Provenance and Such Matters

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Legal and Not So Simple

Article 1, Section 8, of the U.S. Constitution provides for promotion of the “Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Rights to the respective Writings and Discoveries.” This encouragement to create, to explore, to investigate protects ownership, the monetary gain they may make and exclusive use. But it is not forever. Congress has set the time limits on their copyright — now at 95 years — before entry into the public domain.

The example of Winnie-the-Pooh illustrates that this transition to public domain is not always simple. Especially when a large corporation is involved with trademark rights, multi-media projects and related products in the mix.

Editorial cartoonists are visual commentators who develop their own style. At some times, the message is best conveyed using other artistic techniques, imitating styles, and making references using established icons. They are inspired by other artists. Four cartoonists demonstrate this valid approach.

KidsPost introduces the concept of provenance — which also deals with ownership of creative works, especially when stolen goods are on exhibit in museums. Another aspect of museum collections involves what is called blood art. What ethics are involved in acquisition and display? Students also learn what makes a well-designed museum label.

Another aspect of the arts and finance involves the emerging lucrative film and television practice of location shooting, out of studios and into states and other countries. Are the benefits sufficient to give tax breaks and other incentives to film in your community and state?

Protected by the Constitution and ethical practice, writers and artists have legal rights for their works — as do those who want to use them once they are in the public domain — but keeping and using these rights are not always so simple.
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KIDSPOST

Provenance: Crucial history about past owners of artworks

Through research of provenance, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts learned the 14th-century embroidered panel depicting the entombment of Saint Vigilius had been stolen from a museum in Italy. The MFA sent the panel to the Italian museum. The Nazis blocked a Jewish family from receiving money from the sale of figurines, including the one below, in the MFA collection.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS IN BOSTON

BY HABEN KELATI

• Originally Published March 29, 2022

When a painting sparks your interest during a museum visit and you’re reading the label about the artist, are you thinking about each person who owned the work before it ended up there? There are people whose job is thinking about this question.

This work is known as provenance (pronounced praa-vuh-nans). Provenance is the history of ownership for a work of art. This may sound like a simple task, but finding out all the previous owners of a piece of art is complicated.

Margaret Doyle, head of the curatorial files and records department at the National Gallery of Art in Washington says provenance is slow, detail-oriented work that can’t be done alone. “It’s teamwork. It’s a lot of people providing their expertise to really help you understand what is the history of this journey.”

Records aren’t always updated, or kept at all. Receipts are sometimes missing. Family stories about art purchases are lost to time. Yet, Doyle says, the work is worthwhile because knowing what art was bought when and by whom educates you about the time those purchases were made. “It tells you a lot about history, society and economic history.”

Sometimes provenance work can reveal a dark past. The Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) in Boston, Massachusetts, bought an embroidered panel depicting the entombment of Saint Vigilius from Italy in 1946. Very little was known then about the panel’s history, says Victoria Reed, the MFA’s curator of provenance.

It was at the museum for more than 60 years before a key part of its provenance was uncovered: It had been stolen from an Italian museum during World War II. In 2008, a museum professional from Switzerland discovered that connection and contacted the MFA. By the fall of 2010, the panel was returned to the Tridentine Diocesan Museum in Trento, Italy.

“It was part of a series. … Just as a basic ethical matter, it belonged with the rest of the embroideries,” Reed says.

The MFA is also home to Emma Budge’s collection of porcelain figures. Budge was a Jewish German who died in 1937. Her collection was sold, but her heirs had to flee persecution by the Nazis and were cut off from access to the money from the sale. In this case, the MFA came up with a financial agreement with Budge’s estate in 2017 to keep the figures on display in the museum.

When people visit now and see those figures, they know more about their history.

“We have labels that accompany works of art that have been looted. … We also have more general labels up through the galleries, like how did these objects end up here?” Reed says, regarding how the MFA incorporates provenance information into visitors’ experience.

