
Filming at the Courthouse

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To the Board of Supervisors of Madison County:

My name is John Read. For the past 27 years I have worked as a locations scout and locations manager in the motion picture industry, my primary role being to help convince producers of the value of filming in Mississippi. Prior to my going freelance, I worked as the assistant director of our state's Film Office, during which time I discovered the magnetic charm of The Movie Capital of Mississippi right here in Madison County, and, since working on "O Brother Where Art Thou," I've now been involved, by far, with more productions in Canton than in any other city in Mississippi. And I've made Madison County my home since 2003.

In the past year, I've been part of the production of five feature films that filmed in Madison County... and I've scouted for locations for four others that are interested in coming here!

We've just begun filming in Canton the sequel to a popular action thriller called "As Good As Dead." Despite its setting being Southern California and Arizona, the producers of this movie, three of whom have previously made movies in-state, elected to return to make "As Hood As Dead 2." Filming will take place this month in Madison, Scott and Hinds Counties, and in April they'll finish in Tijuana, Mexico.

In our story, Michael Jai White's cop character is transporting a man he arrested, played by Tom Berenger, across country to a federal courthouse to testify against a Mexican cartel. The climax of the movie takes place at this courthouse, where, having escaped numerous attacks from that cartel on the road, our cop delivers his witness. Unfortunately, the bad guys have followed them, and they converge on the courthouse, armed to the teeth. A huge fight, with and without guns, ensues inside the building, and ultimately the good guys prevail. While the battle inside is waged, scores of law enforcement (and even a fire truck) arrive on the scene.

What we are asking is, permission to film *outside* the Madison County Circuit Court - all the indoor scenes will be shot elsewhere - on Thursday, March 26th. We also hope to be allowed to have up to three sheriff's department vehicles, and the county's fire truck, as some of the respondents answering the emergency call. (Canton city police will also be part of this response.) We would work with the

appropriate personnel on the day to coordinate our activity, of course, with all the action being contained within the courthouse parking lot.