



A Tale of Two Companies: Part 2

Kathy Cacace // RTF 308



Key concepts

Media industries perspective

Georges Méliès

Gaston Méliès

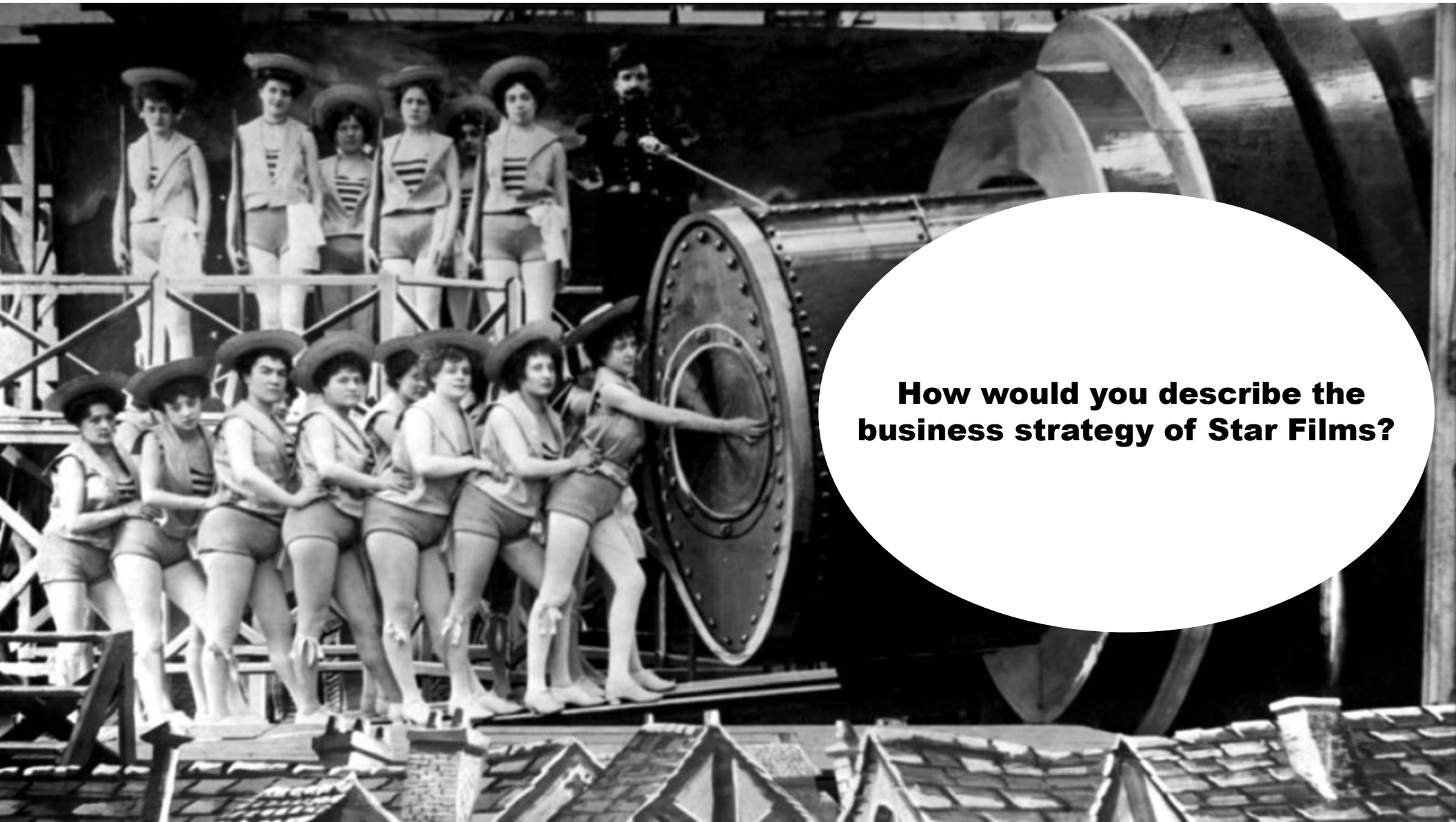
Star Films Paris / Star Films US

