

A 'microdrama' just wrapped filming in Baton Rouge. Are more on the way?

By Dillon Lowe



A short-form vertical drama series wrapped photography in Baton Rouge on Tuesday, and local film industry consultant Patrick Mulhearn says it could be the first of many such productions to shoot in the Capital City.

The series, *Because of Her*, centers on a love triangle and was filmed for [VeYou](#), a mobile-first microdrama platform launched by Hollywood producer Tommy Harper. Harper's credits include major film and television projects like *Mission: Impossible III*, *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, *Top Gun: Maverick*, *Beetlejuice Beetlejuice* and the Netflix series *Wednesday*.

Vertical dramas, also known as microdramas, are scripted, serialized productions shot specifically for smartphone consumption. Episodes typically run just one to two minutes and usually end on a cliffhanger.

Though microdramas are still finding their footing in the U.S., the format has [blossomed into a \\$7 billion industry in China](#), attracting millions of daily viewers and yielding high returns on investment.

Because of Her was shot over about a week in Baton Rouge and is expected to be released in late August or early September, Mulhearn says. Filming locations included the Highland Road home of Kyle and Elona Sharbaugh, the Shaw Center for the Arts and the Old State Capitol.

The production had a budget of about \$150,000 and employed roughly 25 cast and crew members, not including extras, most of them locals. Kasey Esser, one of the leads, is a prominent vertical drama actor whom Mulhearn describes as “the Brad Pitt of microdramas.”

Because of Her is the first Louisiana-shot microdrama for VeYou, and Mulhearn, an executive producer on the project, says it will serve as a test case for a [larger ambition](#) he and Harper have been discussing for months: turning Baton Rouge into the “verticals production capital of America.”

The pitch, Mulhearn says, is straightforward: Louisiana has a competitive film tax credit program, and Baton Rouge has Celtic Studios, experienced crew members, film-friendly locations and a talent pipeline through LSU, Southern and BRCC.

According to Mulhearn, other producers have already begun reaching out as word of the production has spread.

“Baton Rouge has all of the ingredients they’re looking for,” he says.

The long-term goal is to bring a steady stream of vertical productions to Baton Rouge. Mulhearn says the original plan discussed with VeYou called for roughly two productions per month over three years, or about 72 total projects, though no contract is currently in place for that full slate.

For now, he and others involved with *Because of Her* will be conducting a postmortem on the shoot to assess what worked and what did not.

The format's appeal, Mulhearn says, comes down to cost, speed and distribution. Microdramas can be produced quickly and relatively inexpensively and already have a built-in path to viewers through VeYou and other short-form video platforms like TikTok and ReelShort. He also sees potential in "branded entertainment," with companies using scripted content to put their products in front of viewers. *Because of Her*, for example, showcases Baton Rouge-based [Haspel](#)—the "Originator of the Seersucker Suit"—through wardrobe worn by Esser.

"You can basically go from a script to making money on a platform within just a matter of weeks," Mulhearn says.

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