

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 6:00 AM**

**Wednesday, July 18, 2018**

--Detroit, Michigan

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## **FILMMAKERS ANNOUNCE DOCUMENTARY ON HISTORIC DETROIT BANKRUPTCY**

History Making Productions (HMP), a Philadelphia-based documentary film production studio, today announced plans to produce a feature-length documentary film and digital media project on the historic bankruptcy of Detroit. ***We Are Alive: A Grand Bargain for America's City*** will uncover the inside story behind the largest municipal bankruptcy in U.S. history while tracing the evolution of Detroit's historic economic and fiscal slide and its momentum building resurgence.

Today's announcement coincides with the fifth anniversary of Detroit filing for Chapter 9 bankruptcy.

"The Detroit bankruptcy and its controversial economic and political ramifications amount to an incredibly dramatic story that deserves to be told in a documentary format. The characters that shaped this story—city residents, community activists, politicians, judges, attorneys, municipal employee unions, city workers, retirees, bond market creditors, art lovers and philanthropists—reached a profound compromise that allowed Detroit to begin rising from the ashes," said Sam Katz, the project's Producer and Director. "Our goal is to reflect the true spirit of Detroit and the resiliency of its people by producing an ambitious, dramatic and engaging Detroit film."

***We Are Alive*** was conceived in January 2016. Since then, HMP has researched the story, raised funds for its production, conducted initial on-camera interviews, and assembled a production team with deep Detroit roots including:

- ❖ **James McGovern**, Producer and Co-Director James McGovern is a filmmaker local to the Detroit area, but his work has been recognized internationally, at film festivals around the country and on national networks.
- ❖ **Nathan Bomey**, a *USA TODAY* business reporter who covered the bankruptcy for the *Detroit Free Press* and authored the book *Detroit Resurrected: From Bankruptcy and Back*, is the Principal Scriptwriter.
- ❖ **Tom Sugrue**, a New York University historian and author of *Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*, is serving as the project's Senior Historical Advisor.
- ❖ **Chastity Pratt-Dawsey**, covers cities and urban affairs for Michigan's *Bridge Magazine*, and is serving as Associate Producer.
- ❖ **Sandra Svoboda**, with *WDET-FM*, Detroit's public radio, covered the bankruptcy for the station and is serving as Associate Producer.
- ❖ **Sam Katz** founded HMP in 2008. He spent 25 years in municipal finance and served as Chair of the Pennsylvania agency charged with oversight of Philadelphia's finances. Sam has also been a candidate for Mayor of Philadelphia.

Principal photography and production on the project are underway. HMP expects the film to be completed and ready for release in the 2nd half of 2019.

A short video, *My Detroit*, based on a poem, "*You May Not Know My Detroit*" by Jessica Care Moore was released with this announcement and is available through this link: <https://vimeo.com/266934115> A **Media Kit** is also attached.

**CultureSource**, a Detroit-based arts organization, serves as the project's not-for-profit fiscal sponsor. (see: [www.culturesource.org](http://www.culturesource.org))

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**1. Why is a Philadelphia documentary film production company producing a film about Detroit?**

History Making Productions (HMP) is a production company whose focus has largely been on cities, their history and challenges. The company's founder and Executive Producer, Sam Katz, spent much of his business career advising state and local governments on finances and capital project funding. Telling the story of America's largest and most complex municipal bankruptcy is a natural for Sam and HMP.

**2. When do you expect to complete the film and what is the status of production?**

We started filming interviews with experts on the Detroit bankruptcy—both insiders and observers—as well as citizens of Detroit in September and October 2017. We anticipate the film's release to be towards the end of 2019.

**3. Why the title, *We Are Alive*?**

Detroit is a place of gritty ambitions. Despite tremendous challenges, the city's people have persevered and are pressing forward to shape a new future for their city.

**4. Will we see any clips before the full-length documentary is finished?**

In addition to the documentary film, the project will include a digital media portfolio with webisodes (short films on a wide range of subjects to allow audiences to learn more), "shortcuts" (excerpts from interviews with some of the most interesting expert commentary on a variety of relevant topics), and an audio blog/podcast. All of these other resources will be made available to the public on the project's website: [www.bankruptcyofdetroit.com](http://www.bankruptcyofdetroit.com).

**5. How will the film be distributed?**

We intend to enter the film into film festivals towards the goal of theatrical distribution. We expect to partner with one or more cable and streaming video platforms. We intend to schedule screenings in metropolitan markets across the nation including those experiencing fiscal distress. We will also develop curriculum resources so that elements of the project can find a home in schools and other educational institutions.

**6. Why produce a film on Detroit's bankruptcy now that the City is operating on its own and has exited from bankruptcy?**

Detroit's story is unique reflecting the characteristics of place, its politics and culture. But Detroit also resonates with audiences throughout the world because it serves as a cautionary tale of industrial disinvestment, municipal mismanagement, racism, high levels of debt and taxation, and political disunity. As many other cities, states and government services, including Social Security and Medicare, head toward insolvency, the profound grand bargain that ended Detroit's bankruptcy has lessons that reverberate far beyond the city's 139 square miles.