Thomas Edison

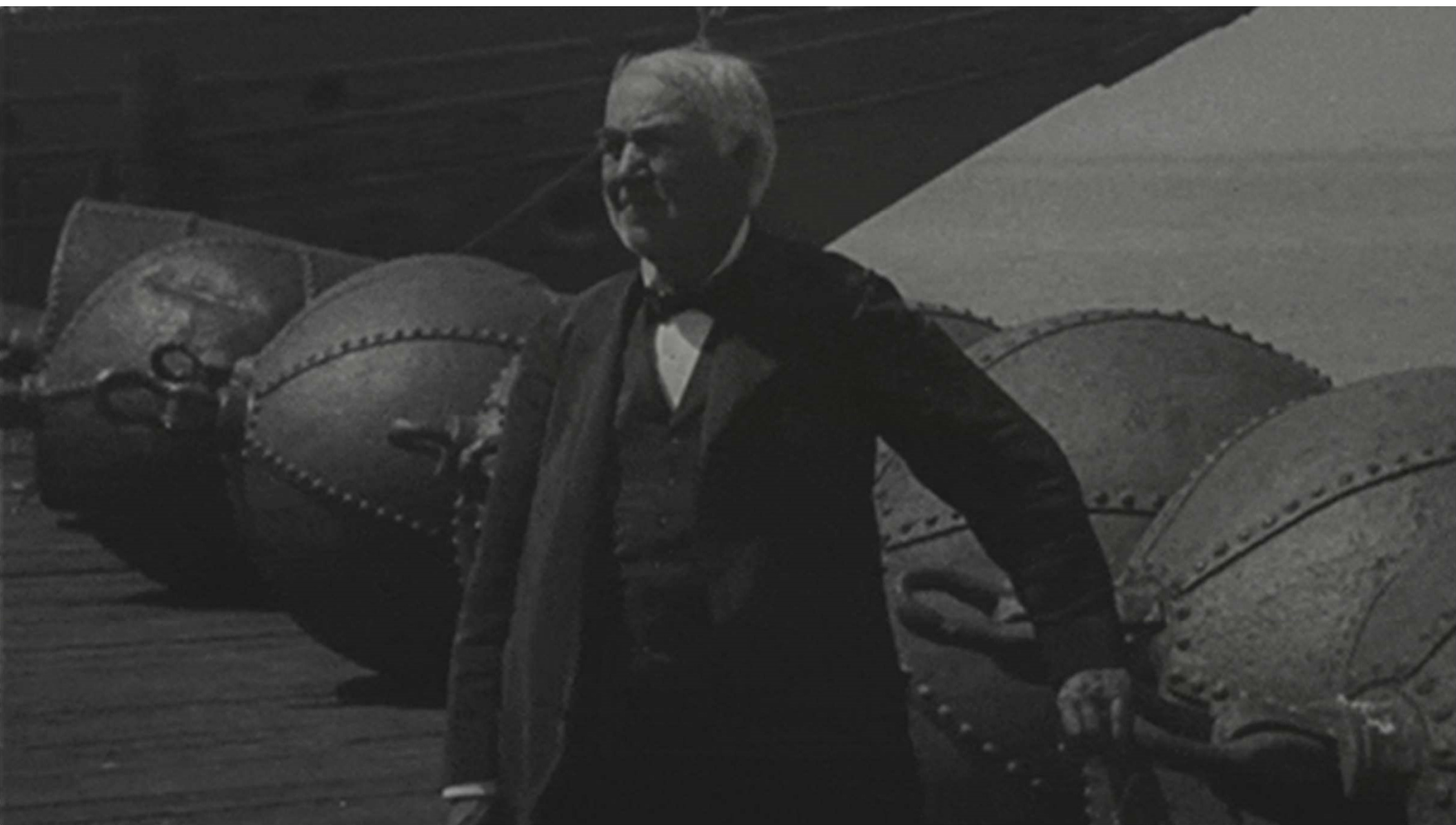
The Edison Trust (or the MPPC)

Factory production system

One-reel films



How would you describe the business strategy of Star Films?





