughout the document words presented in bold are defined in the glossary along with any additional relevant information.

## About the Author

My name is Theo Friedman. A 2017 graduate of the University of Oregon, I studied Business and Economics with a stint on the basketball team throughout school. However, around junior year, my outlook and interests started to shift.

I was no longer excited about the career path I started on. I wanted something that offered more and engaged me. I began pursuing my passions instead of a paycheck. This led me to a number of places, but ultimately, the film industry, specifically screenwriting and producing. I'm not formally educated in film or entertainment and I know things are competitive, but the entire industry is fueled by people taking these same risks so why shouldn't I try?

I'm currently finalizing an original script along with a few shorts and pilot episodes.

## I. Doing it Yourself (DIY)

Independent productions are the most common type of projects today. Their budgets aren't in the millions and fronted by huge **studios**, but in the hundred thousands, often with limited outside help. These "indie" projects are self-financed, **crowdsourced**, and endlessly **pitched**. It is a category where creators bet on themselves, sometimes all-in, and pray things pay off. This is truly the "labor of love" category – filmmakers taking their fates into their own creative hands and physically *willing* a project into existence – *doing it themselves*.

### SEASIDE (2016)

Written, directed, produced (and any other term that encapsulates making and marketing a film) by Sam Zalutsky, *Seaside* is a dramatic thriller about a couple who moves to a beach house on the Oregon Coast. Zalutsky's second feature, *Seaside* comes 10 years after the release of his first film, *You Belong to Me* (2007), of similar genre.

#### Filming & Financing

For *Seaside*, Zalutsky targeted a budget of \$100,000, half the size of his first feature, and pennies in an industry where equipment often accounts for 50% of costs. Funding came through a **Kickstarter** campaign, investments, donations, personal financing, and **state incentives**. **The Film Collaborative** also assisted, creating a way for donators to receive a tax break.

Zalutsky wanted anything he could get his hands on. Finding ways to cut costs, Zalutsky housed a number of crew members during shooting. Additionally, the town of Seaside was very helpful, allowing flexibility with both filming time and location.

#### Distribution

*Seaside* is currently in **post-production**, and in the **DIY** model, completing a film is only half the battle; Zalutsky now looks into the abyss that is film distribution. His current plan involves festival submissions, hopefully leading to audience screenings in an attempt to get picked up by a distribution company. Zalutsky's past experience is beneficial in this process, but it is still a tough, crowded market where many projects fail.

#### Project Timeline

- Fall 2015: Script finished
  - Five years of tinkering to write, including

### *You Belong to Me* (2007)

A budget of about \$200,000, this thriller shows the obsession a landlady has over her new tenant. Although both Mama's Boy and Offhollywood Digital are given production credits, Mama's Boy is actually a corporation Sam created to help raise equity investments for the project. *You Belong to Me* premiered at the San Francisco International LGBT Film Festival in June 2007 before getting a DVD release February 2009. The movie was filmed in New York.

revisions that accommodated the changes made for shooting needs and restrictions.

- October 2015: Producer was attached
- April 2016: Filming (originally wanted to shoot in 2015)
  - 17 day filming schedule

## SHUT UP ANTHONY (2017)

The work of Kyle Eaton, *Shut up Anthony* portrays a man coping with loss by retreating, alone, to a family vacation home. As a filmmaker, Eaton worked as a Producer, Assistant Director (AD) and other supporting roles throughout his twenties. From Eaton's experience, the relationships built through related side-work allowed him to take on his first fe

### Finance & Filming

Working on *Shut up Anthony*, Eaton called in some serious favors. He filmed at a family location, borrowed production equipment from another local project, and used his credit card. Although the budget was \$250,000 on paper, Kyle was able to do it for much less thanks to creativity and a "currency of relationships" as well as a rigorous 11-day shooting schedule.

### Distribution

*Shut up Anthony* wrapped in October of 2016, after most festival submission deadlines. Nonetheless, Eaton was able to submit an unfinished version of the film to many festivals, re-sending the film upon completion - a common practice.

The world premiere for *Shut up Anthony* came in San Francisco at the Cinequest Film & VR Festival. In other distribution efforts, Eaton booked the Hollywood Theater in Portland to host a profitable one-night screening - a bright spot in a part of the process where marketing and distribution efforts tend to cost the filmmaker much-needed dollars for longer than originally intended. Securing a distribution company remains an ongoing process, but Eaton is optimistic about his work and finding a lucrative way into the market.

