

A blue-tinted landscape photograph of Arkansas, showing rolling hills and a forested valley. A large tree is visible on the right side. The text is overlaid on a dark orange horizontal band.

ARKANSAS FILM INDUSTRY REPORT

A white diamond-shaped logo with the text "ARKANSAS" above "INC" inside.

ARKANSAS
INC

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Arkansas Film Production Alliance	2
Training	3
Incentives.....	5
Film Festivals	7
Community Organizations.....	8
Filmography	9
Testimonials.....	10
The Hot Springs Film Festival	11
True Detective.....	12

Forget New York and Los Angeles, Arkansas is the next hub for film productions. While it may seem like an unlikely place, the state is bringing in big-name producers and celebrities to film their movies and TV shows. Arkansas' unique creative economy has been the secret ingredient to film and television success stories like the movie "Mud," with Matthew McConaughey and Reese Witherspoon, and HBO's drama series "True Detective" season three.

Arkansas's uniquely diverse landscape and unspoiled beauty offer more effective and dramatic settings than most other locations. In concert with her natural beauty, Arkansas's statewide, team approach to production provides visionary producers with seamless and efficient single-contact access to production houses, skilled crews, casting agencies and the resources that help filmmakers get from script to wrap party.

Arkansas has plenty of training and education options for those looking to be a part of the film industry. These academic programs churn out industry-ready graduates prepared for a career in digital cinema.

The list of TV and movies made in Arkansas gets longer every year, as does the list of film festivals. From northwest Arkansas all the way down to El Dorado, Arkansas has a large variety of film festivals held throughout the year. With more festivals and productions happening each year, the state has developed a film culture that attracts filmmakers and directors from all around the world to experience everything that Arkansas has to offer the film industry.

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**“THE STATE WAS VERY
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-NIC PIZZOLATTO
CREATOR / EXECUTIVE
PRODUCER,
“TRUE DETECTIVE” (HBO)

ARKANSAS FILM PRODUCTION ALLIANCE

This alliance is a collaboration of private and public economic development organizations united to keep, attract and grow an innovative, competitive and profitable film and digital content production industry in Arkansas.

LOCATIONS

In a place where miles still equal minutes, urban, rural, river valley and timberlands are all within 30 minutes of each other, saving productions valuable time and money.

TALENT

Arkansas has a talented, deepening crew base with potential workforce development incentives for studio and series productions. In addition to a host of industry-leading expatriates who welcome opportunities to return home to work, Arkansas is adjacent to the crew bases of Memphis, Louisiana and Texas.

WORK

From facilitating series and feature productions to creating and enhancing industry-driven crew training to hosting world-renowned film festivals, Arkansas’s film, and digital content production industry is highly collaborative, prolific and innovative.

TRAINING

JOHN BROWN UNIVERSITY

The program has an emphasis on mastering technology in order to further students' artistic expressions. The program prepares students to work with digital as well as conventional photographic, video and motion picture applications. Courses include photography, editing, cinematography, film theory, film production, lighting, script writing and an internship.

Students receive a foundation in traditional illustration techniques, graphic design fundamentals and practical mass media skills. Faculty use their personal filmmaking or professional experience to prepare students for the convergence of technology, art and electronic media. The program is demanding of students' time, energy and talent with the end goal of industry-ready graduates prepared for a career in digital cinema.

SAU TECH

Southern Arkansas University Tech's Film & Video Production program trains students to work with, movie production companies from as far away as Hollywood, California. Students gain hands-on experience at a professional level so they can be ready for the "real world" when they graduate. SAU Tech students have worked on movies such as The Maze, Premonition, and TV shows like American Horror and Duck Dynasty.

UCA

The Film program at the University of Central Arkansas prepares students for the future of filmmaking by combining new technology with the fundamentals of storytelling to produce creative, original stories, with an eye towards emerging technologies that enhance the creation, distribution and exhibition of those works in the global marketplace. The Film program is the only comprehensive film production degree in the state, offering a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science and Master of Fine Arts degrees.

UALR

The School of Mass Communication (SMC) at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock combines the strengths of courses in radio, television, film, new media, and journalism to provide students with exposure to a broad spectrum of media studies needed in today's information world. A Bachelor of Arts degree in mass communication with an emphasis in media production and design provides students with the practical and theoretical knowledge needed to become effective professionals in the areas of film or television production.