**“The Wizard of
Menlo Park”
Drunk History
S3E11**

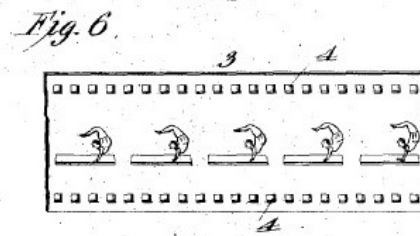
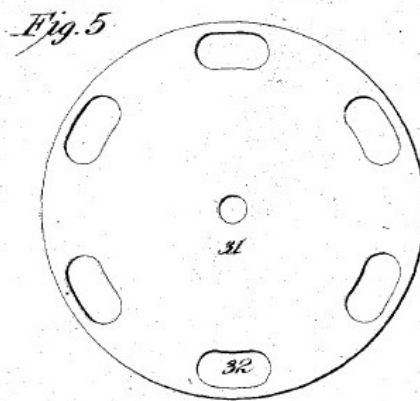
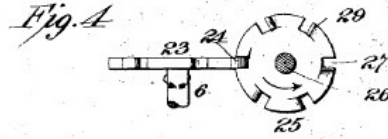
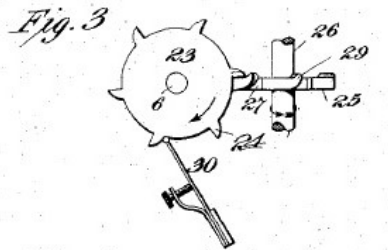
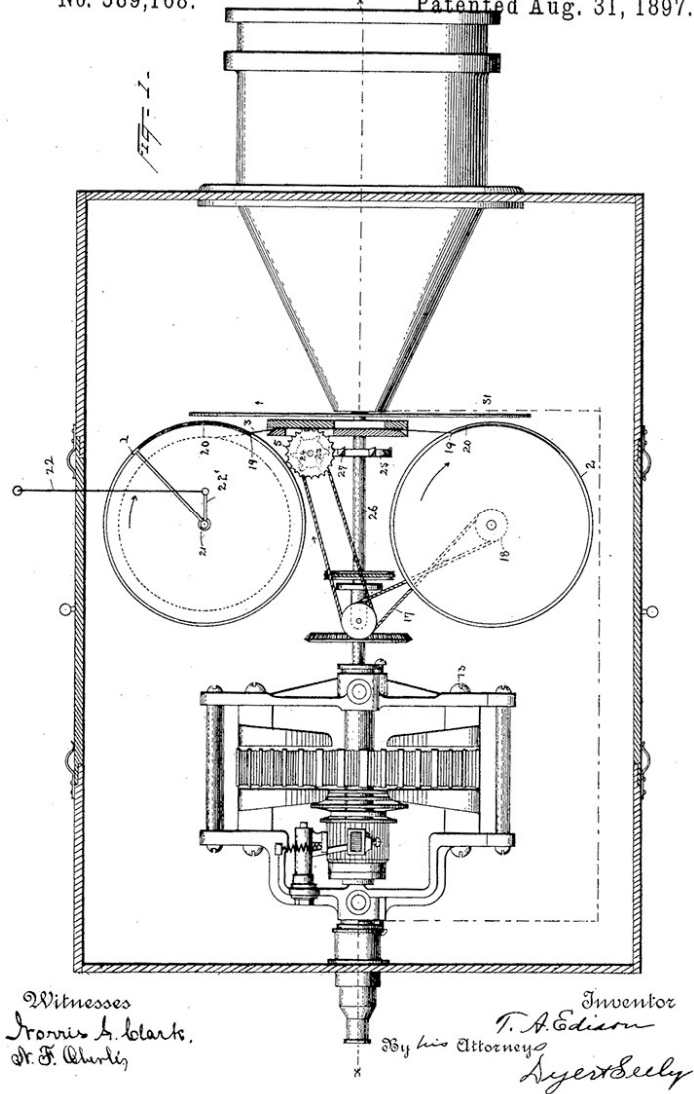


