

**Sample of a Successful Development Application**

This document contains the narrative and treatment of a previously funded grant application. Every successful application is different, and this application many have been prepared to meet a slightly different set of guidelines. Each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations, as well as the requirements in the current notice of funding opportunity (NOFO). Prospective applicants should consult the current Media Projects NOFOs at [http://www.neh.gov/grants/public/media-](http://www.neh.gov/grants/public/media-projects-development-grants) [projects-development-grants](http://www.neh.gov/grants/public/media-projects-development-grants) for instructions. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Division of Public Programs staff well before a grant deadline.

The attached application is incomplete. Portions have been deleted in this document to protect the privacy interests of an individual, and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information, and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

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Project Title: *A History of Rural Appalachian Culture*

Institution: Southern Documentary Fund

Project Director: Ashley Blair York

Grant Program: Media Projects: Development

1. **Nature of the request:**

Sally Rubin and Ashley York are requesting a Development Grant from the National Endowment for Humanities to continue development of a feature-length documentary film tentatively entitled *The Hollywood Hillbilly*. The film examines media representations of the Appalachian region, looking at the creation of the term and concept of “hillbilly” as constructed over the past century. We are seeking funding in order to: collaborate with scholars to refine the project’s humanities content, undertake archival research of a wide range of third party materials, conduct preliminary research for the project, travel to several states in Appalachia to shoot material for a project funding reel and conduct interviews and meetings with potential subjects and advisers, and edit the reel. These activities will culminate in the creation of a full script and outreach and public engagement plan for a feature-length documentary film.

On a broader level, our project’s goals are to use the power of media to: document, disseminate, and revitalize contemporary representations of Appalachia and Appalachian people; challenge stereotypes by telling stories that commercial media does not tell; involve Appalachian people in the media creation process so that Appalachian voices and visions are heard; support communities’ efforts to engage in discourse about public perceptions; celebrate cultural diversity as a positive social value; and participate in regional, national, and global dialogue regarding these topics.

Additionally, we are designing a companion web-based storytelling project entitled *Her Appalachia*, which focuses on the experiences of women and girls from the region.

1. **Humanities content:**

Anchored in a historical framework, *The Hollywood Hillbilly* seeks to engage audiences through an exploration of humanities ideas, themes, and scholarship. Storytelling elements include character-based portraits, interviews, animation, and archival materials compiled from literary texts, films, television shows, and comic strips.

Professors in the fields of Appalachian Studies, Film Studies, American Studies, American History, and Media Literacy have long examined the social and cultural implications of media representations of Appalachia. *The Hollywood Hillbilly* relies on existing research from the field, utilizing the topic’s most relevant contemporary scholars as the project’s advisers and key interview subjects to expand on and explore this already vibrant discourse. The central thesis of the film is made up of the following core humanities themes.

\* *Appalachia as a cultural construct*

Project adviser and Berea College Vice President Chad Berry refers to Appalachia as “a construction, a social and cultural invention.” Berry and other scholars define the concept of Appalachia as an economic frontier located in places where there are abundant natural resources to exploit, and a population of rural working poor who lie within. “I’ve been to fifty countries around the world and every one of them has its own Appalachia,” says Berry. “In Cuba it’s Pinar Del Rio. In Singapore it’s the northern section of the country, near Malaysia. In

France, it’s Brittany. In England, I always say humorously it’s Scotland, Ireland, and Wales.” Berry and other scholars elucidate and expand upon this theme in the film.

* *Appalachia as a microcosm of America*

Appalachian writer Silas House characterizes Appalachia as a microcosm of America. “We have always been America as seen underneath a microscope,” he says. “The main reason for the country’s disgust with this region is because we are a mirror being held up to the face of the United States. We reveal all of its homophobia and racism and misogyny, and everything else that is bad about us as a nation, just as we reveal what is so good about us as a country—the tradition, the family, our rich past and our history.” House and others state that Appalachia has functioned as scapegoat in our country’s ongoing struggle between self-love and self-hatred, our search to define itself as a nation. House writes: “I put forth that Appalachia is no better or worse than the rest of the country. We simply are this country.” *The Hollywood Hillbilly* articulates and examines how Appalachia functions as a mirror for America, reflecting its self- image, both positive and negative, and its deepest fears.

* *Consequences of othering*

Stereotyping does vicious cultural work. The depiction of hillbillies as rural, lazy, deplorable and violent is an “othering” of the Appalachian region and its people, similar to the ways in which women and minority groups are “othered.” “Othering means any action by which an individual or group becomes mentally classified in somebody’s mind as `not one of us.’ We tend not to recognize it as an ‘othering’ process when it’s being applied to rural, white, working class people, for example when they are referred to as hillbillies, crackers, rednecks, and so on,” notes Barbara Ellen Smith, a cultural theorist and Women’s Studies professor. “There’s a pervasiveness and acceptability in so many parts of the country to tell nasty jokes about hillbillies and other white working class people. We are the only people it’s permissible to speak of in such negative, nasty, degraded terms. Every other group has managed to insist on it’s own respectful treatment so the things that people will say about blacks or Jews or whomever, they don’t say anymore, but they can still say it about hillbillies.” Jill Soloway, in turn, creator of the current hit show “Transparent,” about a transgender parent, has articulated the shame that those of us who are members of groups other than the dominant heterosexual, white male culture can feel as we experience the lack of our presence as primary subjects in the media.

*The Hollywood Hillbilly* explores concepts of cultural stereotyping and “othering,” adding a dimension to the question of how and why the rural “hillbilly” has come to exist, and drawing parallels between the Appalachian experience and those of other marginalized groups.

* *Identity politics, negative stereotyping, and romanticizing Appalachia*

Taking a journalistic and critical approach to current discourse around identity politics, *The Hollywood Hillbilly* explores the importance of challenging both negative stereotypes of Appalachia while at the same time questioning overly romanticized views of Appalachia.

Professor Emily Satterwhite argues: “Appalachian identity politics have unintentional and objectionable consequences when they feed into white American nationalism, Southern neo- Confederate nationalism, widespread and intensifying xenophobia, and anti-immigration hysteria. At the same time, the idealized *Daniel Boone* archetype is equally problematic.” Steve Fisher, an Appalachian-born writer and professor, discusses deep and complex problems surrounding the notion of Appalachian identity. Fisher says that Appalachian-American people

are a distinct ethnic group and that there is no consensus as to what we mean when we use the term “Appalachian.” “We must challenge the idea that there is a singular legitimate experience by recognizing all the varied life experiences in the Appalachian region. Whether we are romanticizing a culture or vilifying it, we are simplifying that place and its people.” This discussion exists at the very core of *The Hollywood Hillbilly*, and motivates much of the film’s story and commentary*.*

*\*Media representation*

Most of us have learned about Appalachia largely through the media. “We see what we’ve been taught to look for,” comments Chad Berry. “We think the region has always been poor when, in fact, Appalachia was once a place for economic opportunity.” Silas House works with college students who he says bear the burden of the impact of decades of media representation of the region. “I know so many people who have lost their sense of self because they saw the region they were from portrayed by Hollywood in such a negative way that they wanted to disassociate from that,” he says. “You get to a certain age and you get pummeled by these awful representations in the media, and you start to believe them. You start to feel like a throwaway person. You start to feel like you’re from a part of the country that has done great damage to the rest of the country. It’s something that every Appalachian has to do at some point: ask themselves if they believe those portrayals or if they’re going to defy those portrayals.” Activist and writer bell hooks challenges the entertainment industry to resist dehumanizing public representations of poverty when representing Appalachian people and their life experiences: "When Hollywood offers negative representations of poor mountain folk, all the negative assumptions are intensified and the projections exaggerated.” *The Hollywood Hillbilly* delves deeply into the theme of media representation, uncovering the politics of representation and ultimately the impact media representations have on shaping the image of Appalachia, the people who live there, and those from other disadvantaged groups whose archetypes and stereotypes have been created by the media. Further, with the inclusion of photographers such as Stacy Kranitz and Roger May, both working in the Appalachian region now and both known on a national scale, the film explores the question of an artist’s role and responsibility in telling the story of a region. Who may tell the stories of a region? What do they owe the community?

Is it the artist or the journalist’s role to tell a “fair and balanced” story, or are their other factors included in the definition of a successful final product?

* *Meritocracy and the American Dream*

Themes of capitalism and the pursuit of the American Dream are central to *The Hollywood Hillbilly.* American Studies Professor Meredith McCarroll argues: “One of the most fundamental elements of American culture is the belief in the American Dream—the idea that if you work hard, you can make it, you indeed can pull yourselves up from your bootstraps. For those who have apparently not achieved that, there is no available explanation except that it’s their own fault,” she says. “Stereotypes get mapped onto white working class or poorer people through language that very much tends to blame people’s impoverished or dispossessed circumstances on their own failures and continues to obscure the possibility that there are more systemic forces at work here.” The film examines the concept of meritocracy, raising questions about the forces at play in such a system and the effects on America’s rural working class.

* *Poverty is in the eye of the beholder*

“Americans equate Appalachia with poverty, and Americans don’t want to see themselves in that way. Because they want to be thought of as a rich nation, they are very ashamed of this place that has come to represent poverty, even though poverty exists all over the country, and exists as much in urban areas as it does in rural, if not more,” says Silas House. *The Hollywood Hillbilly* covers Lyndon Johnson’s War on Poverty initiative and tour that occurred in the sixties, and included areas of the country where Co-Director Ashley York’s family had been living for five generations. These initiatives became a national discussion that resulted in eastern Kentucky becoming the face of Appalachian poverty. York’s aunt, Regina York, recalls the impact that the press and media associated with the War on Poverty tour had on the region: "We didn't know we were poor until the War on Poverty workers turned up to inform us of that fact," she said. "I remember a time when some college-aged missionaries came to our home and actually wanted to give us soap! Your grandmother ordered us not to speak to them; she gave brief answers to their prying questions about our home and sent them on their way. And no, she didn't take the soap! Like many mountain people I have mixed feelings about these programs." The film features interviews with residents like Regina York about their memories and experiences of this transformative period of time in the Appalachian region.

* *Accents and dialect*

Many people, not just southerners and not just Americans, experience ridicule and shame for having a particular accent or speaking in a certain dialect. The film examines this experience, focusing on what it means to have a “country” or a “mountain” accent. “I constantly felt like an unwanted outsider,” bell hooks writes of leaving her Kentucky mountain home to attend Stanford University. “I became more consciously Kentuckian than I was when I lived at home. In a short period of time I learned to change my way of speaking, to keep the sound and cadences of Kentucky secret. Not speaking in the tongue of my ancestors was a way to silence ridicule about Kentucky.” For the most part, the film utilizes first-hand testimonials to open up the nuance and complexities behind this humanities theme.

* *Whiteness and race*

Many scholars argue that at the historical root of all American prejudice lies the institution of slavery. bell hooks expands on this idea: “The cultural politics of white supremacy separates poor southern Black folk from their white counterparts with whom they share a common class reality.” Professor Barbara Ellen Smith examines the interconnectedness of race and class, arguing that “the making of Appalachia has been simultaneous with the creation of whiteness. Stereotypes of ‘crackers’ and `rednecks’,” she says, “condemn the white working-class through a racial logic that attributes their presumed class disadvantages to inherent deficiencies for which they may be blamed. This is precisely the dynamic at work in the ‘racialist’ stereotyping of hillbillies.” Scholars in *The Hollywood Hillbilly* take on difficult, layered ideas of whiteness and race, challenging viewers to think about our own preconceived notions of this multi-faceted and, to some, almost taboo issue.

1. **Creative approach:**

Appalachia is as old as it is complex. Made up of Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia, North Carolina, and Virginia, as well as parts of Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Georgia, the region and its people are home to a mountain range and a history that make it an undeniably special — and

even quintessentially — “American” place. Due to a century-and-a-half of reliance on coal as its core industry, one of its defining characteristics has been a “boom and bust” economy that has made Appalachia a region of poverty and a frequent focus of national attention. From these mountains and circumstances has emerged a complicated, often problematic, and extraordinarily enduring American archetype: the hillbilly.

*The Hollywood Hillbilly* examines representations of Appalachia and Appalachian American people in literature, radio, film, and television as constructed over the past century. The documentary uncovers the origins of the American hillbilly archetype, explores the impact of these representations in Appalachia and beyond, reveals how this shape-shifting icon reflects the evolution of America’s aspirational self-image over the decades, and asks critical questions about our roles as journalists and storytellers in representing Appalachian communities and citizens. This film offers an urgent exploration of how we see and think about a poor, white, rural America that extends far beyond the upper mountain South, and introduces a new view of contemporary Appalachia.

