

Slawko: Good morning. My name is Slawko Klymkiw and I am the CEO of the Canadian Film Centre.

Christina: My name is Christina Jennings and I am the chairman and CEO of Shaftesbury.

I am appearing before the committee today as chair of the board of directors for the Canadian Film Centre.

Slawko and I thank the committee for the opportunity to discuss how COVID-19 has impacted the CFC and how professional training in the film and television industry plays a role in economic recovery.

We also thank Minister MacLeod for her support of the production industry in Ontario. I am co-chair of the minister's Film and Television Advisory Panel and we are working to make Ontario the number one destination in the world for film and television production.

Slawko: I am also a member of Minister MacLeod's Film & Television Advisory Panel, on how to grow the industry in Ontario. When the minister asked the CFC to host a meeting of experts last September to identify the challenges to our industry, COVID-19 was not one. Film and TV production were at record levels: over 340 productions, 44,500 jobs and \$2.16 billion in spending – 40% on domestic production.

The Doug Ford government was stepping up investments in studios and projects, with a vision to boost annual production spending above \$5 billion.

That lofty goal seems more distant now. Nonetheless, the Panel's work continues and recovery is a thread that runs through every discussion. The CFC and our colleagues are encouraged by the minister's tireless efforts to put Ontario's film and television production industry back on its feet, to promote our competitive advantages, and to re-open the Province for business.

Christina: The CFC is recognized as a leading institute for professional training in the film and television production industry and we have a role in the minister's culture strategy moving forward. Support for cultural organizations that professionalize talent is essential for industry renewal and growth: Content creators and entrepreneurs drive projects, attract investment, generate jobs, and can make a significant contribution to sustainable economic benefits for Ontario.

We are a centre of excellence for content creators and entrepreneurs working in the film and TV industry. The centre was founded in 1986 by Ontario filmmaker Norman Jewison and he is still active on the board, as a mentor and host at events.

The CFC has delivered professional training and career acceleration for 1,900 writers, showrunners, directors, producers, editors, actors, songwriters and composers, and helped to launch 250 media production companies.

Slawko: The CFC is a charitable organization and relies on a combination of public sector, private sector and earned revenue to operate our programs and balance a \$10 million annual budget. We play a unique role in Ontario film and TV production, which ranks as the largest in Canada and third overall in North America.

The Province of Ontario has been a remarkable partner in the advancement of CFC talent, projects and companies for 15 years.

Thanks to the leadership of Minister MacLeod, the Ford government is committed to a path forward for supporting the CFC to strengthen and sustain our double bottom line:

CFC talent and projects reflect the next generation of creative and industry leaders who will redefine how our stories are told on-screen and experienced by the rest of the world; and,

The CFC annually generates 340 permanent full-time jobs and contributes \$22 million in GDP.

Christina: The CFC program experience is advanced, intensive, collaborative, and requires a commitment of five months to several years. CFC talent receive expert instruction and mentoring to develop their original content, learn new skillsets, showcase, promote and market projects, and expand business networks in Canada and abroad.

We have gained an international reputation for excellence across all programs, our institution has a national reach, and two-thirds of our graduates live and work in Ontario.

Last year, 23 projects involving 58 CFC alumni were screened at TIFF, including 4 films that were developed at the CFC. In February, CFC alumni received 86 nominations for Canadian Screen Awards across 46 categories. In May, the new CTV series Transplant, featuring 10 CFC alumni in key creative roles, was picked up by NBC for broadcast in the United States.

Christina: As of January 1, CFC talent were at work on everything from micro budget features and web series, to mega studio blockbuster hits. Our alumni were receiving international acclaim, working across all platforms and building strong relationships.

Slawko: Much of the program year had concluded by mid-March, and we were able to pivot a recently launched Media Lab project and the remainder of the music program to online delivery. We had to cancel an annual mission to Los Angeles, where we conduct a number of creative and business development meetings with Hollywood studios each year.

On March 17, with the Government of Ontario's enactment of the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, we closed our doors. Since then, our staff have been working from home. We are developing plans to deliver programs through the use of online platforms until the centre can re-open under Stage 3 of the Province's economic plan.

Slawko: With studios and theatres in crisis mode, a number of private sector partnerships are at risk. We have had to cancel two of our three key fundraising events and the third is at risk. Philanthropic membership donations and location rental commitments have fallen away.

