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Local Teen Receives Grant from the Virginia Film Office to Shoot Feature Film in Shenandoah County

Edinburg, VA: Stephen French, 14, has been making movies since he was 7 years old. He's filmed about 300 short movies including a 30 minute film last summer. This summer he will be making his first feature film with financial support from the Virginia Film Office.

The film, *Detached*, is a psychological drama about a young widow, Jessie Lacey, played by local actor Allison Shell. Her husband has just passed away, and she has become socially and mentally isolated as a result. Following a friend's recommendation, she goes up to a small Bed and Breakfast to get some time away from it all. She grows to like the innkeepers, and a weekend trip grows to a week long one. In this week, she comes to realize that the innkeepers are not who they say they are.

Before filming, French contacted the Virginia Film Office whose mission is to promote film making in Virginia. He pointed out that to support their mission; they should be supporting young filmmakers like him. They agreed and gave him a \$500 grant on the condition that he actually make the film; which started filming this week. In addition to writing the script, French recruited adult area actors for all the roles and local youth for the crew, scouted locations, and prepared a detailed shooting schedule. Most of the film will be shot on location at the French's Cabin in Woodstock.

French, who started by making mostly horror films, thinks this one will be special.

"It's got a combination of suspense and drama. Having the dramatic overtones in the film really helps the audience get invested in to the characters," says French.

In addition to Allison Shell, the cast includes, Richard Litten, Jeanne Ellen Russell, Lisa Mikitarian, Samantha Strong, and Evan Christopher Benton as Allison's comatose husband.

When asked what it was like to be directed by a 14 year old, Jeanne Russell had this to say:

"Stephen is totally in charge on the set. He has a specific vision and is amazingly talented with the camera. I am constantly impressed by his organization, professionalism, and creativity."

For more information visit: www.detachedthemovie.com or contact Abby French at Phone: 540-335-3117.