*The Hollywood Hillbilly* interweaves several narrative threads to provide an overall through-line for the film: 1) character-based portraits and scenes of iconic players represented in media, including Billy Redden, the boy from *Deliverance* who played “Dueling Banjos”; Stacy Kranitz and Roger May, photographers working in the region; Silas House, a queer Appalachian writer; bell hooks, a Kentucky native, feminist, and activist; and Samantha Cole, a young Appalachian woman. The film also presents portraits of Hollywood and media producers, including Jenji Kohan of “Orange is the New Black,”; Christopher Dickey, the son of James Dickey who wrote *Deliverance*; and the producers of the “redneck reality” MTV show “Buckwild”; 2) the evolution of film and television representations of the hillbilly archetype from the early 20th century up until today, as well as how America has changed to see itself in relation to Appalachia and the

white, rural, working poor; and 3) the ongoing impact of these media representations on Appalachian people, the relevance of these representations today, and contemporary context, reflection, and analysis of the issues raised in each chapter.

The film’s character-arcs will be solid and compelling. These include: Billy Redden unraveling the meaning of the experience of being in *Deliverance*, for himself and for the town — his anger dissipates by the end of the film when he receives an apology from the son of the book’s late author; Silas House grieving his aunt’s recent death, which has given rise to his current grievances and resulting actions around reclaiming Appalachian media representations; Stacy Kranitz and Roger May, unfurling their current, opposing projects on a national scale; and Samantha Cole beginning the film with damaged self confidence due to negative media portrayals of her people, and ending the film with a newfound sense of confidence and empowerment.

Much like the films *Food, Inc., Race is the Place,* and *Reel Injun, The Hollywood Hillbilly* embraces an essay/survey film format to tell this tragic and poignant story. We want to create a lyrical regional portrait with a tone that is more conversational than preachy, and that takes full advantage of the richness and humor of its archival clips. Interviews will be filmed in a variety of dynamic locations that immerse us in Appalachia as well as take us beyond Appalachia to evoke the tone of America’s zeitgeist. Some of our interviews will take place in locations such

as abandoned coal mines and tobacco barns while others will be on-the-fly action interviews at parties, main streets in Anytown U.S.A., Hollywood studios and backlots, Tallulah Gorge (where *Deliverance* was filmed), an abandoned hillbilly-themed amusement park, an annual music festival called Hillbilly Woodstock, a drive-in movie theater, and — of course — the hills of Kentucky, West Virginia, and the Appalachian Mountains. Rooted in history and presented from an “insider” — rather than an “outsider” — viewpoint, the film explores several key themes: the role of media representation in identity formation and media’s power to shape public and individual opinion; regional identity politics, including southern accents and shame; the interconnectedness of race and class; whiteness and race; othering and cultural/socio- economic class stereotyping; and media literacy. We are creating two versions of the film: one 85-minute version for festival and theatrical release, and one PBS-hour for public television broadcast. Our primary camera is the Canon C300, which allows for high dynamic range photography, creating tonally rich images that create a visual distinction between the existing archival clips (and the stereotypes and archetypes therein) and the contemporary faces and images offered in the film, painting a new portrait of Appalachia.

*The Hollywood Hillbilly* seeks to build on the long history of non-fiction work that addresses significant social challenges of our time, focusing in on the Appalachian region to unravel the complex and varied representations of the region, as well as the politics of representation that lie in the background. We are inspired by the work of Appalachian filmmakers Anne Lewis, who directed *Fast Food Women* (1991); and Barbara Kopple, who won an Academy-Award for her documentary, *Harlan County, USA* (1976). We are also mindful of Herb Smith’s 1984 documentary History of Appalachia: Strangers and Kin — a history of the hillbilly image, Elizabeth Barrett’s *Stranger With a Camera* (2000), *and The True Meaning of Pictures: Shelby Lee Adams' Appalachia* (2002).

Featuring Dolly Parton, bell hooks, Ashley and Naomi Judd, and Dwight Yoakam, *The Hollywood Hillbilly* comes at a crucial moment, seeking to build on a vibrant discourse that increases awareness and sensitivity around the use of two-dimensional, humorous depictions of Appalachian and other rural people on a broad, national level. It reminds viewers of the power of media to create public perception and introduces audiences to a more complex, authentic Appalachia that is quite conscious of how it has been portrayed and the impacts of those portrayals. Further, *The Hollywood Hillbilly* deconstructs mainstream representations and asks crucial questions: What is our responsibility as storytellers to the people and communities we portray? Where did the hillbilly archetype come from and why has it endured on-screen for more than one hundred years? How does it relate to the exploitation of the land and people who live there? How do Appalachian and rural people view themselves as a result, and what is the impact on the rest of America’s perception? And, how does America’s treatment of the rural working poor mirror middle and upper class fears about who we are, and who we may become?

1. **Audience and distribution:**

*The Hollywood Hillbilly* is not a niche, Appalachian, or rural story; it is an American story. This film examines, questions and complicates perceptions of Appalachia in American public discourse, increasing awareness and sensitivity around the use of two-dimensional language and humor to depict the rural working poor, in mountain communities and beyond. Additionally,

we intend to expand viewers’ notions of the concept of “othering,” so that audiences think critically about societal behavior in separating, disconnecting, and ultimately critiquing other, less familiar social groups. Our film will challenge mass media representations of poverty and the working poor, which Appalachian author bell hooks argues “convey to the public the notion that poor people are in dire straits because of the bad choices they have made. [Mass media] pushes images that suggest that the poor suffer because of innate weaknesses of character.” In this way the project takes on social goals that extend beyond the re-conception of Appalachians, becoming an impetus for change on a broader, national scale.

We expect audiences to arrive at *The Hollywood Hillbilly* for a number of reasons, and to have a variety of reactions to and takeaways from the film: Appalachian communities with whom the project may resonate who are hungry for new representations of themselves may both learn from and be affirmed by the film; viewers not from Appalachia, or “outsiders,” may be surprised and engaged as they uncover the origins of their perceptions of the region and consider their impact; other communities around the country that consist of the white, rural, working poor may connect with the issues in the film and perhaps identify with the story; and communities also underrepresented and marginalized in today’s popular media, specifically women and racial, religious, and sexual minorities might see themselves in the film and be validated by its content.

Our goal is to provide material of interest to mainstream audiences as well as to those who don’t often see their own experiences mirrored in commercial and independent programming, asking viewers to think critically about their own perceptions of Appalachian people, or about themselves, if they are from the region. While issues of media representation and the working poor have been in the national dialogue for a long time, *The Hollywood Hillbilly* will break new ground by targeting national audiences with a story specifically focused on media portraits of Appalachia, enriching this national audience by offering a point of view seldom heard and allowing audiences to connect with the Appalachian region in a new way. In many ways, the Appalachian region and its people are more misrepresented than underrepresented, as *The Hollywood Hillbilly* points out in its central argument — a story that has not yet been told on a broad, national scale. This film works to correct that, offering a new look at old stereotypes; a critique rather than more of the same.

Our aim is national PBS broadcast, most likely on the ITVS series Independent Lens, which aired Co-Director Sally Rubin’s film *Deep Down*. Both the series and the film were nominated for an Emmy Award. As we proceed with production, we will also approach other PBS strands such as American Experience, as well as non-PBS broadcast outlets, including A&E Indie Films, CNN Films, and Netflix, with whom we have existing relationships.

A robust social media campaign will distribute the project onto Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Tumblr to prompt lively dialogue about the issues and themes in these stories and to galvanize and empower our core audience into creative thinking around root causes and solutions. We will submit *The Hollywood Hillbilly* to a broad range of film festivals, hoping to capitalize on our existing track record on the festival circuit; our films have screened at Sundance, Hot Docs, the Santa Barbara Film Festival, Seattle International, Big Sky, and Outfest, among others.

We plan to participate in the South Arts’ Southern Circuit Tour, which has reached audiences with more than 200 films and engaged filmmakers in discussions in more than 50 communities across the Southern United States. We will document our tour using a range of social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Tumblr to extend the discussion and feedback loop about representations of Appalachians in the media. Efforts to engage urban audiences include a multimedia exhibit at UCLA’s Hammer Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, the Smithsonian, and the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University.

We have existing partnerships with both regional and national organizations. In the Appalachian region we are partnering with the media organization Appalshop and several filmmakers and programs within such as the Appalachian Media Institute, as well as with the social justice organization The Kentuckians for the Commonwealth and Kentucky Foundation for Women. Outside of the region we are partnering with the Institute for Multimedia Literacy at the University of Southern California. Alongside USC, we plan to design curriculum that allows audience members, including middle, high school, and college students to remix popular culture programming that features Appalachia and Appalachian American people. This material ranges anywhere from the 1972 film, *Deliverance*, to episodes of popular television shows such as “The Munsters,” “The Flintstones,” and “The Beverly Hillbillies.” Participants will re- appropriate found footage and create digital arguments that reclaim and reimagine commercial media’s stereotypical portraits of Appalachian American people.

1. **Rights and permissions:**

We will collect a wide range of original material, ranging from interviews to audio recordings to still photographs, which will be owned by the production. We are also collecting a vast assortment of popular media assets, ranging from film and television clips to newspaper clippings and articles, and will consult with Michael C. Donaldson, former president of the International Documentary Association and entertainment attorney who has been fighting for independent filmmakers for more than 30 years. He is the founding partner of Donaldson & Callif, a California law firm specializing in entertainment and copyright law, with particular emphasis on the representation of independent film producers. We will rely on Donaldson to help us navigate copyright laws and to build a Fair Use claim. We will also refer to the Documentary Filmmakers’ Statement of Best Practices in Fair Use as well as American University’s Center for Social Media and Stanford University’s Copyright and Fair Use Center for guidance.

1. **Humanities advisers:**

* Chad Berry came to the office of the Academic Vice President and Dean of the Faculty at Berea College after serving five years as Director of the Loyal Jones Appalachian Center. Prior to coming to Berea in 2006, he was a member of the faculty at Maryville College. He has authored, edited, or co-edited four books. He is the author of *Southern Migrants, Northern Exiles*, published by the University of Illinois Press, which examines the migration of millions of white southerners to the Midwest during the twentieth century. The book was inspired by his grandparents, who reluctantly left Tennessee in the 1940s, going first to Akron, Ohio, and ultimately settling in Mishawaka, Indiana, where they found jobs and the economic opportunity that had eluded them in the South. Chad is deeply connected to Appalachia and offers a critical perspective about how the region is as much a state of mind as it is a social construct.
* Anna Creadick is Associate Professor of English at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva, NY, where she teaches courses in twentieth-century American literature and culture, and contributes to the American Studies and Women's Studies programs. Author of the monograph "Perfectly Average: The Pursuit of Normality in Postwar America" (UMass Press, 2010), she has published essays on popular fiction, film, and other subjects in journals such as "Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature," "The Southern Literary Journal," and "Appalachian Journal." Her current research project investigates the relationship between reading and middle-class identity at mid-century. Creadick grew up in Boone, North Carolina, before drifting north for graduate school at Hobart and William Smith, a small liberal arts college in western New York. As someone who grew up in Appalachia and moved away, she offers a unique perspective of both an insider and outsider. Creadick is helping us build out scenes and identify subjects who represent the co-option of Appalachian culture and people.
* Dr. Tony Harkins is Associate Professor of History and the Director of the Popular Culture Studies major at Western Kentucky University. He is the author *of Hillbilly: A Cultural History of an American Icon* (Oxford University Press, 2004) and the co-editor of the Media section of the *Encyclopedia of Appalachia* (University of Tennessee Press, 2006). Harkins book, *Hillbilly* is a key text for our research. It’s a pioneering work of cultural history where Harkins illustrates how the image of the hillbilly has consistently served as both a marker of social derision and regional pride. He traces the corresponding changes in representations of the hillbilly from late- nineteenth century America, through the great Depression, the mass migrations of Southern Appalachians in the 1940s and 1950s, the War on Poverty in the mid 1960s, and to the present day. Harkins also argues that images of hillbillies have played a critical role in the construction of whiteness and modernity in twentieth century America. Richly illustrated with dozens of photographs, drawings, and film and television stills, this unique book stands as a testament to the enduring place of the hillbilly in the American imagination.
* Kirk Hazen is a Professor of Linguistics in the Department of English at West Virginia University, where he also directs the West Virginia Dialect Project. His research program focuses on the influence of linguistic and social factors on language variation patterns and has been supported by both the National Science Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities. In addition to 35 articles and book chapters, he has authored *An Introduction to Language* (Wiley 2015) and I*dentity and Ethnicity in the Rural South* (Duke 2000); co-authored *Dialect change and maintenance on the Outer Banks* (1999) with Walt Wolfram and Natalie Schilling-Estes; and co-edited *Research Methods in Sociolinguistics* (Wiley 2014) with Janet Holmes. From the start of his career, he has promoted sociolinguistic goals by presenting dialect awareness programs to numerous communities. Hazen has invited us to document his research with the West Virginia Dialect Project where he and his students have already collected more than 185 interviews across West Virginia. Hazen studies language variation and his contribution to the project will illustrate how language has changed over time. We are working with Hazen to counteract the negative stereotypes that often comes from having a regional southern accent.
* Silas House is an Appalachian born novelist and chair of the Appalachian Studies Department at Berea College. He was born and grew up in Lily, Kentucky. He has degrees from Sue

Bennett College, Eastern Kentucky University, and Spalding University. House was chosen as one of the ten emerging talents in the South by the Millennial Gathering of Writers at Vanderbilt University. House’s first novel*, Clay’s Quilt*, was published in 2001. It appeared briefly on the New York Times Best Seller List and became a success throughout the South. It was a finalist for both the Southeast Booksellers’ Association fiction award and the Appalachian Writers’ Association Book of the Year Award. He followed with *A Parchment of Leaves* (2003), which became a national bestseller and was nominated for several major awards. The book was a finalist for the Southern Book Critics’ Circle Prize and won the Award for Special Achievement from the Fellowship of Southern Writers, the Chaffin Award for Literature, the Kentucky Novel of the Year Award, and many others. House served as a writer-in-residence at Eastern Kentucky University and at Lincoln Memorial University from 2005 to 2010. At LMU he directed the Mountain Heritage Literary Festival. In 2010 House became the NEH Chair in Appalachian Studies at Berea College in Berea, Kentucky. As an Appalachian born author and professor at an Appalachian college, House informs and inspires this project in numerous ways, ultimately helping us paint a complex and nuanced portrait of Appalachia and the people who live there.