We are projecting \$3.1 million in revenue losses over the next 12 to 18 months and we have had to lay off a number of staff, including the entire film and TV production team. Like a number of other arts and cultural organizations, we have not been able to access federal government relief programs.

Christina: At the same time that the CFC is responding to the challenges of COVID-19, we are responding to the challenges of social justice and systemic racism within the organization and the broader screen industry. We applaud the premier's stance against racism. Over the next year, we will create and implement an action plan for a better and safer CFC, more empowering and more inclusive of BIPOC and other marginalized creative and entrepreneurial talent.

Slawko: In closing, the CFC strongly recommends that the Government of Ontario renew its commitment to professional training of creative and entrepreneurial talent in film and television, and that additional funds be made available for development and implementation of innovative new ways for professional training organizations to deliver programs and services to Ontario's diverse communities.

Deputation before the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs
to discuss how COVID-19 has impacted operations of the Canadian Film Centre
(CFC) and recommendations to the Ontario Government for economic recovery

WRITTEN SUBMISSION

Submitted by,

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY

The **Canadian Film Centre (CFC)** is proud to serve as a member of **Minister Lisa MacLeod's Film & Television Advisory Panel**, on how to grow the industry in Ontario. When the minister asked the CFC to host a meeting of experts last September to identify the challenges to our industry, **COVID-19** was not one. Film and TV production were at record levels: over **340 productions**, **44,500 jobs** and **\$2.16 billion** in spending – **40% on domestic production**.

The **Doug Ford government** was stepping up investments in studios and projects, with a vision to boost annual production spending above **\$5 billion**.

That lofty goal seems more distant now. Nonetheless, the Panel's work continues and recovery is a thread that runs through every discussion. The CFC and our colleagues are encouraged by the minister's tireless efforts to put Ontario's film and television production industry back on its feet, to promote our competitive advantages, and to re-open the Province for business.

The CFC is recognized as a leading institute for professional training in the film and television production industry and we have a role in the minister's culture strategy moving forward.

Support for cultural organizations that professionalize talent is essential for industry renewal and growth: Content creators and entrepreneurs drive projects, attract investment, generate jobs, and can make a significant contribution to sustainable economic benefits for Ontario.

INTRODUCTION

The **Canadian Film Centre (CFC)** is a centre of excellence for content creators and entrepreneurs working in the screen-based media production industry. Since its founding 32 years ago by the celebrated Ontario filmmaker **Norman Jewison**, the CFC has delivered professional workplace training and career acceleration for **1,900 writers, showrunners, directors, producers, editors, actors, songwriters and composers**, and helped to launch **250 media production companies**.

The CFC is a charitable organization and relies on a combination of public sector, private sector and earned revenue to operate our programs and balance a **\$10 million annual budget**. We play a unique role in the Ontario film and TV production ecosystem, which ranks as the largest in Canada and third overall in North America behind California and New York.

The **Province of Ontario** has been a remarkable partner in the advancement of CFC talent, projects and companies for 15 years. Now, thanks to the leadership of the **Honourable Lisa MacLeod, Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries**, the Ford government is supporting the CFC to strengthen and sustain our double bottom line:

CFC talent and projects reflect the next generation of creative and industry leaders who will redefine how our stories are told on-screen and experienced by the rest of the world; and,

The CFC annually generates **340 permanent full-time jobs** and contributes **\$22 million in GDP**.

COVID-19 IMPACTS ON THE CFC

As of January 1, talent from CFC programs were generating and working on everything from micro budget features and web series, to mega studio blockbuster hits. Our alumni were receiving international acclaim, working across all platforms and building strong relationships.

Much of the program year had concluded by mid-March, and we were able to pivot a recently launched Media Lab project and the remainder of the music program to online delivery. We had to cancel an annual mission to Los Angeles, where we conduct a number of creative and business development meetings with Hollywood studios each year.

On March 17, in adherence to the **Government of Ontario's** enactment of the **Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act**, we closed our doors. Since then, our staff have been working from home. We are developing plans to deliver programs through the use of online platforms until the campus is able to re-open under Stage 3 of the Province's economic plan.

With studios and theatres in crisis mode, the renewal of contribution agreements is at risk. We have had to cancel two of our three key fundraising events and the third is at risk. Philanthropic membership donations and location rental commitments have fallen away. We are projecting **\$3.1 million** in revenue losses over the next 12 to 18 months and we have had to lay off a number of staff, including the entire film and TV production team. Like a number of other cultural organizations, we have not been able to access federal government relief programs.