The next time you see an interesting piece of art at a museum, read the label to see if it includes the work’s history. If not, try a bit of detective work. You may find out more about where it’s been and how it ended up in front of you. □
The world knows about blood diamonds. It’s time it learned about blood art.

Last week brought the welcome news that some of the treasures of the Kingdom of Benin looted by the British more than a century ago will at last be repatriated to Nigeria. The Smithsonian Institution has announced that it will return its collection of priceless Benin artifacts — 39 pieces in all — once it hammers out the details of an agreement with Nigeria’s National Commission for Museums and Monuments. Other institutions should follow the Smithsonian’s lead.

The Benin Bronzes, as they are known, are a rich trove of centuries-old artifacts. This year marks 125 years since the British sent more than 1,000 troops to slaughter the people of Benin City. The 1897 raid — known as “The Punitive Expedition” — was a response to the Benin ambush of an earlier British expedition. The exact number of Benin City victims is unknown (some historians say it could be in the thousands), but the killing and destruction were not the end of the crime that was carried out.

When the British entered the Benin Oba (King’s) palace, they found “several hundred unique bronze plaques, suggestive of almost Egyptian design, but of really superb casting,” according to Reginald Bacon, an intelligence officer with the expedition. Soldiers walked out with the plaques, along with other art, ivory, brass, jewelry and garments. Thousands of pieces were taken.

They were “not just loot, they were blood art,” Australian journalist Marc Fennell explained on the podcast “Stuff the British Stole.” Indeed, word was sent back to Britain that selling off Benin’s objects could help offset the cost of the war.

To the Kingdom of Benin and its descendants, the works represented both the pinnacle of their spirituality and the perfection of their craft. The British saw a piggybank for their imperial desires.

“Blood art” is not a term we typically use to describe treasures taken from colonial subjects. But how are they any different from blood diamonds and conflict minerals?

The concept of “blood diamonds” grew out of violent 1990s conflicts in Africa and usually refers to diamonds mined by African rebel groups to fund insurgencies against legitimate governments. In the early 2000s, representatives of diamond-producing states met to come up with Kimberley Process to try to curb the trade of conflict diamonds. The 2006 movie “Blood Diamond” also served to increase global consciousness about diamonds that helped fuel war in Africa.

What defense can there be for holding on to looted objects, then? The standard answer is that returning works from major institutions in the West would come at the cost of preservation, worldwide knowledge and admiration. Yet true education about such objects is already minimized. The polite little information cards under these artifacts rarely tell viewers that the plundered objects helped fund colonial violence.

Proudly owning and displaying stolen
art are no less shocking than proudly owning and displaying diamonds that play a role in killing people. If you wouldn’t do one, don’t do the other.

A trickle of change must be turned into a torrent, and I hope the Smithsonian’s agreement will help to touch one off. “Blood art” surely needs its Hollywood moment.

The global Black Lives Matter protests of 2020 put a long-needed spotlight on Western museums and demands by African governments to have their heritages returned. Last year, Germany said it would return Benin Bronzes to Nigeria. The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York returned two of its Benin Bronzes, albeit out of a collection of 160.

In 2012, Boston’s Museum of Fine Arts received a promise of 32 Benin Bronzes, to be transferred over time, from the private collection of Robert Owen Lehman (yes, of Lehman Brothers banking stock). Though Nigeria demanded the art be returned, the museum displayed all 32 of the Bronzes and took ownership of five of them. In November 2021, the Boston Globe’s Malcolm Gay reported that the museum would pause the transfer of ownership of the remaining 27. But museum director Matthew Teitelbaum said “we certainly don’t think we should encourage the return of the objects to the donor.”

To the donor? How about doing the right thing and sending them home?

Meanwhile, the British Museum continues to hold on to its blood art collection of more than 900 Benin Bronzes, offering only temporarily loans back to Nigeria.

Lending stolen items back to their rightful owner adds modern-day insult to colonial-era injury.

More than a century after the Punitive Expedition, the British are still trying to get away with their plunder. But the tide is changing — and it’s good to see an American institution such as the Smithsonian helping to rectify this deep harm by repatriating art stolen in cold blood.