* Virginia Kuhn’s is a professor in the School of Cinematic Arts at the University of Southern California. Her work centers on digital rhetoric and the hybrid texts it engenders, those which blur the lines between the factual and the fictive, between word and image, between art and argument. Kuhn directs the Honors in Multimedia Scholarship program, the graduate certificate in Digital Media and Culture and teaches a variety of graduate and undergraduate classes in new media. In 2005 she successfully defended one of the first born-digital dissertations in the United States, titled *Ways of Composing: Visual Literacy in the Digital Age*, which challenged archiving and copyright conventions. Kuhn co-chairs the Media Literacy + Pedagogical Outreach Scholarly Interest Group for the Society for Cinema and Media Studies and serves on the editorial boards of a number of print and digital journals. Kuhn writes frequently about trends in emerging media and new directions in teaching and learning and will help us carefully consider the best technologies for the content. We look to Kuhn to help us design *Her Appalachia,* a compelling and thoughtful digital companion piece that engages audiences, and their larger online social networks in activities that put forward complex and nuanced issues at the forefront of a national discussion that promotes creative thinking around root causes and solutions concerning Appalachia, with a specific focus on women and girls.
* Meredith McCarroll is a professor at Bowdoin College. She is writing a book where she asserts that the role of the Appalachian figure as Other can best be understood in racial terms, wherein Appalachia provides contrast which whitens and purifies the ideal Southerner.

Appalachian figures are variably raced as *unwhite*, a term she uses to denote the phenotypic whiteness of nearly all Appalachian figures yet the use of nonwhite positioning to sustain white normative privilege. Cataloguing character types (Monstrous Mountaineer, Heroic Hillbilly, Feists, Drudges, etc.), she offers close readings of paired films to demonstrate the patterns of portrayals that treat Appalachia as the Other. *Cold Mountain*’s Ruby, for example, is seen through the figure of *Gone with the Wind*’s Mammy; the urban Appalachian mother of *Medium Cool* is linked to the Hispanic American portrayal of *Salt of the Earth*; *Deliverance* is paired with *Last of the Mohicans* to demonstrate a scale of wilderness and masculinity. Together, the readings of Appalachian figures as unwhite and an attention to self-representation of Appalachian, lead to a questioning of racial markers and a close look at the continued function

of stagnant racial dichotomies. She is also writing “On and On: Appalachian Accent and Academic Power,” which relates to her personal relationship to her own southern identity and dialect. McCarroll is helping us locate films and identity the content priorities of the film.

* Anne Lewis lived in Appalachia for decades, making documentary films about social action, human rights, labor, environmental justice, and cultural democracy - films that create opportunity for social change. She has made documentary films since 1970 and was associate director and assistant camerawoman for the Academy Award® winning documentary, *Harlan County USA* (1976). Her work includes *Morristown: in the air and sun*, a working class response to globalization; *Shelter*, institutional response to domestic violence through the stories of four survivors; *To Save the Land and People*, history of the citizen's movement to abolish strip mining; *Justice in the Coalfields*, about the UMWA strike against Pittston and what justice means to workers; *Belinda*, AIDS activist who fought against homophobia and prejudice; and *Fast Food Women* about the working poor, which is a nominee to be included in the National Film Registry at the Library of Congress. She is a senior lecturer in documentary filmmaking at the University of Texas at Austin. Lewis serves a pivotal role as an adviser and we rely on her to guide us as we create a complicated and meaningful film that seeks to tell the truth about working class Americans, and contribute to the vitality of independent filmmaking.
* Emily Satterwhite teaches Appalachian Studies, American Studies, and Pop Culture. Her research fields include critical regionalism, reception studies, and the politics of culture.

Satterwhite is an affiliate of the ASPECT program (Alliance for Social, Political, Ethical, and Cultural Thought) at Virginia Tech and is an editorial reviewer for the web journal Southern Spaces. Satterwhite analyzes fan mail and online customer reviews to understand why certain readers have romanticized images of the Appalachian region. Her research centers on the politics of culture, especially in relation to imagined geographies and identity formation. Her first book, *Dear Appalachia* was published by the University Press of Kentucky and won the Weatherford Award for best nonfiction work illuminating the Appalachian South. Satterwhite suggests that upwardly and geographically mobile white readers have sought to identify and embrace Appalachia as a rooted, rural, communal, and simple place apart from mainstream America. Appalachian-set bestsellers helped stimulate the formation of a regional identity movement that has critiqued the emotional costs of upward mobility, soothed white readers’ concerns about lack of identity and belonging, and fostered readers’ attachments to place in a society that belittles rural locales. Satterwhite’s scholarship is rooted in a compelling historical framework and enables us to engage audiences in a deep exploration of humanities ideas and themes through interviews, personal testimonies, and archival materials.

* Barbara Ellen Smith is a professor of Women’s and Gender Studies in the Department of Sociology at Virginia Tech. Her interdisciplinary scholarship addresses social inequality and movements for social justice in Appalachia and the South. The Aspen Institute, U.S. Department of Labor, and the Ford, Rockefeller, and Charles Stewart Mott Foundations, among other sources, have supported her research. Her books include *Digging Our Own Graves: Coal Miners and the Struggle over Black Lung Disease* (Temple University Press, 1987), and *Transforming Places: Lessons from Appalachia* (University of Illinois Press, 2012), which she co-edited with Steve Fisher. Smith has dynamic and unorthodox viewpoints and expressions

regarding race, class, gender, Appalachian studies, and stereotypes. She reminds us of the political issues that are at stake with respect to hillbilly stereotyping.

* Lora Smith serves as the communications officer at the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation where she directs strategic communications for the Foundation around issues of poverty, economic development, and racial equity in the Southern United States. A native of Southeastern Kentucky, Lora comes from a background of social justice engagement in Appalachia. She is a former staff person with the grassroots group Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, where her media and storytelling work supported environmental and economic justice organizing. She served as the national outreach director for *Deep Down* (2010) where she coordinated screenings that connected diverse communities directly affected by coal’s cradle to grave cycle. Through her work with *Deep Down*, Smith participated in Working Films’ Reel Power project and served as the community engagement coordinator for the series. She studied folklore and documentary studies as a graduate student at UNC-Chapel Hill. She is a Southeast Council of Foundations (SECF) Hull Fellow, a fellowship program for young leaders in philanthropy. She serves on the board of Working Films. Smith will help us design an engaging audience engagement campaign that moves beyond traditional screens to inspire activism based on the key themes in the film.
* J.W. Williamson is a retired professor of Appalachian Studies and English at Appalachian State University. He was the founding editor of the Appalachian Journal in 1972 and edited that quarterly publication for 28 years until his retirement in 2000. He was honored with the Laurel Leaves Award from the Appalachian Consortium and a special Weatherford Award from Berea College in 2000. Williamson and his wife Pam received the Helen M. Lewis Community Service Award from the Appalachian Studies Association in 2005. He is the author of *Interviewing Appalachia* (University of Tennessee Press, 1994), *Southern Mountaineers in Silent Films* (McFarland, 1994), and *Hillbillyland: What the Movies Did to the Mountains and What the Mountains Did to the Movies* (University of North Carolina Press, 1995), as well as numerous articles, book reviews, and interviews with Appalachian authors, filmmakers, and activists.

Williamson is highly regarded in the community and is connecting us with a wide range of scholars across multiple disciplines in an effort to paint a rich and varied portrait of the long lasting impact of media representations on mountain people and their communities.

1. **Media team:**

* Sally Rubin (Project Co-Director/Producer) recently completed *Life on the Line*, a Fledgling Fund documentary that premiered in February 2014 at the Santa Barbara International Film Festival, about a teenage girl living on the border of the United States and Mexico. Her previous film*, Deep Down*, was an ITVS, MacArthur, Chicken and Egg, and Fledgling-funded feature-length documentary about two friends in eastern Kentucky who are divided over mountaintop removal coal mining near their homes. The film was part of the 2010-2011 Independent Lens Emmy-winning PBS series, and has reached almost 2 million people through its broadcast, distribution, and outreach campaign. It was nominated for an Emmy Award for its Virtual Mine outreach project, in the category of New Approaches to News and Documentary.

Rubin's other credits include *The Last Mountain*, a film about her father's death in a hiking accident that was broadcast on PBS, Robert Greenwald's *Iraq for Sale: the War Profiteers* (Editor), and the television series “The Freedom Files” (Editor), as well as David Sutherland's

6-hour Frontline special “Country Boys” (Associate Producer). Rubin is a full-time documentary Professor at Chapman University and a graduate of the M.A. program in Documentary at Stanford University***.*** Rubin will work alongside the humanities advisers and media team to fully realize the project so that it is grounded in humanities scholarship and demonstrates an approach that is thoughtful, balanced, and analytical. She will collaborate closely with York, project co-director and producer, as well as with the editor to produce a work in progress funding reel that thoughtfully illuminates on the humanities themes and scholarship.

* Ashley York (Project Co-Director/Producer) is an Appalachian-born mediamaker whose interests include documentaries, socially conscious media and emerging modes of storytelling. She has worked on Academy Award® nominated teams and on projects that have premiered at the Sundance, Berlin and SXSW film festivals and on A&E, IFC, HBO and Sundance Channel. Her film *Tig,* which she co-directed and produced with Beachside Films, was acquired by Netflix and premiered at the 2015 Sundance Film Festival in addition to the Hot Docs Canadian International Festival and Outfest. She produced two 2011 Sundance Film Festival Official selections: *Becoming Chaz*, about Chaz Bono’s gender transition, and *GRAB*, about the Laguna Pueblo tribe. She has collaborated with award-winning filmmakers, including Peter Saraf, Mark Jonathan Harris, Fenton Bailey, Judith Helfand, and Kirby Dick. She was a panelist on the topic of interactive documentaries at the 2010 and 2012 SXSW Interactive Festivals and 2009 Sheffield International Documentary Film Festival. She was a filmmaker in residence at MASS MoCA and an artist in residence at the Bay Area Video Coalition’s Producer’s Institute.

Ashley is a founding member of the design collective, Take Action Games, which has partnered with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality, the Independent Television Service and the Center for Asian American Media. She teaches in the USC School of Cinematic Arts. York will commit herself to working alongside the humanities advisers and researching books, films, and television shows to identify content that illustrates the humanities themes. She will collaborate with the media team on the direction of the documentary content and preliminary interviews and work alongside the archival researcher and writer to fully realize the script and budget for the feature length film.