INCENTIVES

REBATE INCENTIVES:

The Arkansas Digital Product Motion Picture Rebate is 20% on goods and services, with an additional 10% (30% labor rebate) for Arkansas crew base. This is a rebate, not a tax credit.

While we have competitive rebates, there are many ancillary benefits to shooting in Arkansas: fee free filming, no fee for permits, most locations can be negotiated without paying a location fee, hotel discounts, craft services discounts, and an experienced union and non-union crew base. We try to make your filming experience in Arkansas as trouble-free and as inexpensive as possible.

REQUIREMENTS

Prior to beginning preproduction activities in Arkansas, register with the film office and submit an application along with an estimate of expenditures; meet the minimum spending requirement of at least \$50,000 within a six-month period in connection with a postproduction project, or \$200,000 within a six-month period in connection with the production of one feature project; and apply for a production rebate certificate no later than 180 days after the last production expenses are incurred.

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QUALIFIED SPEND

Qualified spend includes costs incurred in Arkansas in the development, preproduction, production or postproduction of a qualified production; the first \$500,000 of wages or salaries paid to each resident and nonresident that are subject to Arkansas income taxes; pension, health and welfare contributions; and, stipends and living allowances. Payments for production and postproduction expenses are recommended (but not required) to be made from the checking account of an Arkansas institution. Cash payments to vendors may not exceed 40% of the total verifiable costs.

SUMMARY

This program is administered on a first-come, first served basis. An eligible production company may earn a 20% rebate on all qualified production expenditures in Arkansas. Salaries and wages paid to resident and nonresident above-the-line employees, as well as resident and nonresident below-the-line employees, will qualify for the 20% rebate and, an additional 10% may be earned on the payroll of below-the-line employees who are full-time Arkansas residents for a total rebate of 30% on such wages. Below-the-line does not include directors and producers but for purposes of the additional 10%, resident actors and writers are defined as below-the-line. The incentive program is scheduled to sunset on June 30, 2019.

**“ARKANSAS HAS
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FILM FESTIVALS

Film festivals give filmmakers across the world an opportunity to showcase their work, collaborate with their peers and showcase the value of film, both creatively and economically. Arkansas has become an unlikely hot spot for film festivals. Hot Springs and Little Rock each host four film festivals and there are festivals in Batesville, Bentonville, Conway, El Dorado, Fayetteville and Springdale.

Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival is the oldest in the state with the inaugural festival being held in 1992. It is also the oldest documentary film festival in North America and is an Oscar Qualifying film festival for Documentary Short Subject. At nine days it is also the longest. The newest is our own, the Made in Arkansas Film Festival which will take place in May 2019. Most of the film festivals accept submissions from local and/or international films. Below is a list of the various film festivals held in the state of Arkansas every year.

- 48 Hours Film Project - Little Rock
- AETN Student Selects
- Bentonville Film Festival
- El Dorado Film Festival
- Eureka Springs Film Festival
- Fayetteville Film Festival
- Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival
- Ozark Foothills FilmFest
- Arkansas Cinema Society: Filmland

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

ARKANSAS CINEMA SOCIETY

The Arkansas Cinema Society's (ACS) mission is to build a film community in Arkansas where film lovers can watch films, share ideas, connect with each other, and nurture the new and existing film talent within our state through increased exposure to filmmakers and their art.

The ACS believes that filmmakers who are provided with an arena to exhibit their talents, and film enthusiasts that are provided with a healthy diet of quality programming, can inspire more Arkansans to make and watch more films. By supporting filmmakers, festivals, theaters and young people interested in filmmaking throughout the state, they hope to create statewide network, pool Arkansas's resources and be an umbrella organization that feeds all things film.

NORTHWEST ARKANSAS FILM & ENTERTAINMENT COMMISSION

The Northwest Arkansas Film & Entertainment Commission (FILMNA) was founded by the major Northwest Arkansas cities through their advertising and promotion commissions. FILMNA is a collaboration with the State of Arkansas Film Commission Office and the Arkansas Production Alliance. The Board includes representatives from each city along with representatives from the academic, film, music, arts and entertainment industry sectors.