BACKGROUND

The CFC program experience is advanced, intensive, collaborative, and requires a commitment of five months to several years. CFC talent receive expert instruction and mentoring to develop their original content, learn new skillsets, showcase, promote and market projects, and expand business networks in Canada and abroad.

We have gained an international reputation for excellence across all programs, our institution has a national reach, and **two-thirds of our graduates live and work in Ontario.**

The **CFC Film Program** has produced **200 projects** including the debut feature films of acclaimed independent artists, **Clement Virgo, Vincenzo Natali, Holly Dale, Charles Officer, Jeff Barnaby, Tracey Deer** and many others.

CFC film talent also includes behind the lens exports such as **Semi Chellas** and **Brad Peyton**, whose critical and commercial success is shining a light on Canada, beyond borders.

Many CFC talents, such as **Christina Jennings**, choose to remain in Canada and strengthen the domestic industry. Christina is the one of our most accomplished producers. She is founder, chairman and CEO of **Shaftesbury**, whose enduring series **Murdoch Mysteries** is broadcast in over 120 countries around the world. Christina is also the chair of the CFC board of directors.

The **CFC Prime Time TV Program** is the highest regarded script to screen process in Canada. It has fostered more than 60 original series including the hit shows **Travellers**, **Mary Kills People**, and **Orphan Black**. Think of a made in Canada series airing or streaming today and chances are there is at least one CFC content creator onboard: **Burden of Truth**, **Cardinal**, **Carter**, **Departure**, **Diggstown**, **Frankie Drake Mysteries**, **Hudson & Rex**, **Northern Rescue**, **Nurses**, **Snowpiercer**, **The Order**, and **Utopia Falls**, to name a few – with numerous projects in the pipeline.

The **CFC Media Lab** has accelerated more than **100 start up firms** including **Secret Location**, which is reshaping the virtual reality industry by combining cutting-edge technology with traditional storytelling. They created the first original serialized VR narrative and are the first company in the world to win a **Primetime Emmy Award** for a VR project. The company was acquired several years ago by **Entertainment One**.

Smiley Guy Studios has grown considerably since its founders graduated from the Media Lab. They are expert at vector-based animation, computer-generated imagery, and multi-platform production. They produce the **Canadian Screen Award** winning series **Corner Gas Animated** and other original content while also collaborating with clients on a variety of projects.

Graduates from the **CFC Actors Conservatory** are lighting up screens around the world, from **Annie Murphy** in **Schitt's Creek** and **Cara Ricketts** and **Araya Mengesha** in **Anne with an E**, to **Giacomo Gianniotti** in **Grey's Anatomy** and **Eli Goree** as “**Cassius Clay**” in the upcoming American feature film **One Night in Miami**.

CFC music talent is also making waves, like **Jeff Morrow** whose credits include **Marvel Studio's Ant-Man, Dreamworks' Trolls**, and **Walt Disney Pictures' Olaf's Frozen Adventure**.

Last year, **23 projects** involving **58 CFC alumni** were screened at **TIFF**, including 4 films that were developed at the CFC. In February, CFC alumni received **86 nominations** for **Canadian Screen Awards** across **46 categories**. In May, the new **CTV** series **Transplant**, featuring 10 CFC alumni in key creative roles, was picked up by **NBC** for broadcast in the United States.

To offer programs effectively and remain relevant in an evolving screen media and entertainment landscape requires partnerships. The CFC has more than **100 industry and community partners**, from large corporations and small non-profits to professional associations, from centres for R&D and post-secondary institutions to festivals and forums for cultural exchange. Acting together, we create excellence and surpass expectations.

CFC'S COMMITMENT TO CHANGE AND ANTI-RACISM

A lot of minority communities throughout the history of Ontario and Canada have faced racism and our government won't stand for it. – Premier Doug Ford, June 3, 2020

At the same time that the CFC is responding to the challenges of COVID-19, we are taking a leadership role in responding to the challenges of social justice and systemic racism within the organization and the broader screen industry.

Over the next year, we will create and implement an action plan for a better and safer CFC, more empowering and more inclusive of BIPOC and other marginalized creators:

- Expanded anti-racism and anti-oppression training across the entire organization
- Renewed commitment to diversity among our staff, mentors and board
- New initiatives to address the needs of BIPOC creative and entrepreneurial talent
- Dialogue with BIPOC alumni and partners, professional associations and other arts and culture organizations, to identify and build solutions together to incite real change.