### Project Timeline

- March 2014: Idea inception
  - Note that this project wasn't fully scripted, there was a lot of **improvisation** with direction as

## *Taco Night (2014)*

*Shut up Anthony* is the follow up to Eaton's short *Taco Night (2014)*, which details two old friends getting sucked into the waning moments of another couple's relationship. *Taco Night* played at a number of festivals, winning "Best Comedy" at the Oregon Independent Film Festival and "Best of the Fest" at The 41<sup>st</sup> Northwest Filmmakers Festival.

Although not Eaton's first short, *Taco Night* gave him the momentum as a writer/director move forward with a feature. Much of the cast from *Taco Night* also appears in *Shut up Anthony*.

opposed to a traditional script.

- July - August 2014: Producers/cast attached
- August 2014: Filming begins
- March 2017: World premiere at Cinequest & screening at Hollywood Theater

## THE WATCHMAN'S CANOE (2017)

The first feature by film professor Barri Chase, *The Watchman's Canoe* illustrates Chase's own journey as a white-looking child on an Indian Reservation. Chase's fourth written screenplay, it is the first she took the leap to create. Chase claims, "On the first couple you're not considering budget, you're just writing. I needed something pretty simple, not too out there, that I had the ability to complete with a lot of support."

For her first feature, support and research were paramount. In her research efforts, Chase attended the Rebel Heart Conference in Denver, an educational workshop on how to make a micro-budget feature. The conference gave her much more guidance and confidence in her approach, especially when it came to paperwork and logistics.

### Finance & Filming

Creating a connection with nature is an important aspect of *The Watchman's Canoe*. The actual events of the film take place in Washington State, but after location scouting, Chase felt Oregon provided a better location landscape and film community to make her script come to life. With location and setting established, Chase was able to cast her lead actress prior to fundraising and create a **concept trailer**.

With her trailer and script, Chase set out to raise the \$500,000 she felt was necessary. Practically all funding was collected through a number of **pitches** to local (Coos Bay, Oregon) investors. Her presentations included a detailed business plan for the film, her enthusiasm, ties to the community, and the **concept trailer** – which Chase felt, "Sent it over the top." She offered shares of her project for \$5,000 each with a **project Greenlight** set at \$250,000. More favorable deals were given to the first investors.

### Distribution

Chase too now lies in the distribution trenches. For her, this involves a lot of festival submissions, outreach, and trying to get into the **VOD** market. This process can be navigated more easily with a **sales agent** but, in the DIY model, sales agents can be hard to come by. Agents are often inundated with projects, charge money upfront, and/or are difficult to pin down to watch or read your project.

The success of independent films rely a great deal on word of mouth to attract an audience, and Chase is negotiating with potential distributors to release the film in Asia and Europe this summer. It has been a learning process for Chase, but she feels that in a few years the project will profit. Chase is currently gearing up for another feature with a slightly bigger budget.

### Project Timeline

- Spring 2015: Started script
- May 2015. Attended Rebel Heart Conference
- September 2015: Trailer completed
- March - June 2016: Fundraising
- June - July 2016: Filming
- November 2016 - January 2017: Private screenings
- Summer 2017: Scheduled to be released on iTunes and Amazon Prime.

## II. Doing it Mostly Yourself

These are smaller projects, much like the earlier DIY films, that have especially benefited from premise, word of mouth, and the background of the creators themselves. Here it is often one medium-level relationship or investment acting as a platform to spring project development.

### TRACKTOWN (2016)

Focusing on a lonely track athlete who sprains her ankle days before the Olympic trials, *Tracktown* explores the emotional journey that results from taking a day off. Rooted in Eugene's Tracktown USA culture, the film is co-written/co-directed by Alexi Pappas and Jeremy Teicher, both in their early twenties. Pappas stars in the film and is an Olympian herself; her notoriety as an athlete from the University of Oregon played a large role throughout project development.

In addition, Teicher's momentum coming off a very successful low-budget feature, *Tall as the Baobab Tree* (2012), added to their success. After the reception of his first film, Teicher was featured as one of Filmmaker Magazine's "25 New Faces of Independent Film". *Tracktown* was the next step for Teicher, a bigger feature with a bigger budget. Nonetheless, *Tracktown* falls in the **SAG** ultra-low category (for projects budgeted under \$300,000).