* Silas House (Co-Executive Producer) is an Appalachian author who was born and grew up in Lily, Kentucky. He was chosen as one of the ten emerging talents in the South by the Millennial Gathering of Writers at Vanderbilt University. House’s first novel, *Clay’s Quilt*, was published in 2001. It appeared briefly on the New York Times Best Seller List and became a success throughout the South. It was a finalist for both the Southeast Booksellers’ Association fiction award and the Appalachian Writers’ Association Book of the Year Award. He followed with *A Parchment of Leaves* (2003), which became a national bestseller and was nominated for several major awards. The book was a finalist for the Southern Book Critics’ Circle Prize and won the Award for Special Achievement from the Fellowship of Southern Writers, the Chaffin Award for Literature, the Kentucky Novel of the Year Award, and many others. House served as a writer-in-residence at Eastern Kentucky University and at Lincoln Memorial University from 2005 to 2010. At LMU he directed the Mountain Heritage Literary Festival. In 2010 House became the NEH Chair in Appalachian Studies at Berea College in Berea, Kentucky. House contributes to the project as a humanities adviser where he helps shape the vision and direction of the film and also as an executive producer where he helps our fundraising and

producing efforts. He was instrumental in getting bell hooks and Ashley Judd to agree to participate in the film.

* David Sutherland (Executive Producer) is a critically acclaimed filmmaker whose *series The Farmer’s Wife, Country Boys*, and *Kind Hearted Woman* were seen by more than 40 million PBS Frontline viewers. Sutherland is known for his documentary portraits of the rural working poor, which command change via intimate observation. Sutherland will serve as a mentor during all phases of the development, lending advice and guidance in how to gain and maintain access, how to craft and develop story, and how to finance the film and navigate the waters of securing broadcast following completion of the film.
* Kate Amend (Editor) received the International Documentary Association’s award for Outstanding Achievement in Editing for her work that includes two Academy Award® winning documentary features: *Into the Arms of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport* and *The Long Way Home*. She also edited the 2001 Oscar-nominated documentary short *On Tiptoe: Gentle Steps to Freedom*. Other credits include Jonathan Demme’s *Jimmy Carter: Man From Plains* (2007), *Beah: A Black Woman Speaks* (2005), *Thin* (2005) *and The World According to Sesame Street* (2005), which premiered at Sundance 2006; *Peace by Peace: Women on the Frontlines* (PBS, 2004); and HBO’s *Pandemic: Facing Aids* (2003). Amend is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, American Cinema Editors, and is an adviser at the Sundance Institute Editing Lab. Amend will work alongside us to explore the content in a way that pushes the boundaries of innovative nonfiction storytelling, crafting a work in progress reel that illustrates this nuanced and complex story.
* Kate Coe (Archival Researcher) is a Peabody award-winning documentary filmmaker who has a strong love of archival film as well as still photos, ephemera, and fine art. She has a wide range of experience with international image research, clearance, copyright search, and licensing. She has worked closely with many studio legal affairs departments, as well as with all the Guilds. The doctrine of Fair Use holds no terrors for her, and she’s been able to prove due diligence to the satisfaction of many major E&O insurers. Her large network of colleagues includes contacts at all international archives, vendors and major studios as well as private collectors, curators, and subject matter experts. She has produced museum installations using archival footage and images, and handled acquisition and clearance for a number of published works, both in print and digitally. Coe will assist us in researching, locating, and procuring third party materials, including books, periodicals, films, news reports, and television shows. This effort will allow us to properly budget the film and begin talks with our legal team about rights and clearance and Fair Use.
* Laurie Coyle (Writer) is a documentary filmmaker and writer. Her current project *Adios Amor- The Search for Maria Moreno* was funded by NEH and is currently in postproduction. Her last film *OROZCO: Man of Fire* aired on the PBS American Masters series and was nominated for best documentary by the ALMA awards and the Imagen Awards. Her documentary writing credits include the NEH Bridging Cultures-funded *Geographies of Kinship*, and the PBS broadcast programs: *Speaking in Tongues, The Slanted Screen*, *Children of the Amazon, Ancestors in the Americas, Life on Four Strings,* and *The Journey of the Bonesetter’s Daughter.* Prior to that, Laurie was Associate Producer and Chief Archival Researcher for *The Fight in the*

*Fields, Cesar Chavez and the Farmworkers’ Struggle*, *The Good War and Those Who Refused to Fight It,* and *Ralph Ellison: An American Journey*. Before becoming a documentary filmmaker, Laurie majored in political theory at UC Berkeley and worked as an oral historian.

She co-authored a book based on interviews with factory workers on the U.S.-Mexico border. It was later anthologized in the Prentiss-Hall series *Women and Power in American History*, and is still taught in women’s, labor and Chicano studies courses. A veteran grant writer, Coyle will work alongside Rubin and York to craft a script that reflects the nuanced and complex humanities themes.

* Bryan Donnell (Director of Photography and Co-Producer) is an award-winning director of photography who has been nominated for a Primetime Emmy for his verité work on an episode of “Intervention,” which won a Primetime Emmy. He won the Palme d'Or for best short at the 2001 Cannes Film Festival, and one of his rare feature narratives won best cinematography at the Melbourne Underground Festival as well as best feature. One of his first documentaries, the short *Undesirables*, won both an Emmy and Oscar in the student categories. He regularly works on Academy-Award nominated teams, including with Lucy Walker and Morgan Spurlock on his award-winning CNN series “Inside Man.” He was worked on projects all over the world for ESPN, HBO, Nat Geo, ESPN, A&E, History, Discovery, OWN, Fox, MSNBC, Sundance, Lifetime, and Animal Planet. He earned his MFA at USC's School of Cinematic Arts, and a BA in fine art at UNC Chapel Hill. York and Rubin will collaborate with Donnell to develop the visual language and style of the film, taking into account the wide-range of aesthetic possibilities that best demonstrate a photographic style that is thoughtful, balanced, analytical, and representative of the diverse Appalachian population.

\*Deborah Taylor Tate served as the Federal Communications Commissioner of the United States from 2006 until 2008. Often referred to as the “Children’s Commissioner,” she was a leading voice on issues affecting families and children, and has been at the forefront of the movement to ensure that advances in communications technologies benefit all Americans. Commissioner Tate served as legal counsel and senior policy adviser to two Governors: then Governor (now U.S. Senator) Lamar Alexander and former Governor and Congressman Don Sundquist. In that capacity, she addressed a diverse array of public policy issues, including attracting new industries and improving family incomes. Commissioner Tate has led the way in innovations around media literacy, and is a key asset to our team with respect to financing and distributing the film.

1. **Progress:**

We recently attended the 38th annual Appalachian Studies Association conference in Johnson City, Tennessee where we presented a work in progress concept of *The Hollywood Hillbilly*, convened our advisory board, and presented a panel called “Documenting Appalachia From Inside and Out: Voices From the Non-Fiction Field” with Appalachian filmmakers Herbie Smith and Tom Hansell from Appalshop. During the panel we discussed how today’s storytellers, filmmakers in particular, must perform a difficult balancing act, navigating a history that includes stereotypical depictions and two-dimensional portraiture while aiming to tell authentic stories about this unique place.

The expansive audience and community who we met at the conference expressed its longing for this film to get made. The last film about media representations of Appalachian people was Herbie Smith’s *History of Appalachia: Strangers and Kin — a history of the hillbilly image*, made in 1984. Smith, a veteran filmmaker at Appalshop, participated in our panel and has agreed to support us in any way. Also on the panel was filmmaker Tom Hansell, also from Appalshop, who made a film called *The Electricity Fairy*, about Appalachia’s over-reliance on coal as a core industry. He is currently completing *After Coal*, about how small communities globally survive after the disappearance of their primary natural resources.

We have received overwhelmingly positive feedback about the project, and have been invited to submit to the West Virginia Humanities Council and California Council for Humanities grants this fall. We were also finalists for the spring round of the ITVS Open Call this year and recently resubmitted this summer.

1. **Work plan:**

Rubin and York are requesting [funding] from the National Endowment for Humanities to fund the development of this film, allowing them to research and develop story and key humanities themes alongside their advisers and existing character leads.

**Phase 1, Research and Development: May 1-June 30th, 2016**

Meetings with our humanities advisers will happen in May. During this phase, Co-Directors and Producers **Sally Rubin** and **Ashley York** will engage in vigorous research and consultation with advisers and partner organizations. They will research the archives of the Appalachian Journal and Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences archive to begin identifying and pre- producing our script. They will pursue outreach partners, including Berea College, Appalshop, and the Appalachian Media Institute. They will consult with humanities advisers to determine the most productive, thoughtful, and effective ways to explore the subject matter of the film.

They will virtually convene several of the humanities advisers, including **Anna Creadick**, whose research investigates the relationship between reading and middle-class identity; **Silas House**, the head of Appalachian Studies at Berea College, who is assisting the filmmakers with contacts and connections in the entertainment industry, particularly access to writers and musicians from Appalachia, such as Ashley Judd and bell hooks; **Emily Satterwhite**, whose work on identity and belonging will help maintain a level of integrity and journalistic balance in the project; **Barbara Ellen Smith**, who will provide a large portion of the film’s commentary on race in the Appalachian region, as this has been one of her primary areas of focus in her scholarship; **Meredith McCarroll**, who has written extensively on southern culture and race and Appalachia; **Lora Smith**, who as a media activist will help craft an effective and wide- reaching outreach campaign for the film; and **J.W. Williamson**, who will provide one of the central interviews in the film, outlining the history of Appalachian representation in the media, as well as connections and commentary throughout the development.

**Phase 2, Field Work: July 1-July 31st, 2016**

Co-Directors **Sally Rubin** and **Ashley York** will travel with Co-Producer and Cinematographer **Bryan Donnell** to Appalachia where they will spend 17 days in the region (and three days in Los Angeles) gathering stories from Appalachian people, including the potential primary characters identified and outlined in the treatment. They will travel approximately 1,200 miles

across the four Appalachian states (Kentucky, West Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia) to produce initial interviews and scenes that will serve as the narrative spine for the funding reel, focusing on filming with central characters as well as the key experts involved in the project. **York** will produce, conduct interviews, and record sound. **Rubin** will produce, co-direct interviews, shoot still photographs, and manage all media collected during the shoot, including downloading and transcoding files. **Donnell** will photograph interviews with the assistance of local production assistants who will be hired locally to assist with the transportation and loading of gear. **David Sutherland** will support the production by offering leads on interview subjects ranging from coal miners, nurses, teachers, preachers, elementary, and middle and high school students.

Day 1-3 Fly from Los Angeles to Atlanta, Georgia and drive to Clayton, Georgia, where *Deliverance* was filmed in 1972. Filming with Billy Redden, the banjo-playing boy in *Deliverance,* and other local citizens about the making of the movie and its long-lasting impact on the region.

Day 4-6 Drive to Boone, North Carolina and film with Roger May, director of the *Looking at Appalachia Project,* and humanities adviser **Jerry Wayne Williamson**. Visit Appalachian State University with Williamson for archival research and retrieval.

Day 7-10 Drive to Berea, Kentucky. Filming with **Silas House**, bell hooks, **Chad Berry**, and Sam Cole on campus, around town, and at their homes.

Day 11-14 Drive to Whitesburg, Kentucky for research at Appalshop and filming with local residents at the Cowan Community Center about their memories of Lyndon Johnson’s War on Poverty our. Research interviews for the digital media component, *Her Appalachia.*

Day 15-17 Drive to Morgantown, West Virginia for interviews with locals about Appalachian history, identity, and media representations of Appalachian people. Research with **Kirk Hazen** on his dialect and language variation project.

Day 18-20 Travel back to Los Angeles for filming with Ronny Cox, an actor from *Deliverance,*

and Max Baer, Jr., who played Jethro in “The Beverly Hillbillies.”

**Phase 3, Scripting/Budgeting, Funding Reel, and Outreach and Public Engagement: August 1-September 30th, 2016**

During this period a transcriptionist will produce transcripts from the interviews collected during the field research in Appalachia. **Rubin and York** will use those findings to produce a script and write a budget for the feature film. **Laurie Coyle** will write the script. Rubin and York will review all material collected during the fieldwork phase. **Rubin** will spend one week preparing the digital media files and assets collected in the field during Phase 2 in advance of

**Kate Amend**, the editor, starting. **Rubin** will work alongside Amend for five weeks to edit a 20-minute work in progress media sample, which can be used as a funding reel to share with buyers and financiers. Filmmaker **Anne Lewis** will review cuts, advise, and offer feedback during the five- week edit schedule.

**York** will collaborate with Archival Researcher **Kate Coe**, on gathering production files, photographs, and special collections from the Margaret Herrick Library in Beverly Hills and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in Hollywood, California. This effort is vital to designing a budget that accounts for procuring and licensing hundreds of high resolution digital copies of films and photographs. From this archival research **York and Rubin** will consult with Michael Donaldson, an entertainment attorney who has more than thirty years experience and is the founding partner of Donaldson & Callif, a Beverly Hills, California law firm specializing in entertainment and copyright law, with particular emphasis on the representation of independent film producers. Donaldson feels strongly that the filmmakers have a valid Fair Use defense if they elect to use unlicensed clips in the documentary because the film is being produced for educational purposes and public commentary, the clips in question are necessary to convey the film’s message, inclusion of the clips will create a “transformational use,” and their use is unlikely to deprive the copyright owners of income.