FILMOGRAPHY:

From cult classics, to homegrown Oscar winners, to the most famous motion picture ever made, Arkansas is rich in cinematic history.

Most popular:

- Uncle Tom's Cabin (1926)
- Hallelujah (1929)
- Gone with the Wind (1939)
- A Face in the Crowd (1956)
- Stark Fear (1962)
- It's Alive (1969)
- Bloody Mama (1970)
- Two-Lane Blacktop (1971)
- The Sporting Club (1971)
- Boxcar Bertha (1972)
- The Legend of Boggy Creek (1973)
- White Lightning (1973)
- Encounter with the Unknown (1973)
- Bootleggers (1974)
- The Great Lester Boggs (1975)
- So Sad About Gloria (1975)
- Fighting Mad (1976)
- The Town that Dreaded Sundown (1977)
- The Shadow of Chikara (1978)
- September 30, 1955 (1978)
- The Day It Came to Earth (1979)
- Crisis at Central High (1981)
- The Blue and the Gray (1982)
- A Soldier's Story (1983)
- North and South (1985)
- The Barbaric Beast of Boggy Creek, Part 2 (1985)
- Under Siege (1986)
- Designing Women (1986 – 1993)
- Three for the Road (1987)
- Stay Tuned for Murder (1987)
- End of the Line (1987)
- Pass the Ammo (1988)
- Biloxi Blues (1988)
- Too Scared to Laugh (1989)
- Rosalie Goes Shopping (1989)
- Heart of Dixie (1989)
- Stone Cold (1991)
- Evening Shade (1990 – 1994)
- One False Move (1992)
- The War Room (1993)
- The Firm (1993)
- Frank & Jesse (1995)
- Sling Blade (1996)
- Shelter (1998)
- The White River Kid (1999)
- Daddy and Them (2001)
- A Painted House (2003)
- Chrystal (2004)
- Walk the Line (2005)
- Elizabethtown (2005)
- Come Early Morning (2006)
- Towncraft (2007)
- War Eagle Arkansas (2007)
- Sugar Creek (2007)
- Shotgun Stories (2007)
- Little Rock Central High: 50 Years Later (2007)
- The River Within (2009)
- Bruno (2009)
- Tuckerman (2012)
- The Last Ride (2012)
- Then Night Comes (2012)
- 45RPM (2013)
- Mud (2013)
- Valley Inn (2014)
- All the Birds Have Flown South (2016)
- God's Not Dead 2 (2016)
- Greater (2016)
- Antiquities (2017)
- Then There Was Joe (2018)
- F.R.E.D.I. (2018)
- God's Not Dead: A Light in Darkness (2018)
- Sweet Inspirations (2019)
- True Detective: Season 3 (2019)
- Max Winslow and the House of Secrets (2019)