### Financing & Filming

Financing for *Tracktown* came primarily through smaller, individual investments. Therefore, fundraising involved a lot of cultivating relationships, **pitching**, getting turned down, and trying again. A sizeable investment (25% of the budget) from one investor really got things going.

Once they had some capital, Teicher and Pappas were able to get help from a few local producers and begin crew assignments. In filming itself, Pappas knew a lot of real athletes willing to work for free and Eugene was very extremely friendly in letting them shoot. The University, its alumni, facilities etc. were a huge part in getting the film made.

### Distribution

Due to his previous relationships, Teicher got a **sales agent** (Preferred Content) attached after *Tracktown's* acceptance to the Los Angeles Film Festival. Teicher firmly believes that a skilled sales agent is a crucial part of distribution, "Someone who doesn't charge up front, is reputable, and picky in what they choose. Find your agent then have your world premiere."

*Tracktown* premiered June 2016 at the Los Angeles Film Festival on the way to earning a distribution deal with **Samuel Goldwyn Films**. *Tracktown* had a limited theatrical and digital release in May, 2017.

### Project Timeline

- Summer 2013: Started writing
- August 2013: Teicher came to Eugene
- August 2013: May 2014. Writing, networking, casting
- May 2014: Test shoot with 25% of the money, Laura Wagner accepted by Sundance Producing Lab.
- June 2014: Raised large portion of the capital
- August - September 2014: Filming

## Tall as the Baobab Tree (2012)

Set in an African village, Tall as the

olds attempt to liberate her sister from an arranged marriage. This film featured Pappas as a co-writer and was inspired by Teicher's Student Academy Award-nominated short *This Is Us: Video Stories from Senegalese Youth* (2010).

*Tall as the Baobab Tree* was distributed through more than 50 festivals around the world. Additionally, it has been globally distributed on digital platforms along with African and European TV deals.

## Sundance Producing Lab

The Sundance producing lab is a yearlong fellowship program to help and support independent filmmakers. The support comes through financial grants, mentoring, and legitimizing your project. *Tracktown* co-producer Laura Wagner participated in this lab.

- September 2014 – Spring 2015 : Editing
- April 2016: Preferred Content **sales agent** attached
- June 2016: Premiere at Los Angeles Film Festival.
- Sept 2016: Distribution agreement with **Samuel Goldwyn Films**
- May 2017: Theatrical and digital release

## THE BENEFITS OF GUSBANDRY (2016- )

A pun off the words “gay husband,” *The Benefits of Gusbandry* is a mini-series about a woman's relationship with a gay man, and the benefit it yields. The idea for the series was largely inspired by the life events of writer/director Alicia J. Rose with her “Gusbands”. So much so, the title of the series spawned from one of Rose’s vacation hashtags.

Rose saw a unique type of comedy to the “Gusband” lifestyle and began brainstorming episode ideas around the concept. With her **pitch** and established relationships, Rose was able to identify two lead cast members early and write for their strengths. Rose’s filmic background is made up of work as a director of music videos and various roles on a number of short films.

### Financing & Filming

Rose raised money through **crowdfunding**. And although she was able to round up about \$12,500 in a month, for Rose, “Crowdfunding was hell, like a lot of the process, but you figure it out and get through.” She had already created a teaser trailer and planned to make three episodes with the crowdfunding money. However, additional capital was provided through her closer network increasing funding to a \$40-50,000 budget; enough to make the entire first season.

### Distribution

The first season of ‘*Gusbandry*’ contains seven episodes, all hovering around 10 minutes in length. As part of their marketing strategy, each episode premiered on a range of platforms to generate hype for the series. These included: The Portland Film Festival, **Tubefilter**, **Out.com**, **AV Club**, the New York Times, **Paste** and others. While Rose isn’t currently making money off the project, she is looking for distribution and gearing up for season two. The perfect scenario is to get picked up by Hulu or Netflix as a 30 minute program, but there is no defined roadmap. Rose believes the best way to build a brand is to get hype, get it out there, then monetize – the “word of mouth” model. Rose has controlled all rights to her project, making her work available not only through the aforementioned platforms, but also through Amazon Video Direct, **Vimeo**, and VHS with deals she put together on her own.