two Edison Trust

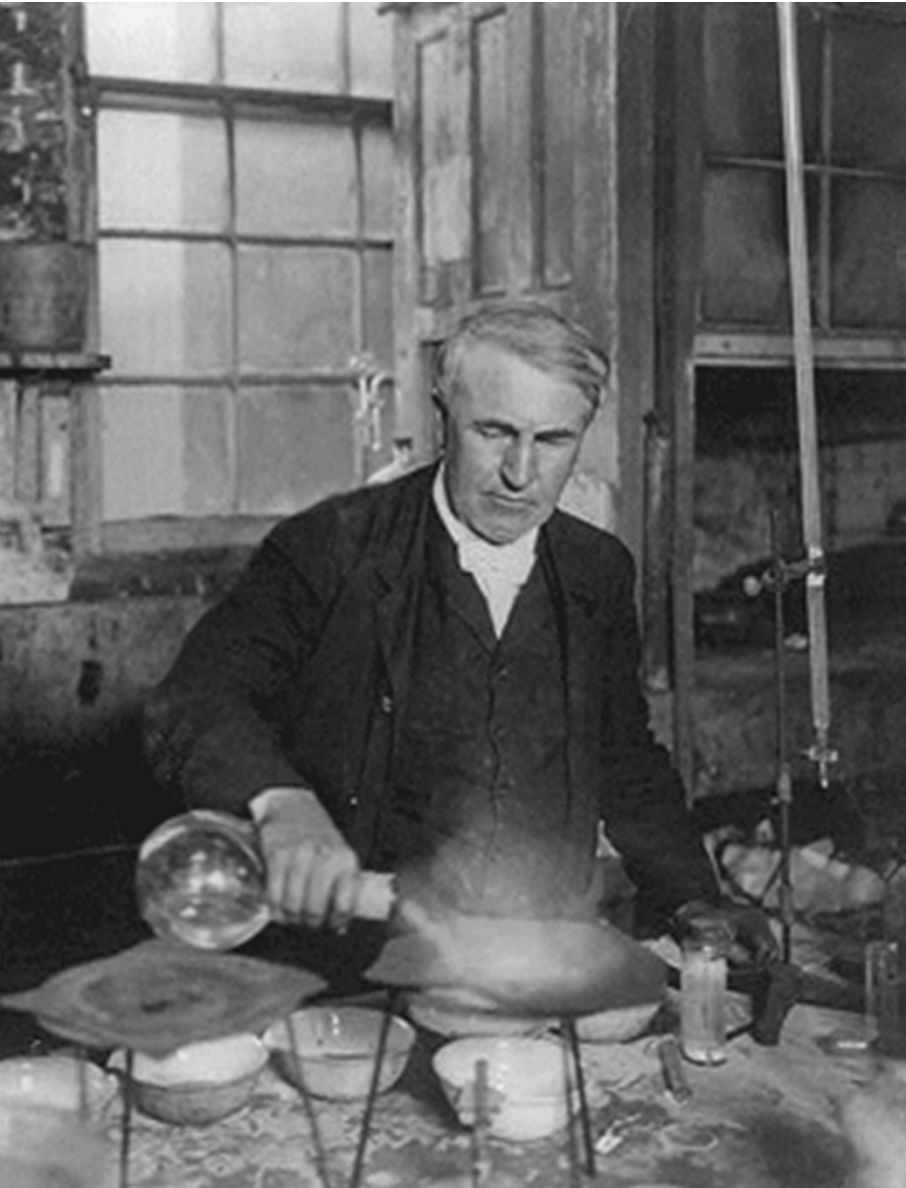
Thomas A. Edison (and associates)
1908 - 1915