TESTIMONIALS

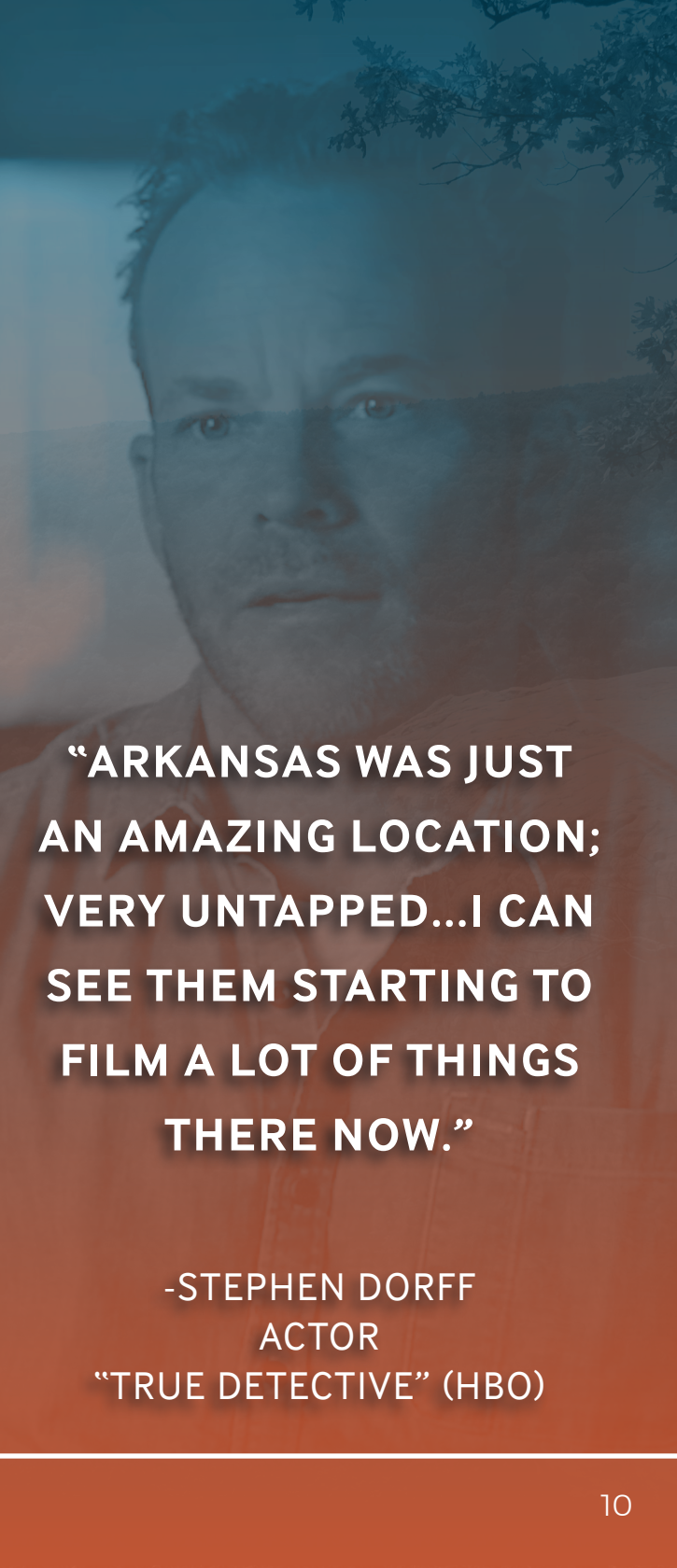
MUD

Having set the story in a small Southern town, Nichols, as an Arkansas native, had no doubt that he wanted to film Mud on location there also. "It was very important to us to bring this film to Arkansas," he said. "The people and the river and houseboats in the region are particular to the Mud story. The Arkansas Film Commission and The Agency Inc. opened doors for us to make this happen. The people and chamber of commerce leaders and police in the places where we filmed really came out to help the film, and we greatly benefited from their support. I feel very proud to have made this film in Arkansas."

"Arkansas is amazing. We fought really hard to get this filmed in Arkansas. It just felt like a legendary place that I wanted to see a present day story told."

