English 345: American Independent Film
Far From Heaven Screening Resources

Production Circumstances

Preproduction	Production (Summer-Fall 2001)	Post-Production (Late 2001-02)
• Haynes begins writing *Far From Heaven* after finishing *Velvet Goldmine* (1998). Conceives film as Douglas Sirk homage and writes role of Cathy Whitaker for "muse" Julianne Moore, who had starred in his film, *Safe* (1995). • Begins developing project with long-time co-producer Christine Vachon (co-founder of Killer Films). • Receives production development and fundraising assistance from John Wells Productions, which funds Killer Films; Paul G. Allen's Vulcan Productions; and Section Eight, production company formed by Steven Soderbergh and George Clooney. Soderbergh calls Haynes to offer help with current project. • Preproduction bidding for financing/distribution rights: USA Films (formerly October Films) and Miramax, who had "buried" *Velvet Goldmine* after Haynes didn't heed Harvey Weinstein's editing suggestions. Haynes and Vachon go with USA Films. • Budget: $12 million, low for a film that required rich, detailed sets/costumes and high-quality color cinematography.	• Filmed in New York City at request of Julianne Moore, who was pregnant and wanted to shoot close to home. • 9/11/01 attack on NYC decreases preproduction time and destroys several booked shooting locations in downtown Manhattan. • Shoot exceeds budget, eventually finishing at $14 million. • USA Films head Scott Greenstein presses Haynes and Vachon to give back part of their director/producer fees to offset cost overruns, which they do. • Film's completion bond company, supported by USA Films, takes over production duties after $300,000 overrun, firing Vachon, who had founded her own production company, produced films for almost 20 years, and worked on all Haynes's previous features.	• Spring 2002: USA Films test-screens initial cut of film to low numbers, with 20% of test audience deeming pacing "too slow." • Executive producer Soderbergh, who has final cut on *Far From Heaven*, reviews film with Haynes and gives editing advice, most of which Haynes rejects. Greenstein threatens Vachon, with poor film marketing if Haynes doesn't take all Soderbergh's suggestions. • Greenstein fired (5/02); James Schamus and David Linde take over Focus Features, an independent division of Universal formed via purchase/merger of USA Films and Good Machine, company Schamus had headed with Ted Hope. • Schamus allows Haynes to cut film as he wishes. • Released 11/2002; grosses $15.9 million domestically $29 millon internationally. • Multiple nominations and wins from critics (NY Film Critics Circle), press (Golden Globes) and peers (Oscars, Independent Spirit, Screen Actors Guild, Writer's Guild of America).