Alongside **Lora Smith**, **Rubin and York** will craft a thorough outreach and public engagement plan for the film, utilizing material from meetings with our partners during Phase 2. **Rubin and York** will work with **Virginia Kuhn** and the Division of Media Arts + Practice and Institute for Multimedia Literacy at the University of Southern California, to further develop the companion web-based storytelling project entitled *Her Appalachia*. **Rubin and York** will work with **Deborah Tate** and **David Sutherland** to secure financing and explore cross platform distribution strategies.

1. **Organization profile:**

Founded in 2002, the **Southern Documentary Fund** is a nonprofit 501©(3) arts organization that cultivates documentary projects made in or about the American South. Inspired by our core belief that documentaries have the power to change lives, SDF serves as a leading advocate for powerful Southern storytelling, providing filmmakers and artists with professional support, fiscal sponsorship, and creative community. Celebrating its 13th Anniversary, SDF has sponsored more than 100 documentary projects that have explored issues of social justice, the environment, history, and the arts. These projects have won critical acclaim, prestigious awards, and inspired audiences around the world with authentic stories that matter. York has worked with SDF on two prior projects, *Tig* and *So Help You God.*

The project is also fiscally sponsored by the **International Documentary Association**, which was founded in 1982 and is a non-profit 501(c)(3) that promotes nonfiction filmmakers, and is dedicated to increasing public awareness for the documentary genre. The IDA is dedicated to building and serving the needs of a thriving documentary culture. Through its programs, IDA provides resources, creates community, and defends rights and freedoms for documentary artists, activists, and journalists. The IDA protects and advances the legal rights of documentary filmmakers. IDA also has a long history of making the case for documentary filmmaking as a vital art form, and seeks ways to ensure that the artists who make documentaries receive the funding they deserve. Most recently, IDA has been in the forefront of support on these major issues confronting our industry: Net Neutrality, Fair Use, and Lobbying for the Arts. Rubin and York are active members of the IDA.

1. **List of collections of materials to be used by the project:**

**Appalachian Journal - A Regional Studies Review** was founded in 1972 and is an interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed quarterly featuring field research, interviews, and other scholarly studies of history, politics, economics, culture, folklore, literature, music, ecology, and a variety of other topics, as well as poetry and reviews of books, films, and recordings dealing with the region of the Appalachian mountains.

**Appalshop** is a media, arts, and education center located in Whitesburg, Kentucky, in the heart of the southern Appalachian region of the United States. Founded in 1969 under the leadership of Bill Richardson as a project of the United States government's War on Poverty. In 1974 the worker-operated organization evolved into a nonprofit company called Appalshop and established itself as the primary hub of filmmaking in and about Appalachia, and since that time has produced more than one hundred films, covering such subjects as coal mining, the environment, traditional culture, and the economy.

**Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences’ Margaret Herrick Library** is a world- renowned, non-circulating reference and research collection devoted to the history and development of the motion picture as an art form and industry.

**UCLA Film & Television Archive** has more than 300,000 films and television programs, and 27 million feet of newsreel footage. The UCLA Film & Television Archive is the world's largest university-held collection of motion pictures and broadcast programming.

**The Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research**

Located at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, this library maintains over three hundred collections from outstanding playwrights, television and motion picture writers, producers, actors, designers, directors, and production companies. It is richest in records of the American film industry between 1930 and 1960, American popular theater in the 1940s and 1950s, and American television from the 1940s to the 1970s.

1. **Preliminary interviews:**

We have conducted extensive preliminary interviews with the following individuals:

**Chad Berry** is the Academic Vice President and Dean of the Faculty at Berea College, Goode Professor of Appalachian Studies, and Professor of History. He came to the office of the Academic Vice President and Dean of the Faculty after serving five years as Director of the Loyal Jones Appalachian Center. Prior to coming to Berea in 2006, he was a member of the faculty at Maryville College. He has authored, edited, or co-edited four books. He is deeply passionate about Appalachia and its people and claims that no other region in America is more misunderstood.

**Alexandra Bradner** is a philosopher and writer who writes about popular culture through the lens of Appalachian Studies. Originally from Chicago her interest in Appalachia was piqued when she moved to Huntington, West Virginia, with her spouse, who teaches English literature at Marshall University (and grew up in Lexington, Kentucky). She lived there for five years. The cultural differences were so pronounced, that she couldn’t stop thinking about them, and began thinking about cross-cultural understanding and the idea that there might be paradigmatic differences between the Appalachian culture and a more Northern/urban culture. She wrote an article for Salon entitled “America’s Funniest Joke is Anything but Funny,” in response to MTV’s reality show, “Buckwild,” about West Virginia teenagers.

**Samantha Cole** is a 25-year-old who was born in Lee County, Kentucky in a large, extended mountain family. While attending Berea College, she majored in Appalachian Studies with a concentration in Regional Literature. While at Berea, she helped edit an anthology of contemporary Appalachian writing. Titled *Appalachian Gateway*, this book was published by the University of Tennessee Press. Cole works at Berea College.

**Anna Creadick** is Associate Professor of English at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva, NY, where teaches courses in twentieth-century American literature and culture, and contributes to the American Studies and Women's Studies programs. Author of the monograph "Perfectly Average: The Pursuit of Normality in Postwar America" (UMass Press, 2010), she has also published essays on popular fiction, film, and other subjects in such journals as "Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature", "The Southern Literary Journal", and "Appalachian Journal." Creadick grew up in Boone, North Carolina and says she consciously lost her accent for fear of being discriminated against in academia.

**Sam Gleaves** was raised in Wythe County in Southwest Virginia, where his family has lived since just after the Revolutionary War. After learning to play banjo from a local barber named Jim Lloyd, Gleaves attended Berea College and performed for four years with Al White's Berea College Bluegrass Ensemble. At Berea College, he developed a passion for collecting oral history interviews and field recordings of traditional music in the region. He earned a degree in Folklore in 2014.

**Dr. Tony Harkins** is an Associate Professor of History and the Director of the Popular Culture Studies major at Western Kentucky University. He is the author *of Hillbilly: A Cultural History of an American Icon* (Oxford University Press, 2004) and the co-editor of the Media section of the *Encyclopedia of Appalachia* (University of Tennessee Press, 2006).

**bell hooks** is a Distinguished Professor in Residence in Appalachian Studies at Berea College. Born Gloria Jean Watkins in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, she has chosen the lower case pen name bell hooks, based on the names of her mother and grandmother, to emphasize the importance of the substance of her writing as opposed to who she is. She is the author of thirty books, many of which have focused on issues of social class, race, and gender. Her latest book is titled *Belonging: A Culture of Place.*

**Silas House** is an Appalachian author, who was born and grew up in Lily, Kentucky. He has degrees from Sue Bennett College, Eastern Kentucky University and Spalding University.

House was chosen as one of the ten emerging talents in the South by the Millennial Gathering of Writers at Vanderbilt University. House's first novel, *Clay's Quilt*, was published in 2001. It appeared briefly on the New York Times Best Seller List and became a success throughout the South. It was a finalist for both the Southeast Booksellers' Association fiction award and the Appalachian Writers' Association Book of the Year Award. He followed *with A Parchment of Leaves* (2003), which became a national bestseller and was nominated for several major awards. House served as a writer-in-residence at Eastern Kentucky University and at Lincoln Memorial University from 2005 to 2010. In 2010 House became the NEH Chair in Appalachian Studies at Berea College in Berea, Kentucky.

**Loyal Jones** was born in 1928, Loyal Jones grew up on a mountain farm in western North Carolina. He graduated from Hayesville North Carolina High School in 1945, earned an undergraduate degree in English at Berea College in 1954, and received his masters in English (and became certified to teach) from the University of North Carolina in 1957. One characteristic of Jones’ writing is optimism about the resiliency of mountain people and their culture, says Ron Eller, former director of the Appalachian Center at the University of Kentucky. In 2008, the Berea College Board of Trustees passed a resolution to rename the Appalachian Center at Berea College the Loyal Jones Appalachian Center in recognition of his distinguished career and notable accomplishments as the Center’s founding director.

**Meredith McCarroll** is a professor at Bowdoin College who has written widely on Appalachian film and has a particular interest in race and the hillbilly character — especially "whiteness" or "un-whiteness" of these figures. Her most recent paper is “Half Bear, the Other Half Cat: Appalachian Women, Race, and Film.”

1. **User-generated content:**

N/A

**3) Treatment**

*\* We have confirmed access to the subjects and interviewees described in the following treatment.*

**Prologue/Tease.** Daybreak. From high above: a shining river twists through summer mountains, breathing out wisps of mist. Closer now, and there are houses--trailers, double-wides, brick homes. Our camera wends its way through a lush garden where an old couple hoes in the cool of morning. In a small, neat house near a rushing creek two little African-American girls scramble out of bed and flip on the television. They eat cereal and laugh as cartoons play on TV. We catch only a glimpse of Bugs Bunny dressed in stereotypical hillbilly garb at a square dance. The girls’ mother is frying eggs and laughing at them. Musician **Sam Gleaves** brushes his teeth, sleepy-eyed. Appalachian novelists and gay activists **Silas House** and **Jason Howard** make toast and coffee as they prepare for the day ahead. **Samantha Cole** gets ready for work in her bedroom, which is decorated with posters of Loretta Lynn and Dolly Parton. Feminist/author **bell hooks** walks down her stairs with some effort, yawning. In a well-kempt trailer, a coal miner kisses the forehead of his sleeping daughter and eases outside, gets into his truck, and drives to work. The highway winds through modern Appalachia, a place that many of us do not know. It’s a place where the past--abandoned farmhouses, dogs limping along, a massive coal pile--stands alongside the present--McMansions, folks congregating at a boutique cafe, a gay pride flag on a porch.

We zoom slowly in on a stylized map of Appalachia, set within a television screen.

Highlighted areas include parts of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina. All the while, this voiceover from House: *Appalachia is a contradiction and a secret and a history waiting to be read. Appalachia is a wound and a joy and a poem, a knot of complication that others assume they know with a little bit of research. But you cannot know a place without loving it and hating it and feeling everything in between. You cannot understand a complex people by only looking at outsider media—something inside you has to crack to let in the light so your eyes and brain and heart can adjust properly*. A final shot of our traveling miner as he sings along with the radio and taps his fingers on the steering wheel of his truck quick cuts to:

An archival clip from the movie *Deliverance* reveals a car laden with canoes and camping gear rushing through Appalachian countryside. Banjo music kicks in and a toothless, bearded man smiles at the camera. A title appears on screen: *The Hollywood Hillbilly*. A series of archetypal movie and television clips flash by: the aforementioned Bugs Bunny cartoon, poverty-stricken elderly people gazing into the distance from their porches, women in rags collecting welfare checks, gap-toothed men guffawing and clogging, the feuding Hatfields and McCoys. “We need to ask where these images come from and why we want to see this over and over again,” says bell hooks, Kentuckian, Appalachian Studies professor, and African-American feminist writer, in an interview in front of an old tobacco-barn.

Professor Meredith McCarroll comments “America’s perception of Appalachia reflects the evolution of its aspirational self-image over the decades. As goes America’s sense of itself, so goes media representation of the Appalachian region.” Early black and white clips of the film industry in Los Angeles and clips of industrial New York play on screen. “America has always aspired to be greater, better, bigger, more. At times we have been,” says professor **Meredith McCarroll**. We see the Hollywood sign, the Statue of Liberty. “At times we haven’t.” Tumbleweeds roll through a Depression- era desert, a poor family sitting on the stoop in the background. “But whatever we’ve been,” continues McCarroll, “it has appeared in our view of Appalachia as translated by the media of that time.”

Silas House, a writer-professor with a lilting mountain accent, is sitting on the porch with the gay pride flag behind him. “Appalachia has always been a microcosm of America. How the rest of America perceives itself is reflected in representations of this region; we represent what is best and worst about who we are as a nation.”

Cut to: Miami, Florida. A new line of soft-drink is being wheeled off a truck, a symbol of a gap-toothed smiling face on the front of each bottle. “It’s Hillbilly Brand,” says the delivery-man to camera. “We can’t get it off the truck fast enough.” Los Angeles, California: “Buck and June’s White Trash Hoedown” Halloween party unfolds at someone’s home, bluegrass music blaring as party-goers wearing wife-beater tank tops, ripped jeans, straw and “trucker” style hats. A sign on the front lawn reads: *Paddle faster*. *I hear banjos.- Deliverance*. McCarroll’s voice pulls us out of the scene as the bluegrass music crescendos and then dies out over a slow zoom on the *Deliverance* sign: “What the majority of America understands about Appalachia, it has learned through the movies and through the media.” “Who gets to take our pictures?,” asks House looking directly into the camera. “Who gets to tell our story? And what is the responsibility of the storyteller to our community?”

