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'Keyes' to success? Waltham studio sets sights on big screen

By Paul Restuccia
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Coming to a theater near you: "The Legend of Lucy Keyes," a psychological thriller starring French actress Julie Delpy and American actor Justin Theroux.

From what studio? Oh, the one in downtown Waltham.

These are heady times for film production studio Moody Street Pictures.

Founded three years ago by Boston Camera co-owner John MacNeil and local filmmaker Mark Donadio, Moody Street is a collaborative of producers, camera operators, editors and directors that does a variety of commercial, industrial and documentary projects. Its clients include Legal Sea Foods and Polar Beverages and it's the production company for the "American Chopper" show on the Discovery Channel.



"The Legend of Lucy Keyes" writer/director John Stimpson at his office in Waltham. (Staff photo by Doug McFadd)

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Now Moody is becoming a player in the world of feature films.

"Lucy Keyes" local connections don't end there. John Stimpson, who wrote and directed the movie, is a Wellesley native and Harvard University grad.

Stimpson, who lives in the shadow of Wachusett Mountain in Princeton, mined the homegrown legend of Lucy Keyes, a girl who was murdered by her neighbor 250 years ago. Stimpson's home is on part of the former Keyes family property.

"I have heard things out there, have had the hair stand up on the back of my head," said Stimpson, who lives in an 18th century house with his wife and three sons. "It's creepy."

"Lucy Keyes" was filmed on location in Princeton in only 26 days on high-definition video. The shoot had its own otherworldly moments, including an eerie white mist hovering above Keyes' actual headstone, caught on camera.

Because "Lucy Keyes" was shot digitally, Moody Street was able to keep the budget under \$1 million. Stimpson even did some of the editing on his laptop at home.

Moody Street is still working out the movie's North American distribution, but has wrapped up deals to show "Lucy Keyes" in most major cities next spring.

Moody Street is already at work producing its next film, "Black Irish," an indie drama about a dysfunctional South Boston family, written and directed by Southie native and Hollywood screenwriter Brad Gann.

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