- Jeff Nichols, Director of Mud

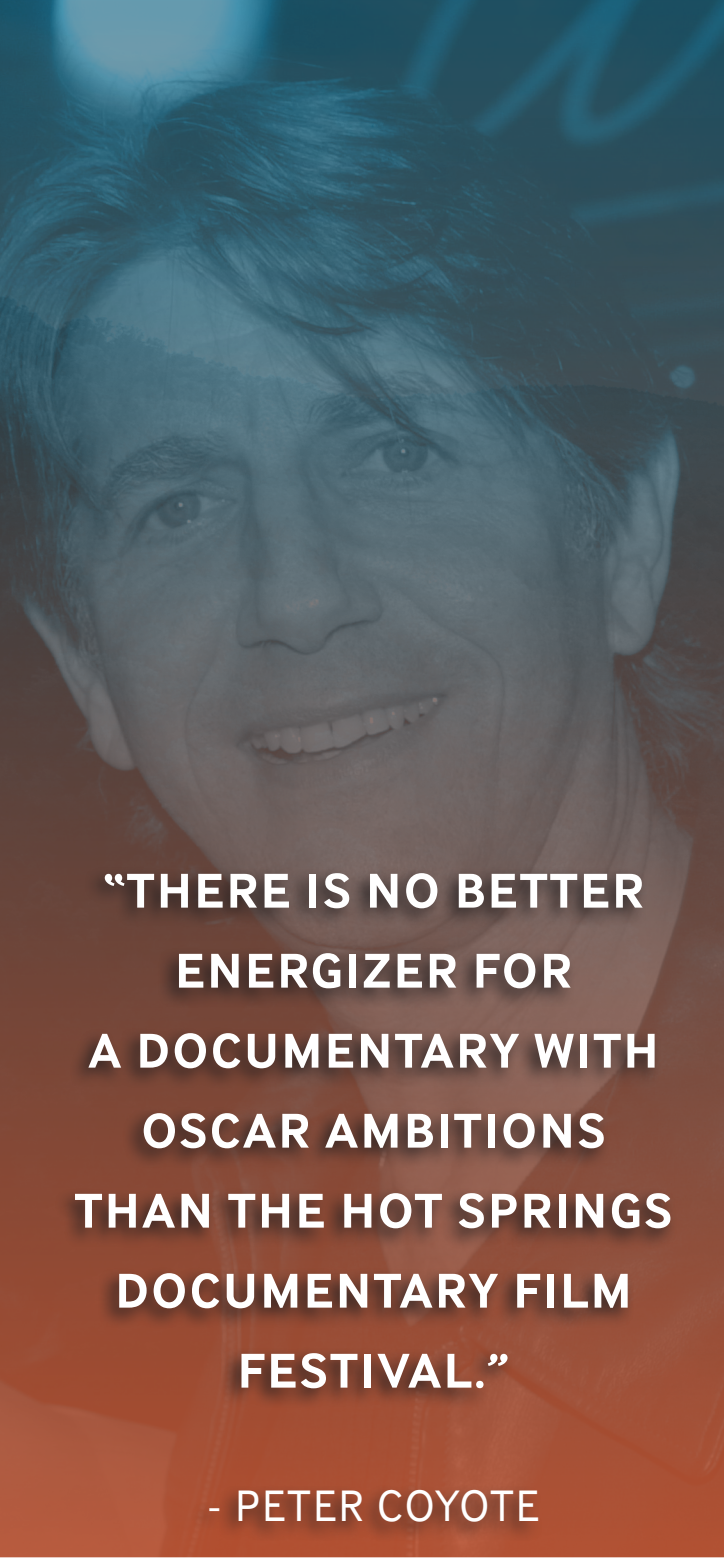
The feeling, it turned out, was mutual. Arkansas was also elated to have Mud filming in its backyard. "The enthusiasm here for this film resembled an old-fashioned barn-raising. Everyone wanted to be a part of it, to support it," said assistant locations manager and Little Rock native David Fowlkes. Many Arkansans even generously offered the use of their cars, trucks, and homes as settings and props for Mud.



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-STEPHEN DORFF
ACTOR

"TRUE DETECTIVE" (HBO)



**“THERE IS NO BETTER
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- PETER COYOTE

THE HOT SPRINGS FILM FESTIVAL

“One of the genre’s most important venues.”

- James Earl Jones, actor

“There is no better energizer for a documentary with Oscar ambitions than the Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival. Coming closer to nomination time than most festivals, it is the trampoline to bounce contenders up to the starting line.”

- Peter Coyote, actor and narrator

“Without exaggeration I was literally reborn at the Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival. As a co-founder of SXSW and a producer who has had films premiere at Sundance, Toronto International Film Festival and SXSW, this might seem sheer hyperbole. But the truth is I spent the previous two years battling ill health, and, after that experience, I was a bit bitter and encased in a shell. The films and people at Hot Springs reminded me why I fell so in love with film in the first place. It was intimate yet professional, passionate but still reasoned. The attendees were great, the special guests exciting and accessible, and the films excellently programmed. It is a remarkable Festival and a great event.”

- Louis Black, Editor of the Austin Chronicle & Co-Founder of SXSW

TRUE DETECTIVE

“No matter where you are in Arkansas, if you go 30 minutes outside of what we might call an urban center, you change locations and you can change locations to fit pretty much any script,” explained Arkansas Film Commissioner Christopher Crane. “Sans a beach and an ocean, we’ve got a little bit of everything. It’s always going to make sense in a topographical standpoint. I love Arkansas, and I think she’s a beautiful state.”