**Act I.** Well-outfitted rafters tackle the white-water of the Chattooga River. A sign announces: *Welcome to Rabun County, Georgia*. This is the hometown of **Billy Redden**, the banjo-playing boy from *Deliverance*, and is also where the film was shot. Now in his fifties, Redden stands in an abandoned schoolroom. He is gentle and soft-spoken. “I was in the fourth grade when they came,” he says. “They looked around, saw me, and said `that’s him, we want him for the part.’” The banjo lick that Redden plays in the film—now synonymous with the South, rural poverty, incest, and rape—strums in the background throughout Redden’s opening scene. The camera cuts to Redden at work, collecting grocery carts in the Walmart parking lot, his breath visible in the frigid cold. “I thought I might have a career in the movies. Instead I just got this old job at Walmart. The rest of the town never did like the film neither, though we haven’t talked about it much.” **Professor Emily Satterwhite**: “*Deliverance* came out in 1972, and chronicles the rape and murder of four city slickers who come from Atlanta to the mountains of Georgia for a weekend canoe trip. The rape scene in this iconic film functions as an excuse for the city to complete the job of destroying the rural.” At his house, Redden can hardly look at the movie, which is being projected onto a wall behind him. A clip from the infamous rape scene plays with the “hillbilly” terrorist crying “Squeal like a pig, boy!” As Redden struggles with the images, this voiceover from him: *About that one part in the woods, that shouldn’t have been in there. I just don’t want to talk about that part.* We join Redden at the local diner, talking jovially with the waitress who has just served him a slice of blueberry pie. A life of hard work and good times lines her face and voice. *“*Had he known that was probably gonna be in the movie, he wouldn’t have done the movie. Hollywood did that. It’s not the first time, it’s not the only movie,” she says.

**Christopher Dickey**, a journalist and son of the author of *Deliverance*, sits in a busy café in San Francisco, drinking tea. “Well, in May of ’71 we basically moved Hollywood to the little town of Clayton, Georgia. I was 19, an extra in the film. As time went on my discomfort grew as I saw tensions brewing between the crew and the community. I remember thinking that the people were very vulnerable. The studio had gotten some of the extras out of the local jail, for God’s sake.” Dickey laughs. “On the whole, I think Hollywood paid these people well and treated them as gently as it knew how to do, but it was hard for me to get over the feeling—as the cameras rolled—that souls were being stolen. One morning everybody arrived on the set to word that someone had been shooting at the trucks the night before. No one was hurt. But I was pretty scared."

“The media produces shame and self-hatred in us—in *me*,” House tells us. “I work with a lot of young people who are ashamed of where they’re from, because the media has taught us to be.” Redden knows all about that, and as we linger on his soft, dark eyes and wrinkled face, we can see the toll the film has taken on his entire life.

House bends over his garden on a fall afternoon in Berea, Kentucky, weeding tufts of clover from rows of snow peas. “I’ve been really struggling with the recent death of my aunt, who was more

like a grandmother to me. I called her Sis. And strangely enough, one of the things that has troubled me so much since her death has been media portrayals of our region. Every time I see that, I think of her and how Appalachian she was but also how she defied every one of those stereotypes of what that means. She was so strong and hard-working and independent and defiant and complex, non-religious,” he says. “It hurts me so deeply because I see her dignity being negated. And I can’t abide that.” **Liv House**, his 16-year old daughter, appears on the front porch of the Craftsman home behind him. “I’m leaving, Daddy. Kinzie’s picking me up and we’re going to her house for awhile.” “How are you getting home?,” House asks, tensely. He strolls through the yard towards her as he tells us in voiceover: *Lots of photographers come here and insist on only capturing the negative aspects of the place, or movies show us as these simpletons who are either saints or villains.* House’s husband, Jason Howard, comes out to talk to Liv, too. He puts his arm around House’s back as the girls drive away. *We have the same joys and sorrows, the same problems. Our lives are complicated and complex.*

In New York City, director **Jenji Kohan** leads actress **Taryn Manning** through a scene on the set of “Orange is the New Black,” a Netflix original series recently nominated for twelve Emmy Awards. “You snicker, you drawl—you’re white trash,” Kohan tells Manning. “Act like it.” In scene, Manning tells her boyfriend: “We’ve got those food stamps. We could use those to make baby food casserole, and save our money for more coke.” “All of the characters on the show are an archetype,” Kohan tells the camera. “Taryn’s our hillbilly.” Relaxing after filming wraps, Kohan says: “I don’t follow convention. When people have these sacred cows, my urge is to tip them. Ultimately, my characters are individuals. But stereotypes are stereotypes because a lot of people act that way. You don’t say

`Black people are like this and Latinos are like that,’ but there are certain cultural memes that people subscribe to.”

Samantha Cole is walking home from work toward her small apartment. A truckload of teenaged boys go by and let out a string of catcalls. “Hell yeah!” she yells to them with derision, then laughs. “Everybody always tells me how confident I seem. And for the most part, I am. But I’m always worried about being judged because of my accent and where I’m from. Not ashamed. But sure that people are assuming things about me because of that. I grew up being assaulted by these images of how my people weren’t worth anything,” she says as clips from scenes of stereotypical “hillbillies” in shows like “Saturday Night Live” and “Orange Is the New Black” and films like *Lawless* and *Next of Kin* roll. “And of course there are worse things in the world. I mean, hellfire, people are getting killed because of their race or sexuality.” Close up on a bulldozer working a large coal mining site. As the camera pulls back we see that an entire mountain—thousands of acres—has been removed. “But when people are thought of as being disposable, that makes it easier for them to be taken advantage of.” We see crumbling bridges, highways that are crumbling down the mountainside. “It leads to people not being treated justly, being treated less-than,” she says.

“I think a real good example of this is the story of Jeremy Davidson,” Silas House tells us, seated in his garden now. As he talks we see newspaper clippings from the case and snippets of a song called “Black Mountain Lullabye” that was written about the incident. “In 2004, in the middle of the night, a one ton boulder rolled off a mountaintop removal site and crashed through the exterior wall of a double wide in the town of Appalachia, Virginia. Then through two interior walls before it came to rest on the bed of Jeremy, who was three years old.” House has to pause, his jaw tightening.

Cole has tears in her eyes. “And you know what’s the worst thing about that story to me? It’s the fact that most people in America don’t know about it. If a little boy was killed that way in Los Angeles or New York City or Chicago, it would have made the news. And people would know his name. But to most of the country, we’re just disposable. We don’t matter. Everywhere we go people make fun of us right to our faces. And I think the media is to blame for that.”

“When I think of that forgotten baby, I think about all of my people and the way they’re only dragged out on the news or in movies if they can somehow make the rest of America feel good about itself,” House says. Voiceover as he studies a photograph of his aunt: *I think about the way my aunt Sis*

*was held back by those assumptions, the opportunities she didn’t have that others did because of stereotypes about her class and region.* House looks into the camera. “And I tell you what, I’m angry over it. I’ve tried not to be, but it makes me mad as hell.”

The sound of a coal train moans in the night as **Chad Berry** leaves the campus of Berea College where he is Vice President and Dean of Faculty. His road home twists toward a magnificent sunset. Berry tells us as he drives: “My family originally settled in the mountains of east Tennessee.

I’ve made my home here in these hills, in this small community that is both quintessentially Appalachian and at the same time forward thinking, worldly. ” He climbs the steps to their large home, greeting his wife, Lisa. His teenaged son and daughter are laughing in the gleaming kitchen as they prepare supper together. “This is the Appalachia I know.” The Berrys eat supper together and talk with animation as night spreads over the hills and valleys beyond their wide windows. After supper, the Berrys’ daughter is curled up in the living room now, reading, while their son watches “Orange is the New Black” on his laptop with earbuds on. He is watching a scene where Pennsatucky’s mother forces her to drink a liter of Mountain Dew so she can collect medical benefits on her—the young man laughs. *No region in America is more misunderstood than Appalachia,* Chad Berry tells us in voiceover as he stands in the doorway, watching his son watch this scene.

**Act II. Chapter Heading: HISTORY.** Journalist Allen Batteau comments: “Notions and perceptions of and about Appalachia are just as much a social construction as those of the American cowboy and Indian.” Respected film historian **Jerry Williamson** is seated in front of a window revealing an amazing view of the Smoky Mountains. “The simplification of the hillbilly in film by no means began with *Deliverance*,” he tells us. “These generalizations are there at the very beginning of film.” Clips from the silent film era—*The Moonshiner* (1904), *Kentucky Feud* (1905), *Moonshiner’s Daughter* (1908), *Mountaineer’s Honor* (1909), *Law of the Mountains* (1909), *Primitive Man* (1913), *Breed o’ the Mountains* (1914), *Mountain Blood* (1916) and *Tol’able David* (1921)—all reveal common “hillbilly tropes”: feuding, illiteracy, over-sexualization, laziness, fear of the outside world.

Early one and two-reeler films shown in Nickelodeons flash on-screen. “The oldest Appalachian archetype,” explains Jerry Williamson over corresponding graphics and old drawings, “was the Fool, which had roots in the medieval court jester.” An animated medieval court jester fills the frame. “The Fool was historically a member of the poor country class of people who was hired to entertain the wealthy. This early archetype, the prancing, joking, contented minstrel who existed primarily to amuse his king and queen made it through the centuries, across the Atlantic, and to the hills.” The minstrel’s mischievous grin twists and then guffaws. “This eventually shows up in “Hee Haw,” “The Andy Griffith Show,” and so many others.”

“The history of the Appalachian in the media,” explains **Barbara Ellen Smith**, an elegant and articulate academic, “goes all the way back to the Civil War.” A steam locomotive roars through the mountains at night, its lights filling the frame. “The extraction of coal, its location as the battleground for the war, and then the invention of the phonograph and then radio--all placed the region in the spotlight." Jerry Williamson tells us that European immigrants settled the area in the 18th century, somewhat isolated on high mountain ridges. "The early hillbilly archetype was rough, rural, poor but fruitful, blatantly anti-urban, and often dangerous,” he explains. We see an animation showcasing early Daniel Boone novels intercut with the film *Daniel Boone* (1936). “Early representations of Appalachian people as The Romanticized Pioneer, people who are rugged mountaineers off the beaten path of the rest of America sets the stage for how the hillbilly is perceived today.” Emily Satterwhite comments: “Romanticized notions of Appalachia as a place strictly of authenticity and heritage may in some instances unwittingly endorse racism, nationalism, and imperialism. There is a danger in these assumptions that the region is `ignorant but simple’ and we need to avoid fantasies that overgeneralize Appalachia as a pastoral region populated by self-sufficient yet communal people whose whiteness is presumed--though coded in words such as `simple,’ `American,’ and `pioneers.’” Cherokee and Native American Studies Professor **Carolyn Johnston** comments: “Of course there had been people in

Appalachia long before whites arrived. The Cherokee, Iroquois, and so many others. These first people made it into early media about the region.” The clip from *Daniel Boone* features a Native American princess being slung over his shoulder and whisked away from danger.

Williamson goes on: “In time, largely due to the presence of the notorious Hatfields and McCoys, you begin to see a darker, shadier archetype emerge: the Sociopathic Barbarian, a monster.” A news clip shows the two families at odds, and a newspaper heading: *Two Appalachian Families at War.* Meredith McCarroll tells us: “The hillbilly has always reflected America’s fears about what it is— and what it could become. Appalachia’s social problems have continually connected it to characteristics of failure and undesirability.” A cartoon strip identified as “Mountain Boys (1934)” shows three barefoot and disheveled men sitting on the porch of a country home. The caption reads *Wonder if Ma’s had her baby yet. I’m gittin’ mighty hon’gry.* Jerry Williamson says: “In the 1930s, life in Appalachia was changing. Labor issues were hitting not just Appalachia, but the entire country. Images of the hillbilly during the Depression began to reflect America’s fears that it would fall back from its industrial, hard scrabble, `live off the land’ existence.” “We grew up poor in the forties and fifties,” smiles country music star Dolly Parton, intercut with archival photos from her youth growing up in east Tennessee. “We were the truest Hill-billies you ever saw! We were redneck roughnecks, real white trash.” She turns serious. “We had less than nothing, went barefoot in the hills. People made fun of us and still do…But I’m proud of where I’m from, can’t outrun it. Keeps me humble.”