Karen Attiah is a columnist for The Washington Post. She writes on international affairs, culture and social issues. Previously, she reported from Curacao, Ghana and Nigeria.

Discuss “Blood art has no place in museums.”

1. What are “blood diamonds”?
2. What connection does Post columnist Karen Attiah make between blood diamonds and the Benin Bronzes?
3. Answer the question that Attiah poses in her column: What defense can there be for holding on to looted objects?
4. Attiah refers to private collector Robert Owen Lehman; however, her main concerns are museums and their exhibits. According to her point of view,
   a. Give a negative example of a museum’s practice.
   b. Give a positive example of a museum’s response to holding stolen and looted items.
   c. What differentiates the approaches?
5. What do you think? Do museums have legal, financial and/or ethical duties to keep or return plundered and stolen art? To whom? Explain your response.
Smithsonian announces new policy on repatriations

Rather than rely on legal title, the institution will consider the ethical implications of owning objects, especially items of cultural heritage.

BY PEGGY MCGHONE

• Originally Published May 4, 2022

A year after it set out to review its collection practices, the Smithsonian has decided it will allow shared ownership of items and the return of objects for ethical rather than legal reasons.

In the case of colonial-era objects, it is no longer enough to say “we didn’t steal it,” Smithsonian officials now believe. In addition, the National Museum of Natural History and the National Museum of the American Indian will apply the federal law dictating the treatment of Native American remains to other human remains in their collections.

“We are codifying what is becoming contemporary museum practice. More and more, we are seeing museums sharing authority of the things we possess and their interpretation, and that requires engagement with their originating communities,” said Kevin Gover, the Smithsonian’s undersecretary for museums and culture, who noted that this approach has been used at the American Indian Museum and the Anacostia Community Museum for many years.
Last week, the Smithsonian adopted the first significant revision to its collections management since 2001. The policy outlines new “values and principles” but offers no details on how they will be implemented by the Smithsonian’s 19 museums, which are responsible for the care of more than 155 million objects, including artwork, historical artifacts and scientific specimens.

The museums have six months to craft procedures for deaccessioning and returning items for ethical reasons. The Smithsonian’s Board of Regents must approve returns that are of significant monetary or historical value.

Despite being identical to the plan Smithsonian Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III previewed five months ago, the update took a year to complete.

“There is a lengthy process of consultation throughout the institution before we can change a Smithsonian directive,” Gover said. “It just takes a while. We are federal, after all. We go through all the steps any federal agency does to create a rule.”

The new policy will affect only a fraction of the collection, Gover said.

“I have heard Lonnie say, and I agree with him, that it will be less than one might expect. There might be a few high-profile cases, like the Benin Bronzes, but those will be rare,” he said, referring to artifacts stolen in 1897 by British forces, which the Smithsonian is planning to return to Nigeria.

The Smithsonian intentionally avoided establishing “a set of prescriptive rules” for all museums, Gover said, preferring instead to allow experts at each institution to take charge. They will not receive additional resources for the work.

“We are not going to have the researchers go back through the catalogue cards for all 155 million objects,” Gover said. Officials expect that research for future exhibitions and public inquiry will generate potential returns.

Several categories, including items taken by colonial violence, human remains and sacred and funerary objects, will be most affected. Federal law already regulates the process for repatriating Native American remains from the United States, but the Smithsonian also has the remains and sacred artifacts of African Americans and people from Australian and New Zealand in its collections. These will now be handled the same way as those under federal law.

“So many things ended up in the Smithsonian’s collection that never should have left the Native American communities,” Gover, a former director of the American Indian Museum, said. “What we’re saying is we have learned from our experience with repatriation and return [under federal law], and there’s no reason not to take it beyond the requirements and not apply it to other museums as well.”

The new policy will affect future acquisitions by raising the bar on what is known about an item before it is acquired. There are no current examples of acquisitions that have been abandoned as a result of the new policy, Gover said.