## Amazon Video Direct

Amazon will let users upload their own content to the streaming library as long as basic requirements are met. Once uploaded, projects are available free of charge to all Amazon prime users. Content providers receive royalties or larger sums based off of popularity.

### Project Timeline

- April 2015: Idea inception
- June - July 2016: **Crowdfunding**
- August 2016: Filming
- Sept 2015 - Nov 2016: Pilot & subsequent episodes released
- October 2015 - March 2017: Screened at Atlanta Film Festival, New Orleans Film Festival, Nashville Film Festival, NW Filmmakers Festival, and others.
- May 2017: Filming of season two
- September 2017: Scheduled release of season two

## III. The Standards

This is the dream, where all the previously mentioned projects are working towards. It's not easy to get here, but it happens. In these examples, financing and distribution come as a package deal once a major company or **studio** buys the project rights.

### PORTLANDIA (2011- )

This Emmy-winning, quirky sketch comedy series poking fun at the Portland lifestyle is, spoiler, also filmed in Portland. *Portlandia* is recognized for its distinctly unique premises, Fred Armisen of *SNL* (Saturday Night Live), and the consistent cameos from other recognizable talent.

#### From YouTube to IFC

The idea for *Portlandia* originated with Armisen and Carrie Brownstein (then a guitarist with the well-known band, Sleater Kinney) meeting through a Sleater Kinney band member, Janet Weiss. Armisen and Brownstein hit it off and proceeded to make self-financed, experimental videos on YouTube under the title *ThunderAnt*, starting in 2005. These videos were quite similar in style to what became *Portlandia*.

After sporadic filming for a few years, Armisen spoke to Andrew Singer and Lorne Michaels at **Broadway Video**, both of whom he had known from *SNL*. At this point, there was plenty of material to serve as an appetizer and concept **pitch**, as well as Armisen's relationship and reputation. Using Broadway Video, *Portlandia* was pitched to **IFC**; a perfect fit to IFC's "Always On, Slightly Off" brand. Armisen starred on both *SNL* and *Portlandia* for a few years before focusing more exclusively on *Portlandia*.

#### Wrap up

Getting to **IFC**, and subsequently to Netflix, got *Portlandia* where it is today. The story might've had a different spin with an unknown, un-networked cast of creators, but nonetheless, Armisen and Brownstein started this themselves. It was six years before *ThunderAnt* debuted as *Portlandia*, but they had a vision, picked up a camera, and turned it into something. That's a lesson anyone can take into account. On top of that, having a recognizable name or "star power" helps both the financing and distribution greatly. Both Armisen and Brownstein had notoriety from their previous exposure as a comedic SNL actor and musician, respectively.

### Project Timeline

- 2003: Armisen and Brownstein meet after a concert
- 2005 - 2008 (roughly): *ThunderAnt* YouTube series
- July 2009: Project **pitched** to **IFC** and Lorne Michaels' **Broadway Video**
- January 2011: Debut on **IFC**. First season of six episodes.
- February 2011: Renewed for a second season of 10 episodes.
- 2017: Season seven of *Portlandia* & filming for the eighth and final season

## THE HAUNTING OF SUNSHINE GIRL (2010- )

Originally a YouTube series about a teenage girl in a haunted house, *The Haunting of Sunshine Girl* (aka *Sunshine Girl*) stars Paige McKenzie as Sunshine and Mercedes Rose as her mother. The story was simple and to the point, no script, no budget; just a girl, her mom, and their reactions to paranormal activities.

*Sunshine Girl* has since expanded to a trilogy of bestselling books and an upcoming episodic series with **The Weinstein Company**. All the while maintaining a YouTube presence, now as a YouTube channel that hosts a number of projects with *Sunshine Girl* at the helm.

### YouTube Popularity

The YouTube channel for *Sunshine Girl* began in 2010 and immediately gained a following. The first video quickly collected three thousand views and as they continued uploading and learning their audience, things kept growing. But money doesn't simply come from YouTube, money comes from what one does with YouTube popularity. So in 2012, McKenzie made a Hollywood push, trying to get roles in the large young adult projects. However, when McKenzie saw herself in audition waiting rooms underneath *Gossip Girl* posters, she knew she didn't fit the Hollywood prototype and didn't want to adapt to it.