An archival clip plays showing a little girl on a 1950s living room floor watching "The Beverly Hillbillies.” **Anthony Harkins**, author of *Hillbilly: A Cultural History of an American Icon*: “‘The Beverly Hillbillies’ was a situation comedy that told the story of a family of Ozark mountaineers. The show's popularity stemmed partly from the way it played off of fear and fascination with southern mountaineers much in the news. More people in the world today know "The Beverly Hillbillies" than know President Johnson or even the Pope.” **Max Baer Jr.**, ID’d as the actor who played Jethro Bodine on the show, enters a high-rise condominium building in the Mid-Wilshire district of Los Angeles. In his apartment he gazes out the window at the Hollywood sign, the Griffith Park Observatory visible in the corner of the screen. "Hoootttt dawgg!,” he proclaims, several octaves above his normal speaking voice. "I can actually carry on a conversation as Jethro if I have to. I do it better in the afternoon than I do in the morning." Standing in front of a “Beverly Hillbillies” commemorative plaque, he talks about the show’s success, then notes, “I saw nothing wrong with playing Jethro, or offering people a good laugh. Jethro was a made up character, his job was to entertain, and that’s what he did. I never felt funny about playing someone that folks may have thought of as stupid; that wasn’t part of our dialogue on the show. We just acted. And many of us were still kids.” Back Harkins, in voiceover over clips from “The Beverly Hillbillies”: “The outmigration of more than three million southern Appalachians in the three decades after the start of World War II was one of the largest population movements in American history and also vital in helping share and justify the representation of `hillbillies’ as urban invaders that became prominent in early television incarnations. Largely in response to the widespread mechanization of the coal mines and the rise of natural gas as an alternative to coal, millions of southern Appalachians fled the mass unemployment of the coal fields for Midwestern cities such as Cincinnati, Chicago, and Detroit, where they were an unwanted population. Job listings announced `No Southerners need apply,’ and restaurant owners refused to serve `hillbillies.’”

We see President Johnson visiting poor mountain children, sitting on porches with old women and men, shaking hands with teachers and children outside of small schoolrooms. “And of course in 1964, Johnson launched his War on Poverty,” Jason Howard tells us. Harkins leans toward the camera, counting off shows on his fingers. “There was the 'Andy Griffith Show' in 1960, 'The Dukes of Hazzard' in the seventies—also smash hits.” Old jalopies careen around the bend in Beverly Hills, puffing smoke, the General Lee catches air as it swings around a corner, Daisy Duke preens in her short-shorts. “These also gave rise to a spate of animated shows that featured the region, beginning with `The Flintstones,’ then ultimately `South Park,’ `The Simpsons’, and `King of the Hill.’” Appalachian

Studies Professor **Emily Satterwhite** explains, “In this case, there was a contrast between the Appalachia in the media and the reality on the ground.” **Dwight Yoakam** sits on his porch in Santa Monica, reminiscing about what it was like having President Johnson come to town in Pike County, Kentucky, where he was born. “He knocked on people’s doors and offered folks pairs of shoes. I remember when I saw an episode of `The Beverly Hillbillies’ playing onscreen. I remember thinking at the time- not the president or a Hollywood director--nobody knows who we really are.”

Author **David Whisnant** sits on the front stoop of a southern Baptist church, and tells the camera over corresponding archival clips: “By the 1980s the civil rights movement had succeeded, representations of African-Americans were beginning to change on TV, movements for Native American and Latino rights were picking up visibility. And yet, the hillbilly image remained what some would call `the last acceptable stereotype.’”

A string of clips from recent shows and films follow. Robert DeNiro terrorizes Juliette Lewis and her mother on a stormy night in the mountains: the Sociopathic Barbarian, *Cape Fear.* Jennifer Lawrence points a rifle at a man emerging from the woods with a gleam in his eye: the Meth Addict, “Justified.” A family guffaws as they pile into a car and head down the street: the Ignorant Hillbilly, the remake of “The Beverly Hillbillies.” A white man with a Confederate flag on the wall behind him assaults an African-American man: the Racist Redneck, *Pulp Fiction*. A toothless woman kills someone at an abortion clinic, later taken into the evangelical community: the Holy Roller, “Orange is the New Black”. West Virginian and doctoral candidate **Michael Iafrate** comments: “We have—and have always had--a two-sided and contradictory image of Appalachians: that of a romanticized, proud people steeped in tradition and `original’ American values, and its opposite, a culture of backward, ignorant, and violent savages.” “We are simultaneously compelled and revolted by what we see,” says Harkins. “This contradiction creates a charge--we simply can not look away.”

**Chapter Heading: THE ANATOMY OF A STEREOTYPE.** Emily Satterwhite is perched in a rocking chair and says to us with confidence: “Stereotyping is only for people without the creativity to see people as they really are instead of being like someone else they already understand.” An animated graphic appears on screen while circus music hops along in the background: *Ster·e·o·type,*

*ˈsterēəәˌtīp/, noun…a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.* A silhouetted image of an African-American woman with an Afro appears on screen, followed by a Jew wearing a yarmulke, an Arab holding a machine gun, a woman with huge breasts, a lesbian with short hair. The graphic reads: *Stereotype synonyms = standard/conventional image, received idea, cliché, hackneyed idea, formula, as in "the stereotype of the hillbilly."* Then, *The Anatomy of a Hillbilly.* In interview Satterwhite continues: “Stereotypes are based on a combination of looks, gestures, body language, and smell.” The image of a hillbilly in a shapeless beige dress, and as Satterwhite lists each element, a new one is added to the animation, exposing crooked teeth, stringy hair, yellowing fingernails, and finally a jar of moonshine. Satterwhite: “A person from the outside confronts the image, develops a sense of fear, and the stereotype blossoms.” The cartoon hillbilly guffaws, pulls out her banjo, and starts strumming. Banjo music echoes throughout the rest of the animation. Author of *The Redneck Manifesto* **Jim Goad** addresses the camera: “Hillbillies, ridge- runners, poor white trash, hicks, rednecks, and just plain dirt. These are the terms America uses to indicate mountain, southern, or country people.”

“I remember what it was like here during the fifties,” says bell hooks as she cooks supper. “It’s led me to study the intersectionality of Black and southern identities, as someone from this mountain region. `Peckerwood, po’ pecks, po’ white trash,” she laughs as she throws a handful of salt into a pan on the stove. “That’s what we used to call poor white folks when I was growing up right here in these mountains.” hooks continues in voiceover as she stirs food on the stove. *When I was growing up privileged white folks looked down on poor white folks who lived outside the law, projecting them into the same negative stereotypes they use to define Black people. The cultural politics of white supremacy separates poor southern Black folk from their white counterparts with whom they share a common class*

*reality. And let’s face it, the hatred of poverty is in this society--particularly poverty that has a white face--definitely gives a lie to the whole idea of the American dream and democracy, so we push white poverty into the hills, to Kentucky, and then to Maine or Colorado or Washington.* Barbara Ellen Smith weighs in: “Some Appalachian scholars and advocates largely ignore race in exploring and defining

`hillbilly’ culture, including a failure to situate pejorative stereotypes of white, working-class Appalachians within a larger critique of racism and white supremacy, bypassed in favor of the inaccurate and highly misleading position that `hillbillies’ are a racial minority.”

**Chapter Heading: HILLBILLY IDENTITY, OTHERING, & REGIONALISM. “**The product of growing up other, of growing up as not the subject, is that you think there’s something wrong with your voice all the time,” comments **Jill Soloway**, creator of “Transparent,” in an interview. “Women experience this, people minority groups, and those from other classes.” Cut to Silas House, sitting comfortably on a set of old wooden steps: “As somebody who grew up gay in the region, I have always felt several layers of being the `other’.” House strolls the beautiful, hilly campus of Berea College in the fall, leaves crunching under his feet, his breath in the air as he talks. “One of my most vivid memories from my childhood was when I was ten years old. I was raised Holiness, so my parents didn’t believe in going to the movies, but they allowed me to go with my aunt to see *Coal Miner’s Daughter*. We stood in line for about an hour one cold night and I kept asking her why we were waiting in this line. She plucked her cigarette out of her mouth and she leaned down and she said, `Because this movie’s about us.’” Silas takes out a journal, sitting on a bench to write.

Later, closing his journal, Silas enters class. “The thing that I have seen time and again from these media portrayals is that it produces shame and self-hatred in a lot of young people.” Silas begins class. “Sometimes we’re relieved just to see ourselves on screen at all, even when the media portrayal is a negative one. But often it makes us feel ashamed of where we’re from. Today we’re going to talk about the idea of regionalism,” he tells his students. “What does it mean to be from a region?” One young woman responds, “No matter where I go, I always feel an immediate connection to rural people, and I think that there’s much more of a divide between the rural and the urban than there is between region, between Appalachia and, I don’t know, somebody from the rural Midwest or somebody from New England.” “And how was your identity shaped by the media as a young person,” Silas asks?

Samantha Cole responds: “I think a lot about being female and Appalachian. It’s a complicated mix of identities. I feel powerful and autonomous as a woman- we’re more respected here in some ways, especially today I think. It’s more my identity as a hillbilly that follows me both in and out of the region.” Sam Gleaves says “As a gay banjo player I feel both Appalachian and queer. This place supports me. Appalachia’s amazingly tolerant actually.” “I think if anything,” says **Nick Mullins**, “I’m more ashamed of my accent. Around here nobody looks at me. But I want to be a filmmaker, and if I do, and I leave this place, then to be taken seriously I’m going to need to change the way I talk. I know that’s easier said then done. And what does it say about who I am, that I’m erasing a part of myself?”

McCarroll comments: “In contemporary depictions of Appalachia, issues of representation and exploitation continue to provoke.” A bonfire rages outside a run-down trailer in a mountain hollow at dusk. Photographer **Stacy Kranitz** drinks moonshine by the fire, circling and taking pictures of the thirty or so young people partying at the site. A young woman asks her if she’s getting any good shots of “us hillbillies.” Kranitz smiles. In voiceover she says, “I make work that challenges the viewer’s ideas of documentary truth. Part of that means getting completely up close to my subjects: doing drugs with them, sleeping with them. I have to get completely immersed in their lives and their culture. I spend time here, I smell the air with them, I swim in rivers at dusk with them. That’s the only way true portraits can be told.” After sundown the party moves inside. A small child lies on a couch, a bottle of pills on the table near him. Kranitz snaps a shot. “Representing place is a complicated series of negotiations. I refuse to romanticize Appalachia, to set it up as this soft focus, beautiful, pure, primitive space that we have to preserve and protect. The romancing of Appalachia is still a distancing between the viewer and the mountain person. I also do not want to make images that reinforce mass media’s view of

Appalachia as a poverty-ridden region. Both of these options are equally problematic.” “Stacy doesn't objectify me,” says Pat as she turns her camera on him again. “Her pictures make me feel special, rare.” Pat leans over the couch to gaze out the window, at the night closing in. “This is my home, I love it here. Stacy helps me understand what it means to be Appalachian.”

Samantha Cole studies one of Kranitz’s photographs through her stylish cat-eye glasses. “It’s not that I think these people are unworthy of having their pictures made or because I don’t think these people exist—they do. I know people just like them. But if somebody looks at her whole body of work, they see the same thing over and over, so that there is this suggestion that everyone from Appalachia is this way.”

House and Howard are seated close together on their couch, looking through a book of photographs by Appalachian photographer Roger May. House lingers on one of a man sitting in a graveyard. He is wearing flip-flops, a camouflage hat, and a shirt that reads: *The Catch of the Day: Jesus*. “I love this picture because to me, this is modern Appalachia, a place where the past—in this case, the neatly decorated grave—co-exists with the present—a place where a man is dressed in a very contemporary way and looks like a hard-working, complex individual rather than a trope. There is mystery and complication here.” We linger on several of the photographs as House and Howard flip through. This fades into the couple flipping through their own family photo albums.

“We've been together about nine years,” House says. “And we were both raised in a very traditionally Appalachian way. Our parents brought themselves up out of the real deep poverty of the 1950s and 1960s.” Photographs of House’s and Howard’s parents as children and pictures of House’s Aunt Sis are juxtaposed against images from Stacy Kranitz, Shelby Lee Adams, and Roger May. “They worked hard and made something of themselves and raised us up in strict churches,” House continues, “and we both grew up to really embrace and love that culture but also challenge the problems with it.

We’ve been very outspoken on all of that. The fear, the homophobia, the racism. But it’s important to point out that we always took note of the good and the bad. Not just one or the other. To romanticize a place is just as bad as vilifying it. It’s not a place that is inherently evil or inherently perfect,” Howard interjects. “It’s a world of the in between that every place inhabits.”