The procedures that will be created in the coming months will determine the success of the effort, he added.

“The fact that we’re giving back the Benin Bronzes, which are worth millions of dollars, shows that even though it can be painful, we think it’s worth it,” he said. “We will have a new, different and much more prosperous relationship between ourselves and Nigeria and the Kingdom of Benin.”
Museum labels

Museum labels provide information that adds to the viewers’ knowledge of the artist and an appreciation of the work. Viewers learn the artist’s name, the artwork’s name, the year the art was completed and the materials used. Other information may include a brief telling of the work’s story or inspiration, the artist’s situation or a comparison with other works of the same scene or genre. If the owner wants to sell the work, the label may include the price of the artwork.

The font should be legible, especially from the distance viewers must stand. The typeface often varies in size to emphasize the artist’s name and title of the work. White or a light colored paper stock or foam board is used again for legibility.

A label for a work of art might have this information:

**Artist’s Name First Last**  
Artist’s country, date of birth, school of art possibly  
*Title of the Work of Art, year completed*  
Medium used: Oil on panel/Pastel/Watercolor  
Optional: size  
Optional: acquisition information, on loan by information, property of the artist  
If for sale: price/price by request

**Preston Singletary**  
(Tlingit American, b. 1963)  
*Salmon (Xáat), 2018*  
Blown, hot-sculpted, and sand-carved glass; steel stand.  
Courtesy of the artist.

**Edvard Munch**  
Norwegian, 1863-1944  
*The Scream, 1895*  
Pastel on paper on cardboard  
Private Collection

**Nan Yourname**  
American, b. 1973  
*Cat in Basket, 2020*  
Acrylic on board  
32in x 48in  
Property of the artist  
$600

1. Write a museum label for a work that you have created.
Museum Labels for a Group of Photographs, Artwork or Artifacts

Read “What makes a great museum label?” by Anna Faherty.
https://www.museumnext.com/article/what-makes-a-great-museum-label/
She provides examples of museum labels that provide information and take visitors “on a revelatory journey, reframing perceptions along the way.”

2. In the examples she provides, what are three aspects of writing meaningful labels?
   a.
   b.
   c.

3. What does it mean to “reframe perspectives”?

4. Select two to three of the following objects to group in an exhibit. Write a museum label that would give visitors a new way of looking at the items and provoke a reaction.

5. Take a photograph of an item that means something to you on the theme your class has chosen for an exhibit. Using the suggestions in the article, write a 100- to 150-word, personal label that would be exhibited beside your photograph.
Inspired by Artists

Michael Ramirez

March 7, 2022  War Criminal

Mike Luckovich

March 26, 2022  Picasso’s Guernica Updated

They Have Style and a Point of View

1. Both editorial cartoonists are commenting on a current event. What is it?
2. Who is the central figure in both cartoons? What view do the cartoonists have of him?
3. Ramirez uses calligraphy and negative space to create his image. Give three examples of his effectiveness in creating his commentary.
4. Who is Picasso and what is Guernica? Why is the artwork a particularly effective comparison to contemporary events?
5. Compare and contrast a reproduction of Picasso’s painting to Luckovich’s image. What elements are the same and what has Luckovich added?
They Have Style and a Point of View

1. Ratt tells readers his editorial cartoon is inspired by artist Kara Walker. Where is this information found? For what style is Walker known?

2. To assure readers understand the images, cartoonists will use labels and symbols.
   a. What symbols have been used by Ratt?
   b. What label identifies the third figure?

3. What ideas are found in the title of Ratt’s commentary?

4. In Goodwyn’s visual commentary, three figures are reading a newspaper. Tell who each is and what details identify the figures.

5. The dialogue box and newspaper headline together identify the country and the situation. What is Goodwyn’s point of view?
Luke McGarry began drawing a nude Pooh Bear as soon as he heard the news. The original, nearly 100-year-old “bear of very little brain” from the Hundred Acre Wood had rung in this new year by entering the public domain. Now quite humbly, McGarry’s creative appetite felt rumbly.