- 1847** Thomas Edison is born
- 1876-1886** At Menlo Park laboratory Edison develops (with others!) the phonograph, the incandescent bulb, etc.
- 1888-1891** William Dickson develops the kinetograph and kinetoscope—and they patent the *hell* out of these inventions

T. A. EDISON.
KINETOGRAPHIC CAMERA.
No. 589,168. Patented Aug. 31, 1897.



Illustrations of the
kinetograph included with its
patent paperwork (1897)

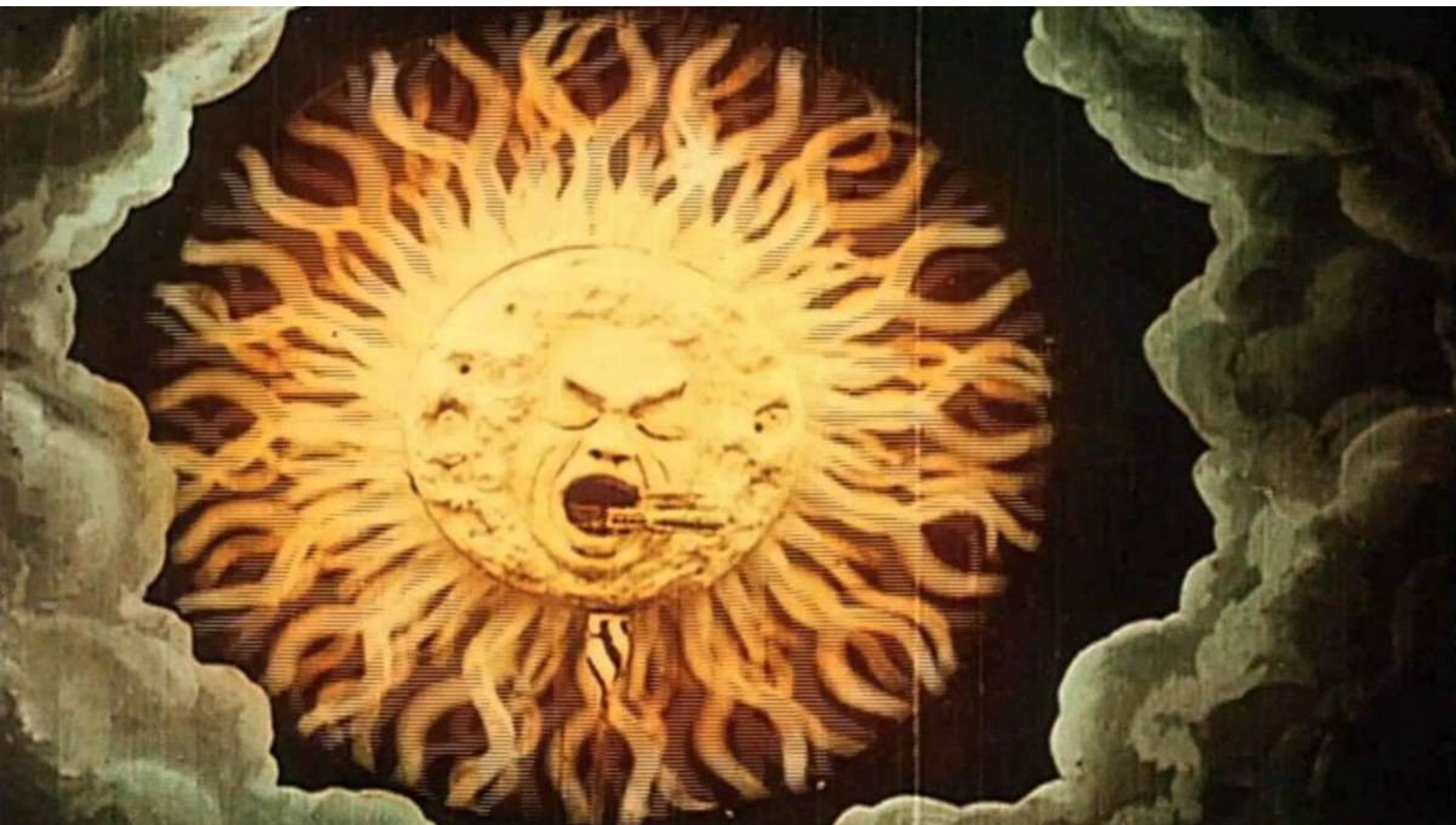


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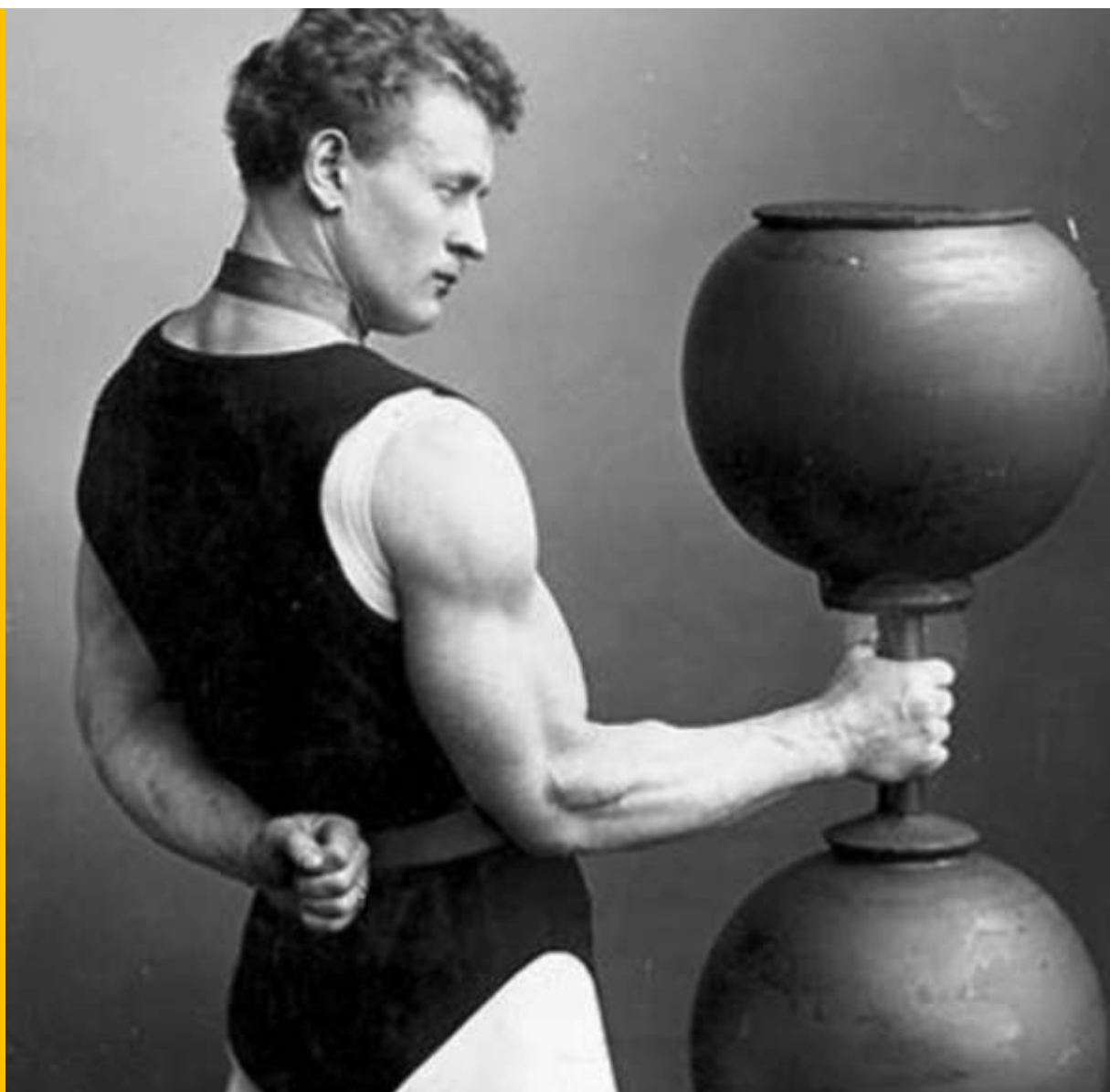
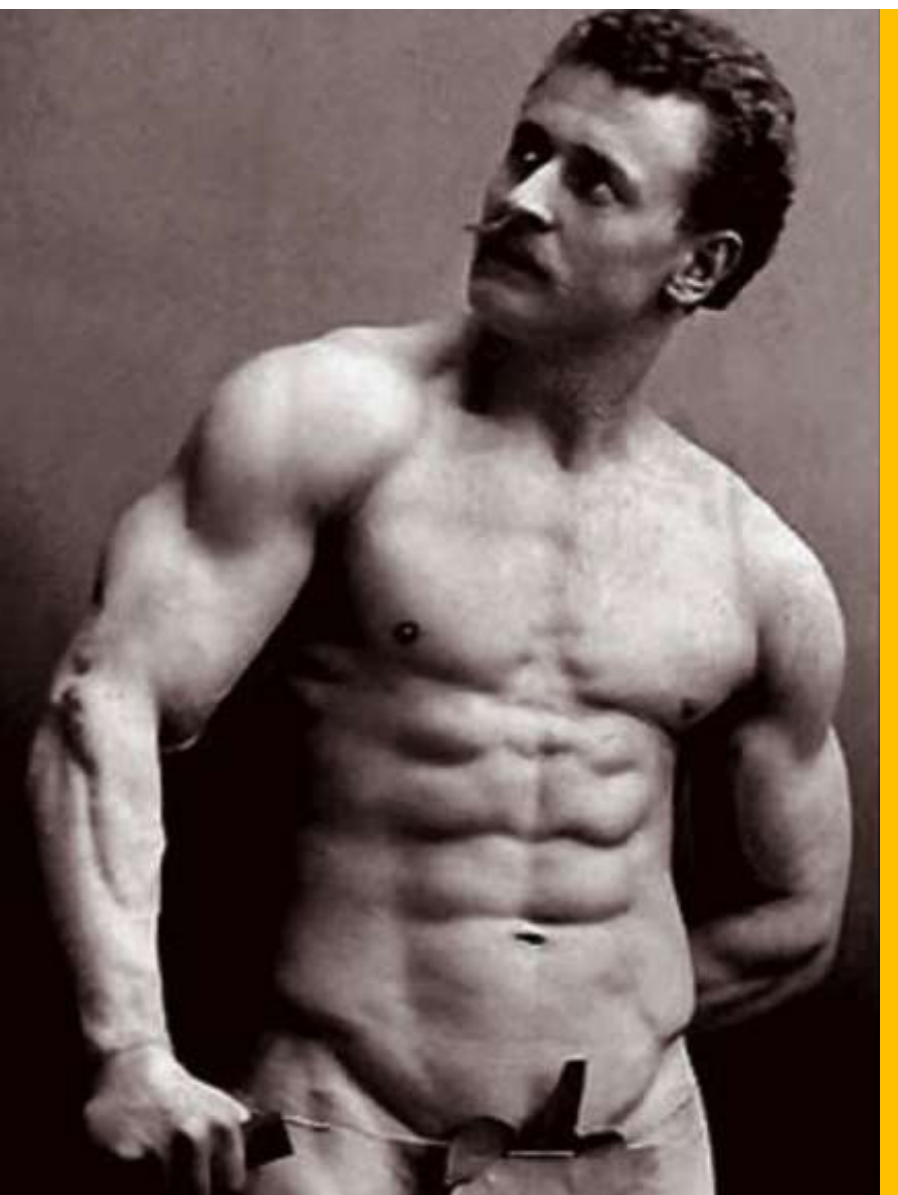
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- 1888-1891** William Dickson develops the kinetograph and kinetoscope—and they patent the *hell* out of these inventions
- 1893** The Black Maria studio is opened in West Orange, NJ
- 1894-1900** Edison Studios puts out hundreds of films for kinetoscope, and then for projection. Most of these early films depict “actualities”









