
April 10, 2015

Dear Premier McNeil,

My name is Jordan McMurray. I am not a film producer or a big director. I'm not a cameraman or a writer, although it's my dream to one day be a big part of the film industry. Right now I'm only 13. While I can't say I *need* the film industry to survive because it is my livelihood, like so many other people,—I can say that without the film industry my life will not be the same. In fact, it is because of the film industry here in Nova Scotia that I even have the courage to write you in the first place.

I first moved to Nova Scotia when I was in Grade 1. I have always been "small" for my age. In fact, people have always thought I am at least 4 years younger than I really am. Everyone in my class was always taller, including most of the girls. My Mom told me I would "catch up" and even if I didn't, God just made some people smaller than others. This really wasn't a huge problem when I was in the younger grades, but as I moved up in school and the kids got bigger and bigger, it was more apparent, and I started to get teased quite a bit. I eventually got a nickname, "Shorty Jordy." I tried to brush it off and laugh with everyone else but one day it got really bad when the bullying became physical. My life seemed to really change after that. I was not as happy. I hated school. I begged my mom not to make me go. I hated being short. I always asked her if there was something wrong with me. Being only 9, I just didn't understand. I hated being "me."

Then one day, my mom signed me up to do some background work with Haven. I thought it might be fun as I knew some other kids that had done it. I got chosen to be in an episode where Jason Priestly and Emily Rose were talking to a bunch of kids in a classroom. I was one of those kids. I was seated at the back of the class where Jason was also sitting. I got to talk to him a bit between takes, which was great, even though at the time I really didn't even know who he was. He asked me questions and seemed really interested in me, so I was happy to talk to him. I am not even sure how we got on the subject but I remember him telling me that I can do anything I want to do and that size has absolutely nothing to do with it. If I want to do something, nothing should stop me. I remember that he was also "short," at least compared to other people, so I knew he meant what he said. That's when I also knew exactly what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. This may sound funny coming from someone so young but even today, I know with every part of me, this is what I want to do forever. It is like something changed that day and I have never looked back. My size never mattered to me again. In fact, I started seeing all the great things I could do because of my size.

Since that day I have been doing everything I can to be part of the film industry. I joined the local theatre and worked for 3 years with Cynthia Myers, who was my first mentor. I also auditioned for parts in different projects and when I was eligible, I joined ACTRA. I have been lucky enough to meet so many amazing and kind people in the industry who have gone out of their way to help me. People like John Shurko, an assistant director for Haven. He knew how badly I wanted to be an actor and he helped me

when he really didn't have to. People like Erin Hennessey who owns a casting agency. She really understands how much acting means to me—and everyone else she works with.

Because of her I have been lucky enough to be a part of so many different projects filmed in Nova Scotia, like Mr. D, The Lizzie Borden Chronicles, 22 Minutes and the Book of Negroes to name just a few. And people like Gillian Everill, who works at a big film company in Nova Scotia. She was always there to give me or my Mom advice just because she believes in me and wants to help. Or people like Ciel Crosby, who also believes in me and has helped me (and so many other people) get auditions for the incredible projects here in Nova Scotia. And there are so many other people in the industry that have helped me on my way to reaching my dreams, like the costume people, the hair and makeup people, the casting directors, the people who coordinated everything, the people who made the meals and fed me, the people who helped me on set when I felt lost or overwhelmed when I first started. Without all of these people and the countless others I have not even named (because honestly, it takes a ton of people to make a movie or TV show), I know I would not be who I am today. I would not be confident in who I am. I would not feel good about myself and I probably would not know exactly what I want to do for the rest of my life.

I may not understand much about the politics of what is happening with the film industry, but I do know that all of the people involved in this amazing industry love what they do as much as I do. I have never seen anyone who is not nice or who doesn't want to help another person like they have helped me. Making movies is not just a job to them, it is a dream. I also know that not many people get to do what they dream about for a living. And it scares me that all of those dreams and people may not be there tomorrow or the day after, not because they don't want to, but because they *have to* leave to follow their dreams somewhere else. That just seems so sad to me, especially when all these people who are following their dreams are also helping others find theirs.

I know my letter will likely not change your mind about the tax cuts to the film industry, especially when it comes down to money—it's always about money for the people that are in charge. I get that. But that is why this whole thing makes even less sense to me. I am in Grade 8 math and even I can see that the money the film industry brings to Nova Scotia is so much more than the money the government pays out. So, I am asking you, for the sake of all the people like me that simply want to see their dreams come true, that you really look at the real cost if the film industry is no longer in Nova Scotia, and if all of the amazing people that work in it are no longer here because they had to face the fact that their dreams just couldn't come true in Nova Scotia anymore.

Sincerely,

Jordan McMurray
Actor!

Cole Harbour, NS