The Los Angeles-based artist sat and penned his Winnie-the-Pooh idea in four panels, announcing the 1926 character’s free-for-all status as of Jan. 1, with a winking if satirically speculative interpretation: “Disney still own their version of me. … But as long as I don’t put a little red shirt on, I can do as I like” — a reference to how the character’s attire regularly began to be depicted beginning in the 1930s.

McGarry waited a day to post his colorful cartoon on social media. Later he checked his accounts: “I didn’t think it was going to blow up like it did.” On Twitter alone, the illustration received nearly 40,000 likes. The artist realized his Pooh toon could bring some cash flow. “Had I anticipated there being any demand, I would’ve probably had prints done in advance.”

What the post did highlight is now that the mid-1920s iteration of Pooh Bear is available to anyone free of charge, he and pal Christopher Robin’s woods are packed with potential money pots.

Among the many works in this year’s public domain trove — now that their requisite 95-year period has ended under U.S. copyright law — are Felix Salten’s original “Bambi, a Life in the Woods” novel; titles by Ernest Hemingway, Langston Hughes and Dorothy Parker; classic silent films and Broadway songs; and about 400,000 pre-1923 sound recordings. Yet Jennifer Jenkins, director of the Center for the Study of the Public Domain at Duke
University, says most of the response she has received this year involves the gentle teddy bear co-created by British author and essayist A.A. Milne.

"I can't get over how people are freaking out about Winnie-the-Pooh in a good way," Jenkins says. "Everyone has a very specific story of the first time they read it or their parents gave them a doll or they [have] stories about their kids." Sheonders why early Pooh in the public domain resonates.

"It's the 'Ted Lasso' effect," she says. Right now especially, "We need a window into a world where people or animals behave with decency to one another."

Milne unveiled the character Edward Bear in a 1924 collection of poetry, which led to the 1926 book "Winnie-the-Pooh," whimsically illustrated by E.H. Shepard. Milne and Shepard, having survived the horrors of World War I battlefields, chose to turn sharply toward the warmth of an imaginary playland inspired by their own children's stuffed toys. They introduced the anthropomorphic title teddy bear and such friends as Rabbit, Piglet, Owl, Kanga and child Roo, downcast donkey Eeyore and human Christopher Robin, named for Milne's son. The first "Winnie-the-Pooh" tells a series of charming adventures, including thwarted attempts to score a little honey.

"Everything in that book — the plot, the dialogue, the setting, the events, the characters — that's all public domain," says Duke's Jenkins, who notes that the character Tigger is not in the public domain because he was introduced in the 1928 follow-up book, "The House at Pooh Corner."

The rights to the post-1926 Pooh-niverse, as Jenkins calls it, still belong to the Walt Disney Co. as a global juggernaut — centering on shows, films, toys and merchandise — that is among the world's most profitable media franchises, in the stratosphere of Pokémon and Hello Kitty, according to an estimate in Statista.

So what types of adapted or derivative Pooh projects, exactly, are creators free to put into the marketplace?

"It's up to them and their intellectual property lawyers to figure out where Disney is retreating to, and where Disney is going to put up a fight," attorney Stuart Rees said.

If you're a writer or artist, for instance, "You can put original iterations of Pooh into any of your creative work" such as a film, musical or play, says Jenkins, while noting that Disney holds trademark rights on various "Winnie the Pooh" products, be it plush dolls or pajamas.

Jenkins points out that Disney itself has benefited from earlier public domain books and folk tales including those by Gabrielle-Suzanne de Villeneuve ("Beauty and the Beast"), the Brothers Grimm ("Snow White") and Charles Perrault ("Sleeping Beauty" and "Cinderella").

She also says that when "The Great Gatsby" novel entered the public domain a year ago, it inspired sequels and planned animation, as well as "The Gay Gatsby" and "The Great Gatsby Undead."