### Getting Into Books & Television

McKenzie and Rose kept producing their YouTube series until a literary agent emailed them on Halloween, 2013. Together, they drafted a book outline and, thanks to their established popularity, had multiple buyers interested. When The Weinstein Company got into the discussion they had the "Wow, this is happening" moment.

The books took off, and landed McKenzie on the Today

## *Sunshine Girl: TV & Film*

Film and Television had always been in the minds of McKenzie and Rose. There were two separate experimental attempts at self-made *Sunshine Girl* movies throughout the years. Yet, due to a lack of funding, these didn't turn out as envisioned.

Even before the YouTube series, episodes of a longer, more scripted project called *Paranormalist* were filmed. A parody of ghost hunter shows, Rose thought it was hilarious, but when released on a number of platforms, it didn't gain much traction. Rose feels "They were trying to do too much, it's once they simplified things that people started paying attention."

show, in People Magazine, and the starring role in the upcoming *Sunshine Girl* TV series (also through Weinstein). *Sunshine Girl* is scheduled to debut fall 2017.

### Wrap up

*Sunshine Girl* started as **DIY** project but grew quickly, a true testament to the fact the industry is ever changing and any “magic formula” is elusive. Each project needs to be put together, produced and distributed in its own unique way. Any pathway that works for one project may not necessarily work for another, even for the same creative team.

### Project Timeline

- 2009: Original *Paranormalist* episodes
- December 2010: First *Sunshine Girl* YouTube video
- 2012: L.A. push for McKenzie to get starring roles
- October 2013: First contact with literary agent
- 2014: Sign deal with Weinstein for book and film rights
- March 2015: *The Haunting of Sunshine Girl* book released
- March 2016: *The Awakening of Sunshine Girl* book released
- April, 2017: *The Sacrifice of Sunshine Girl* book released
- Fall 2017: TV show to premiere

## GREEN ROOM (2015) & I DON'T FEEL AT HOME IN THIS WORLD ANYMORE (2017)

Filmed in Oregon and involving escalating/thrilling premises, these two independent projects have exploded onto festivals and garnered successful reviews around the world. *I Don't Feel at Home in This World Anymore* even won Sundance Film Festival's highest honor, “The Grand Jury Prize” (2017).

Although I was unable to speak to anyone directly involved in these films, Neil Kopp (producer), Anish Savjani (producer), and Macon Blair (producer/actor/director) were integral parts of the production team on both projects. According to my interviewees, Kopp, Savjani, and Blair have reached a place in local filmmaking that is an inspiration on how to monetize Oregon projects.

However, their reputation and success came from years of producing quality projects. Their experience and creative insight built over time after starting with the “Doing It Yourself “ and “Doing It Mostly Yourself” models. It was only after a lot of hard work, talent and scrupulous project selection that they reached a point where *I Don't Feel at Home in This World Anymore* was fully funded and distributed as a Netflix Original.

## Findings

So what can one learn from these interviews? Each scenario is a bit different, so a number of things must be reviewed and considered.

### NETWORK & EXPERIENCE

- *The most popular route toward making your own project still appears to be working on a few jobs, a few shorts of your own, then gearing up and taking personal risk to create a feature/mini-series.*
- *Having people willing to believe in you, and maybe work for free, is awesome.* Sadly, most newcomers don't really have anyone like this, and it can feel a little exhausting to search for "friends" so they you can help you later. But at the same time, it's what everyone else is doing too. As long as you don't burn any bridges, and give a favor here and there, maybe it won't take too long. Invest before you request!
- *Use everything you have at your disposal.* From an empty house, to ties with a community, to flexible return policies at electronic stores, and this is a big one, any relationships with people of wealth. Do what you have to, who cares if they say no? Who cares if they don't respond? Exhaust your resources because if you make good work, people will like being a part of it and it will add to your network.
- *Get people who have been around the block.* There are a million things to this business, the majority of which, someone new won't know. You won't just be a filmmaker, but a jack-of-all-trades. The more experience you gain, the less likely you will get blindsided by an added cost along the way.

### FINANCING

- *There will be added costs.* Tying directly to my last point, this is pretty self-explanatory. Stuff is expensive. Festival submissions are roughly \$70 each, sales agents have costs, as do lawyers, cast, producers, cameras etc. It always costs money, prep for it.
- *You can get money.* People like movies, it's a cool thing to invest in, and if you're passionate about your theme or location, even better. Additionally, it can be easier to raise money with a trailer, or some form of cut footage; it's more tangible and feels less risky. Check out the glossary for some of the newer and unique ways people raise money.
- *Earning a profit isn't the same as making back your budget.* Generally speaking, the budget is what it costs to film and produce a project. To earn a profit, you must make back your budget plus any interest owed to investors and costs spent in distribution

efforts. As a rough estimation, the break-even number lands at around 120% of the original budget for independent projects (the percentage is much higher for a traditional “Hollywood film”).

