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AN AFFIAR, a feature film

This grant application involves the production of a narrative feature film (which is my primary scholarly activity, according to the Department of Communication Studies Tenure Document). AN AFFAIR, which will be based on a script I wrote, is a story that explores why two people might enter into an extramarital affair one night when they are both on the road to their respective homes.

Matthew Shelton is a 35 year old actor still trying to make a go of his chosen profession. He is on his way home from a small commercial production. Cora Van Der Graf is a mid-30s wife and mom on her way home from caring for an ailing parent. They meet as they're checking into a roadside motel, and the instant spark combined with their emotional vulnerability leads them to seriously consider a fling – but as they talk throughout the night, they also become aware of their own manipulations and each others' vulnerabilities. So the encounter that seemed to be about to happen becomes an exploration of their situations and the possible ramifications.

The story is about the human need for companionship and the reasons people consider and enter into affairs. It's about two people who have reached the age where life's disappointments have begun to add up and make them all the more likely to consider other options.

On an artistic side, the film represents my attempt to go deeper on an issue that I think is of cultural importance. As marriage comes more and more under fire in our society, I think it's of value for art to explore why people do these things, to illuminate our issues and allow people to experience something challenging through the artistic exploration of it without having to go through the pain of actually experiencing it. The film also represents an artistic challenge – two people will spend much of the film in a confined space. These elements make it important to my development as an artist.