Those examples point to how different a "Winnie-the-Pooh"-inspired work can be. "Want to write a story about how Pooh and friends stay sane during a pandemic? (Eat more honey!)" Jenkins writes on the Duke center's site. "Or a story in which Pooh and friends tackle online bullying? Now you can, without having to seek a license from Disney. This is how the public domain supports creativity."

The Walt Disney Co. declined to provide a statement to The Washington Post about the ramifications of 1926's "Winnie-the-Pooh" entering the public domain.

(For the late producer Stephen Slesinger obtained exclusive rights to "Winnie-the-Pooh" works in 1930 from Milne, then in 1961 transferred them to Disney. The company and Slesinger's heirs later fought over those rights for decades.)

McGarry, the artist and "Palaver" comic creator, says that many people particularly responded to a line in his cartoon about what's ahead for Public Domain Pooh, as McGarry's Christopher Robin says, "You're not going to do anything weird, are you?"

How weird? Well, Ryan Reynolds delivered perhaps the first prominent spoof of Public Domain Pooh when he appeared in a video, posted Jan. 2 to YouTube, to promote his mobile service company by reading from a new "book," "Winnie-the-Screwed." The video has more than 3 million views.

Jenkins says future Public Domain Pooh works will be well-served by including disclaimers. "Say you draw something with the original characters — call it 'Winnie the Pooh Goes to Mars' — and you put a disclaimer that it's not produced or sponsored by Disney. That dispels confusion right there."

But just how dark or bizarre or derivative might plays and books and movies and memes get now that Public Domain Pooh is fair game?

McGarry says he can point only to his air-of-menace punchline: "That remains to be seen."

—The Washington Post

2008 PHOTO BY MATT DUNHAM/ASSOCIATED PRESS

A first U.S. edition of “Winnie-the-Pooh” signed by the author A.A. Milne and illustrator E.H. Shepard is displayed with cutouts of characters from the book at the London offices of the Sotheby’s auction house. Disney still owns the rights to the post-1926 “Pooh-niverse.” “It’s up to them and their intellectual property lawyers to figure out where Disney is retreating to, and where Disney is going to put up a fight,” attorney Stuart Rees said.
How to get Virginia in the movies

BY BEAU CRIBBS

Originally Published February 6, 2022

This time last year, I was Michael Keaton’s personal assistant while he worked in Virginia on the Hulu limited series “Dopesick.” I realize that sentence sounds made up, but, thanks to good timing, dumb luck and a previous life as a politician’s body man, it’s true.

I’ll admit to being a fish out of water at first. For more than a decade, my day job has been as a political communications consultant and occasional comedy writer. And though being my own boss allowed me to take this sabbatical, I had never been on a big-budget production such as this.

My duties with Keaton were fairly straightforward: I made sure he knew his schedule, wrangled some press availabilities and, on days when I was exceedingly lucky, I looked after his yellow Lab, Amos.

The days were long. Often, we worked more than 12 hours to shoot only 90 seconds of footage for the final product. I didn’t mind, though. It was fun to chat with my literal childhood superhero between takes about everything from baseball to politics to Harold Ramis. And I’d be lying if I said it wasn’t thrilling to watch Keaton do his job.

But here’s something I didn’t expect: I loved watching everyone else do their jobs, too. All told, the cast and crew of “Dopesick” totaled more than 450 people — and nearly all of them worked off-screen. They were truck drivers, grips, coronavirus testing teams and everything in between.

But here’s something I didn’t expect: I loved watching everyone else do their jobs, too. All told, the cast and crew of “Dopesick” totaled more than 450 people — and nearly all of them worked off-screen. They were truck drivers, grips, coronavirus testing teams and everything in between.