## FILMING

- *Small locations let you be flexible.* Sometimes smaller markets where you establish a personal connection can be more cooperative and hospitable. This also means being able to adapt your script effectively to accommodate changing circumstances. Sometimes the infrastructure, setting, population and ease-of-access of a city is better. In both instances, don't skip the insurance as all locations require coverage before issuing permits and permissions. Much of the information on required permits and insurance coverage can be found through state film offices, city governments, tourist boards, or chambers of commerce.

## DISTRIBUTION

- *Distribution is less talked about, but perhaps the hardest part.* You can get creative to finance something, but getting distribution is a more structured and specific arena. Having a plan will help immensely. Your plan can include selling distribution rights in various “territories” to third party distributors, licensing your project to online platforms for streaming, or even “self-distributing” through direct bookings and various digital platforms. Festivals can be cut-throat, political, and unreliable, but they can also be a great way to generate audience feedback, word of mouth, and reviews. Another way would be to engage a **sales agent**, someone who knows the circuit, the market, the deals and what distributors/festivals are looking for to get you on the right deals.
- *It's getting better and worse.* There are more and more VOD platforms each year, but also more content swarming the internet. This means projects are frequently getting picked up for streaming and online distribution, but the deals vary wildly. This massive influx has allowed VOD platforms to be more selective, and create favorable (for them) contract negotiations. Once upon a time you would sell something for a fee and get a marketing commitment. Now you sell for a smaller fee and pony up your own marketing so as not to get lost in the abyss of a streaming library.
- *Being “Available on Amazon and iTunes” doesn't guarantee you money.* Generally, there is no “up front” money for being available for purchase – especially for smaller projects. Instead you are given revenue for each sale and the housing company (in this case Amazon or iTunes) takes about 10-20%.

## IN CONCLUSION

- *Be open to new ideas.* Not everyone knows what is going to work and what won't, that's why there's no “sure fire” way to make something a “hit.” But it is a business built on successful relationships and you never know where you might meet your next collaborator. There are many ways to reach any level of success in this industry.

- *Make it happen for yourself.* Everyone I've spoken to has taken personal risks and started by creating something on their own. The million dollar break won't happen on your first project and it won't come find you; you make your own reputation.

## Glossary + Some Useful Terms

**Producer** - Someone who does everything possible to help projects come together, get made, and get distributed. There are often many producers or production companies listed on a project, each with varying levels of involvement.

**Executive Producer (EP)** - Normally one producer directly tied to a project with a bigger role in financing and logistical organization.

**Post-Production** - The portion of the process occurring after filmmaking. Often dealing with editing, sound mixing, and technical effects.

**DIY** - Acronym for “do it yourself “

**Concept Trailer** - A short scene or trailer that shows the mood, setting, actors, actions and overall feeling of a piece – generally runs between 2 and 8 minutes and can be a single scene or a more traditional series of scenes cut into a “trailer.”

**Improvisation** - Telling an actor what needs to be accomplished with a scene and letting it play out without specifically scripting the lines which need to be said in advance.

**SAG** - Screen Actors Guild. The union that represents most professional actors that stipulates work rates, hours, overtime, health safety and welfare rules for working with members. Contracts for projects working with SAG actors are broken out into several budget levels. More info at [SAGAftra.org](http://SAGAftra.org)

**Original Content** - A new project that is created, produced and distributed exclusively by and/or financed through a singular entity (e.g. network, production company, streaming platform and/or cable channel; e.g. “Netflix Originals” or “Amazon Original” or “Hulu Original”).

**Studio** – Traditionally, this meant one of the “five major Hollywood Studios” (i.e. Fox, MGM, Warner Bros, Paramount, Columbia) but it has since been expanded to mean any larger corporate entity which has the ability to acquire, produce, finance and/or distribute content (both “original” and otherwise). In series television it can also mean the company paying for and overseeing the development of a pilot/series but not necessarily “distributing” it – leaving distribution to a “network” and other international distribution licensees, selling off distribution rights throughout the world on a territory by territory basis.