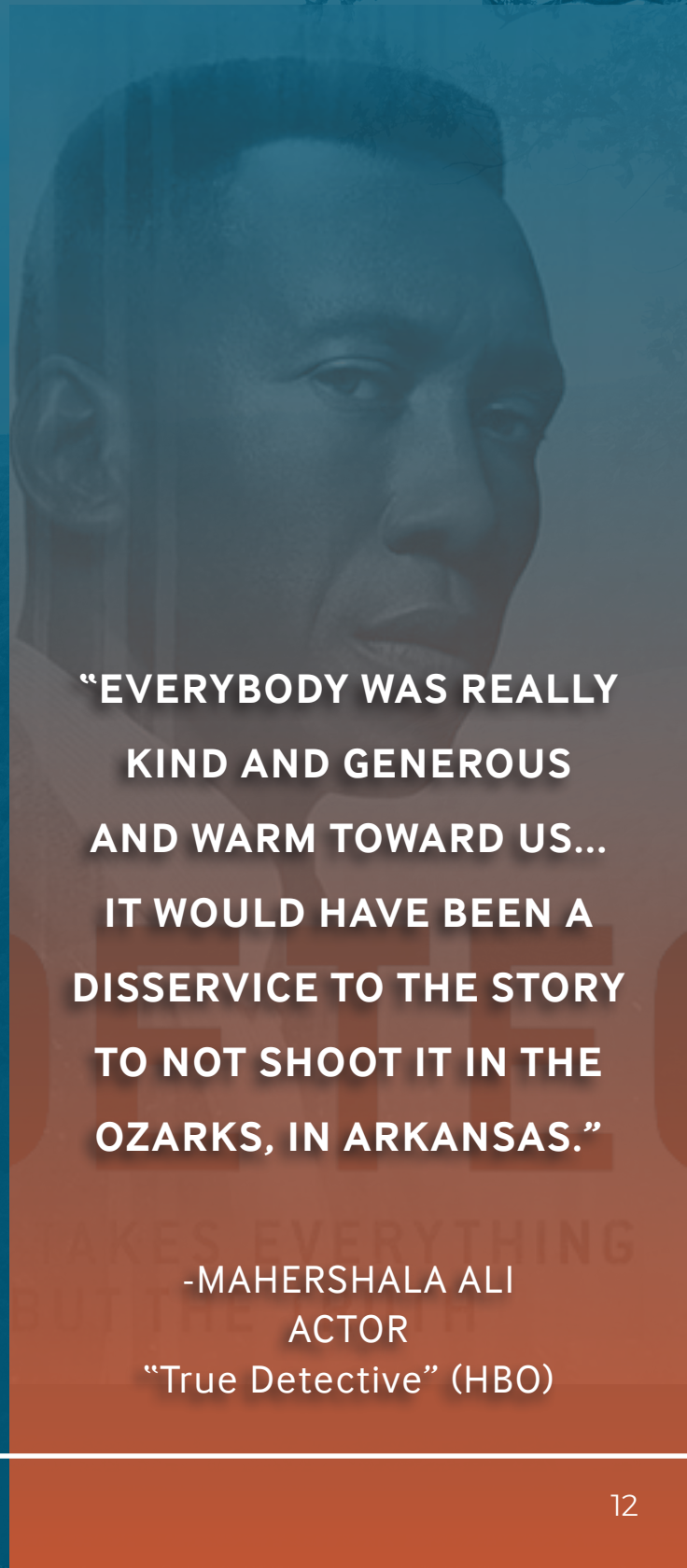
Oscar-winner Mahershala Ali spent nearly eight months in the northwest corner of the state last year, filming the third season of “True Detective” for HBO. He has this to say:

“I remember getting out of my car after being dropped off from the airport, and I was walking to go get some food. This woman was walking her dog, a few houses down from mine, a good distance from me, and she yells out to me ... “Welcome to Fayetteville. We’re glad you’re here.””

Everybody in Arkansas wants film to succeed here. And, at the top of the list, is Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson.

Hutchinson is known the world over for having an “open door policy” when it comes to economic development, and the state’s film industry is included.

“He was willing to sit down immediately with the producers and with the HBO executives, and just talk to them in a very personal way about how much we wanted them here in the state and what that meant as far as what we could offer them,” Crane said. “I’m not talking about monetarily or incentives, I’m just talking about customer service. And I think that that went a long way.”



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-MAHERSHALA ALI
ACTOR

“True Detective” (HBO)