These weren’t short-term transplants from New York or California, as I naively assumed; they were Virginians doing what they loved in their home state. And it led me down a rabbit hole to learn everything I could about what the commonwealth does to cultivate and attract more creative projects — and jobs — like this.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, Virginia is one of 34 states offering film/television production incentives. Our programs are the Governor’s Motion Picture Opportunity Fund (providing grants) and the Virginia Motion Picture Tax Credit Fund (providing refundable tax credits) — the latter of which was last revamped in 2010 with bipartisan legislative support under then-Gov. Robert F. McDonnell (R).
9. These investments have paid off. The Virginia Film Office cites a 2020 economic study that estimates the industry’s impact was $862 million in 2019, providing 5,600 full-time jobs and a $13 average annual return for every public dollar spent.

10. But our incentives pale in comparison with those of nearby states. Virginia’s annual funding cap is $10.5 million, which lags behind Maryland ($14 million), Tennessee ($13 million) and North Carolina ($31 million) — the same states Gov. Glenn Youngkin (R) singled out in his inaugural address when talking about our need to remain competitive in the region.

11. Variety reports that Georgia’s film/television tax credit topped $1.2 billion last year. That isn’t a typo. Virginia’s programs equal 1 percent of Georgia’s.

12. Those of us who live and work in Virginia aren’t surprised when out-of-towners rave about all we have to offer. “Dopesick” showrunner Danny Strong gushed at a Virginia Film Festival panel about how much he loved working here. Actor Will Poulter said Richmond was “one of the best places [he had] visited in America.” And I have it on good authority that Keaton frequently enjoyed local restaurants and the Capital Trail.

13. After the show wrapped, several of my new friends moved on to new gigs in the industry — none of them in Virginia. One moved to New York full time; another got work in Cleveland; another in Asheville, N.C. This is anecdotal, but it shows that Virginia is at a competitive disadvantage compared with our counterparts jockeying for the same creative projects — projects that hire local workers and contribute to local economies. It’s time to change that.

14. By modernizing and expanding our existing incentives, gig workers could turn into full-time workers right here at home. It’s an obvious opportunity to bring permanent high-wage jobs to Virginia before we fall even further behind.

15. For me, working on “Dopesick” was like visiting a small but interconnected city. When the cameras rolled and the actors delivered their lines, I saw with my own eyes that it was the result of hundreds of people doing specific jobs to prepare for that moment. But these opportunities will be in short supply if our elected officials don’t make them a greater priority.

16. In other words, the crew did their jobs. It’s time for Virginia to do the same.
Personal and State Benefits in the Movies

Read “How to get Virginia in the movies,” an opinion piece that argues the benefits of filming movies and television episodes in the state of Virginia. Respond to the following questions, including doing the research suggested.

1. The first four paragraphs relate personal experience.
   a. What do readers learn about Beau Cribbs?
   b. How does his job influence his point of view?

2. In paragraphs 5-7, Cribbs begins to build his argument. Summarize the point of view he shares.

3. In paragraphs 8-9, Cribbs presents the numbers provided by reliable sources.
   a. Who are his sources? Why are they reliable?
   b. What concept do the numbers support?

4. Paragraphs 10 and 11 act as a concession. In paragraphs 1-9 readers learn of the personal and state benefits of film/television incentives. What counter information is given in these two paragraphs?

5. Paragraph 12 returns to presenting a support of Cribbs’ thesis.
   a. What idea does he present?
   b. Is it a persuasive argument? Explain your response.

6. What are the repercussions of state officials’ inaction?

7. What is the thesis or main idea being made by Beau Cribbs in his guest commentary?

8. Cribbs includes suggestions that go beyond his personal experience, facts and quotations.
   a. What does he suggest in paragraph 14?
   b. What do words such as “obvious,” “opportunity” and “high-wage jobs” add to his position?
   c. Has Cribbs been effective in his arguments? Has he persuaded you to agree with him?

9. Before making a decision about Cribbs’ position, do some research.
   a. What costs are there to the state to provide incentives?
   b. Where have movies or television episodes been filmed in Virginia? What have been the benefits to local communities? What have been the costs to local communities?
   c. Would communities where filming has taken place, do it again? Why or why not?

10. Write a persuasive essay or guest commentary in which you present reasons to or not to provide incentives for production companies to film in your community.