## FINANCING TERMS

**Debt Financing/Loans Model** - Presenting a distribution promise made from a third party to the bank (ex. “we will buy your movie for our streaming website for \$500,000”), and subsequently getting a loan to make the project. This is most useful for larger projects with guaranteed distribution.

**“Project Greenlight” or “Greenlighting a project”** - Obtaining the minimum level of funding needed to proceed with production of a project.

**Pitch** - An attempt to convince someone else to invest, help, or purchase your project. Your “sales pitch.”

**Pre-sales** - Selling rights to a project before completion to finance the project with the dollars earned from the sale.

**State Tax Incentives** - Each state is a bit different in requirements and how much they reimburse, but you can often get money back and discounts for filming costs if you contact the state office. This is easier to acquire in smaller markets and there is normally a minimum budget requirement to receive state funding.

**Line of Credit** - Either the use of your own credit cards to finance a project and/or actually obtaining a physical line of credit from a bank.

**Taking on Investors** - Taking money from investors, offering them a rate of return for the project if things go as planned.

**Crowdfunding/Crowdsourcing** - Getting money from the crowd, generally on social media. You put an idea out and ask for money from people online. Often with a pre-determined target of committed dollars needed before any money is withdrawn. (Popular crowdfunding platforms include Kickstarter, Indiegogo, and Seed & Spark)

**Kickstarter** - Crowdfunding platform with a deadline by which the target of committed dollars must be met. Kickstarter charges a 5% fee off of money raised with an additional 3-5 % coming later.

**Selling Equity vs ROI vs Donations** - With each crowdfunding/Kickstarter campaign you're generally given the option to either, sell equity (a percentage of your projects), or offer a “Return on Investment” for each investment/loan given, or request donations.

## DISTRIBUTION TERMS

**Sales Agent** – A third party to help sell your project to distributors, develop word of mouth, and get you into festivals.

**Withoutabox** - A self-distribution Internet service allowing you to upload projects, get an IMDB page, go through festival directories and more. All in one middle man.

**FilmFreeway** - Rival website to Withoutabox letting you submit digitally to festivals.

**Vimeo** - Large video sharing platform.

**VOD** - Literally “Video on Demand,” can refer to any streaming option that has video ready when a consumer wants it.

**SVOD** – “Subscription Video on Demand,” the classic Netflix model where a provider charges a fee for their video library.

**TVOD** – “Transactional Video on Demand,” where customers buy an individual movie or video from a platform. Transaction by transaction, the iTunes system.

**AVOD** – “Ad-based Video on Demand,” The YouTube model, where content is free, but there are sometimes advertisements.

**NVOD** - Near video on demand. The soon to be extinct pay-per-view model. It's not streaming, but offering the same content staggered at different starting times for convenience.

**Catch-up TV** - When a network offers their program on a VOD platform for a few days after it airs so viewers can catch up. The TIVO killer.

**Samuel Goldwyn Films**- An art house/independent production company founded in 1997.

**The Film Collaborative** – Nonprofit aimed at helping independent film, often with distribution.

**The Weinstein Company** – A New York based film studio and publisher created in 2005 by Bob and Harvey Weinstein, co-founders of Miramax Films.

**IFC** – The Independent Feature Channel – a cable network

**Broadway Video** – A production company started by Lorne Michaels which produces “Saturday Night Live” amongst many other film, TV and online projects.

**Tubefilter, Out.com, AV Club, & Paste** – Different unique online streaming and media websites/magazines publishing articles, information, and new pop-culture content.

## Thanks to Those I Talked to

*Project title*

Name (role in the project) -

Barri Chase (creator) - *The Watchman's Canoe*

David Cress (producer) - *Portlandia*

Kyle Eaton (creator) - *Shut up Anthony*

Erin Egan (executive/producer) - *Bad Samaritan & The Librarians*

Alyssa Roehrenbeck (producer) - *Seaside*

Alicia Rose (creator) - *The Benefits of Gusbandry*

Mercedes Rose (creator/actress) - *The Haunting of Sunshine Girl*

Jeremy Teicher (co-creator) - *Tracktown*

Janice Williams (producer)

Tim Williams (Executive Director of Oregon Film)

Sam Zalutsky (creator) - *Seaside*