**Roger May** has parked his car on the side of a mountain road so he can take a picture of a huge cross that is situated near a billboard that declares *Coal Keeps the Lights On*. Coal trucks grumble by, issuing massive winds that nearly knock him off-balance, but he steadies his long legs and gets his shots. May’s height—and refusal to bend down to others—is intimidating until he speaks in his soft and thoughtful way. “My goal is to tell the story of what’s happening here and now.” May visits with friends on the wide front porch of their double-wide that is perched on the side of a mountain. Kudzu creeps nearby. He takes pictures on an iPhone, then a Polaroid, then an expensive Nikon. We see several photographs from other photographers in the region, their names identifying each photographer. *One reason I started the ‘Looking at Appalachia’ project was because I wanted more of the images to come from people who truly understand the region*, May tells us in voiceover. He unfolds a copy of *The New York Times* and reveals a large spread about the project. *It’s gotten lots of great feedback. It not only shows the region as it is right now, but it also reveals that there are plenty of photographers from right here who have real talent in documenting their own place and people.*

**Chapter Heading: DELIVERANCE.** A clip from *Deliverance* plays, introduced by the film’s signature banjo lick. We see the horrible rape of the urban camper intercut with mountaintop removal coal mining, fracking, and the building of an ever-increasing number of power plants. “`Hillbilly’ is a pejorative term that has a way of legitimating the dispossession of the mountains,” comments Barbara Ellen Smith. “It’s a region of people who are not part of the American Dream, they don’t deserve the kind of resources and wealth that lie beneath the land of Appalachia, particularly coal. It’s only a region of trash…so why not trash it?” Satterwhite explains, “Though this film is known as `the most degrading depiction of southern mountaineers ever put on film,’ it was nominated for three Academy Awards.”

Tallulah Gorge, Georgia. Billy Redden and Christopher Dickey are walking along together along the river. “That’s where most of the scenes were filmed,” gestures Redden. “The rape scene was filmed right in that little pocket of trees over there.” Meanwhile, Christopher Dickey is shuffling through security at the busy San Francisco airport. Voiceover from Redden: *When he gets here, I’m going to show him all of this. I bet he remembers it, but I bet it hasn’t shaped his whole life the way it has mine.* Dickey’s plane departs as the notes from the famous theme fade.

**Chapter Heading: “REDNECK REALITY.”** “Over the past six years,” online blogger **Alexandra Bradner** tells us, “we have seen an exponential increase in the number of `redneck reality’ TV shows about poor, rural white people on television.” Clips from several reality shows play. “Television has spawned a flood of new shows tied to the representations of southern mountaineers and hillbilly characters, which many have dubbed a form of ‘hicksploitation’,” Harkins says. We see a clip of the 2012 smash hit, “Buckwild.” Meredith McCarroll comments: “When there’s a recession, we want to see and to know that there are others who have less. TV shows like ‘Buckwild’ are really popular during this recession, playing on the need that people have to separate themselves. If they can’t do it by class they do it by culture. I might have lost my job, I might not have any more money than someone in West Virginia, but thank god, at least that’s not how I live.” A.P. Warner, ID’d as Buckwild’s Producer, walks down Hollywood Way in Burbank, enters a Starbucks and orders a latte. *Oh come on*, he says in voiceover, unapologetic. *We didn’t set out to ridicule people or negate a whole culture*. *It’s just a fun show. So, no, I don’t feel guilty, and I don’t feel like we’ve done anything to harm the Appalachian people. These people exist. They’re real. And at no point in our show do we put up a disclaimer that says “this show represents all of the people of the Appalachian region.”*

**Chapter Heading: CO-OPTION.** Cut to a scene at the Rusty Mullet, a new diner in the heart of Hollywood, designed to look like a mobile home. The place is packed. Customers sit at booths selecting and eating items from the menu such as “Two-teeth tacos” served with chicken fried steak and other traditional country menu items. Waitresses in daisy dukes careen around corners, breasts bursting from too-tight muslin tops, country music blaring. A sign announces: *See our Events page for the next Redneck Girl dress up day*. “I’ve always been amused by portrayals of Appalachian and southern women,” says Appalachian writer **Lee Smith** in an interview. “Usually as sex kittens or these dainty little creatures who are always fainting on sofas. The Appalachian women I knew growing up were about as delicate as a coal truck.” A master of words, Smith is a wonderfully engaging storyteller. She stands on a bridge spanning Troublesome Creek at the Hindman Settlement School in eastern Kentucky. “You know, I grew up very near Ralph Stanley and when I was little he and his brother would play on top of the concession stand at the Grundy, Virginia Drive-In. Well, when *O Brother Where Art Thou?* came out, he became a big star because in the film he sings this amazing version of “O Death,” voicing an actor dressed up as Klan member!” In the film clip we see an elaborate KKK rally with a man on a horse belting out the old ballad. Voiceover: *And I went to see him and others from the film perform at Carnegie Hall in New York City. It was wonderful. But I had this strange sadness. Because I don’t really like to see my favorite places and people be “discovered.”* Close on Smith’s face: “I constantly see my place and people getting co-opted. And it hurts. But I’ll tell you something else—I was mighty proud to be there the night Dr. Ralph played at Carnegie Hall. It’s always this weird mix of emotions.”

Cole is laughing as she paints her nails. “It tickles me that these celebrities or hipsters put down who we are, then try to look like what they *think* we look like.” As Cole lists the perpetrators, we see images or clips of them. “Like when Jessica Simpson was always wearing those Daisy Dukes. Or Ashton Kutcher started the trucker hat craze. And those ‘White Trash Parties’ that so many ‘hip’ kids are having these days. And the worst is when you’re in New Orleans or New York and you see these ‘faux poor’ hipsters who are dressed like they came out of the cast of *The Grapes of Wrath* because they think that’s what Appalachians are supposed to look like. I’m sure some of them are authentically from the region. And I’m sure that most of them are not being malicious. But still, people need to think

about what they’re doing when they’re co-opting people’s lives without understanding that. And it’s not just Appalachians. The co-option of culture happens to every group, and it happens around the world.”

Chad Berry examines a globe that sits on a stand in the Appalachian Culture Center at Berea College. Spinning the globe, he squints to read out the name of several countries as they pass: “In England there are `chavs,’” he says, “in Canada they call us `rubes.’ In Boston we’re `townies,’ in the Midwest we’re `cutters.’ There are slang terms for country folks every place in the world.

Appalachia’s a concept, it’s a state of mind.” The globe continues spinning. Harkins: “Appalachia *is* the touchstone for much of this imagery, but it is not the root or focus of all of it, and `hillbilly’ is applied much more broadly. The Ozarks, for instance, have in many ways have been as central to the construction of the hillbilly image. The idea of Appalachia as the home of the hillbilly subsumed everywhere else that was tied to the term, and the concept.”

**Act III. Chapter Heading: THE REAL APPALACHIA.** Exterior of House-Howard residence, night in a small town in the Appalachian foothills. *If you tell people they are worthless long enough, some part of them begins to believe it*, says House in voiceover. Cut inside to House standing next to an old piano, singing a duet with Howard, their voices blending sweetly as they sing “In the Gloaming.” The couple makes eye contact as they sing. “Some of us are backwards and violent and racist,” says House in an interview. “Because we’re people, just like everyone else. At the same time, we can’t blame everything on the media, we need to claim some responsibility for how we’re perceived. We have to quit buying this notion that we’re not as intelligent that we’ve been taught all of these years, and go forward.”

“It’s been a long road, but in this age of the internet and Netflix, diverse voices are able to reach the public,” says Emily Satterwhite. “You do have some Appalachian media-makers and young people beginning to make their own media and actually get it out there, and to think about things in a new way.” Whitesburg, Kentucky. Exterior of Appalshop Media Institute, a youth media organization. Young filmmakers experiment with cameras in class with **Tom Hansell**, Appalachian documentarian. “Our first show is going to be a new kind of reality show- a show about the real Whitesburg, Kentucky. It won’t be anything like `Buckwild,’ but it’ll be exciting,” Hansell says. “And the next time a `reality’ show comes to our neighborhood,” says a young woman, “we’re going to the set to show the directors what Appalachia’s really like.”

bell hooks is seated on her couch as late afternoon light falls through the window. Her intelligence and raw emotion are palpable. “Early on in my life I learned from Kentucky backwoods elders, I learned a set of values one must be self determining” she says. “Radical critical consciousness. Folks from the backwoods were certain about two things. The responsibility of being free required one to be a person of integrity. A person who lives in a such a way that there is congruency between what one thinks, says, and does.”

Billy Redden and Christopher Dickey stroll near the ruins of what used to be the cabin where he sat and played banjo in the film. He tells Dickey: “This is where they filmed me. There was a monument here, recognizing the movie. We worked on it and finally got that taken down.” He smiles faintly as he continues on down the ridge. Exterior Redden’s house, afternoon. Redden and Dickey are drinking sweet tea on the porch. “Do you ever feel bad about the movie?” Redden asks. Dickey hesitates, then responds. “I was only 19,” he says. “But your family got rich off of it,” Redden counters, firm but polite. Dickey locks eyes with him. “I’ve felt bad about it my whole life,” he says. “It was wrong, what they did, the way it all comes off in the film. I’ve always known that.” Redden doesn’t hesitate; he puts out his hand to be shaken and Dickey takes it. “I appreciate that,” Redden says. Later, Redden struggles to articulate himself in interview: “I just wanted some of them to take responsibility. To feel like somebody was hearing me.”

Lee Smith is speaking with fiery defiance. “This place isn’t anymore perfect than anywhere else. But it’s a place of real human beings and real feelings. People work here, they love and lose, they get hurt, they lose their jobs, they struggle to take care of their parents and do whatever they have to to

take care of their children. And I think that’s how we fight all of this, by being who we are, by writing about it, and making films about it, and insisting that people not condescend to us. I love a good joke as good as anyone else but it gets old being the butt of the joke all the damn time!” She laughs, but then grows serious. She pauses to collect her thoughts and watches the slowly flowing waters of Troublesome Creek. “No, it’s certainly not perfect, and I would never want to romanticize it. But I love it. It’s a part of me and I’m proud to be from Appalachia. It’s so rare we get to say that, you know?” Zoom to the faces of Trigiani, Jason Howard, bell hooks, Sam Gleaves, Roger May, Sam Cole.

“No matter how proud I am of where I’m from, there will always be that fear that people won’t take me seriously because of my upbringing,” Samantha Cole says as she enters an office and gives a firm handshake to a woman who is interviewing her for a new job. Voiceover from Cole: *But I’m not going to change my accent. I have perfect grammar and that’s what matters. No matter what the movies and TV tell me, I know that I matter. Where I come from matters.* Cole is leaving the interview now. “I feel good about it. It took me a long time to not have that shame, but I don’t anymore. Because I’ve been lucky to be around other Appalachians who taught me to take pride in that.”

Silas House is seated on the ground at his aunt’s grave in a beautifully maintained cemetery. Her tombstone reads THELMA SMALLWOOD 1935-2015. He talks as he rearranges flower on her grave. “It’s not enough to just complain about the offenses. We have to let people know when they’re being rude. We have to speak out. But most of all we have to tell the stories of our people,” he says. “To me, she was Appalachia, in many ways. Fierce, beautiful, stubborn, sometimes mean, sometimes joyful. Everything she did, she did it hard: she danced hard, she loved hard, she fought hard, she lived hard. That’s who we are, as a people, and I’ll always be fighting for my people like her and the Appalachia I know to be portrayed correctly, with nuance.”

Silas House’s voice narrates: *Those who are attempting to portray the region must become immersed in the region in a special kind of way*. Appalachia’s mountains and people play on-screen, including mountaintop removal coal mining sites, fast food restaurants, untouched mountain ranges, gas station attendants, attorneys, nurses, teachers, children exiting a school bus. *One must go to the mountains, to drive these winding roads. One must sit and jaw for a while with folks on their front porches, to attend weddings and high school graduations,* House continues, and as he does, we attend a high school commencement deep in the mountains. *One must study the history of the place and come to understand it, must sit at a wake and look at the lines on the faces of the people, the calluses on their hands, understand the gestational and generational complexities of poverty and pride and culture.* We see a movie theatre at dusk, brightly lit against a black mountain behind it. Folks file into the theater and are immersed in the film as they eat popcorn. Rows of theatre seats morph to headstones in the cemetery we visited earlier with House and then the camera lifts, taking us back over the mountains as nighttime gathers itself over the land we have come to know more intimately. The mist eases its way over the winding river as we hover. Lights pop on in the houses below. *One must stand for awhile outside and smell the air, study the gravestones on the hillsides that await the inscriptions of names belonging to people, not statistics or stereotypes.*

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