Life of an American Fireman
(d. Edwin S. Porter, 1903)



Life of an American Fireman
(d. Edwin S. Porter, 1903)

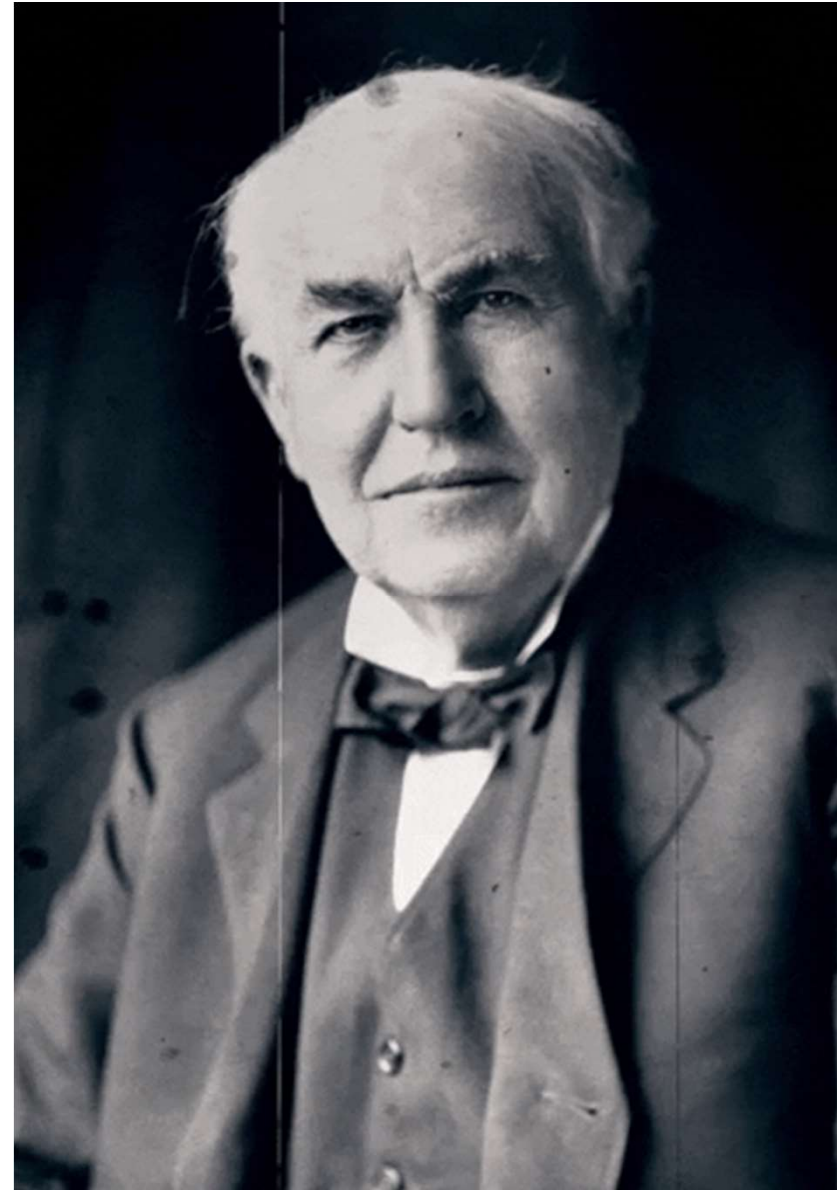


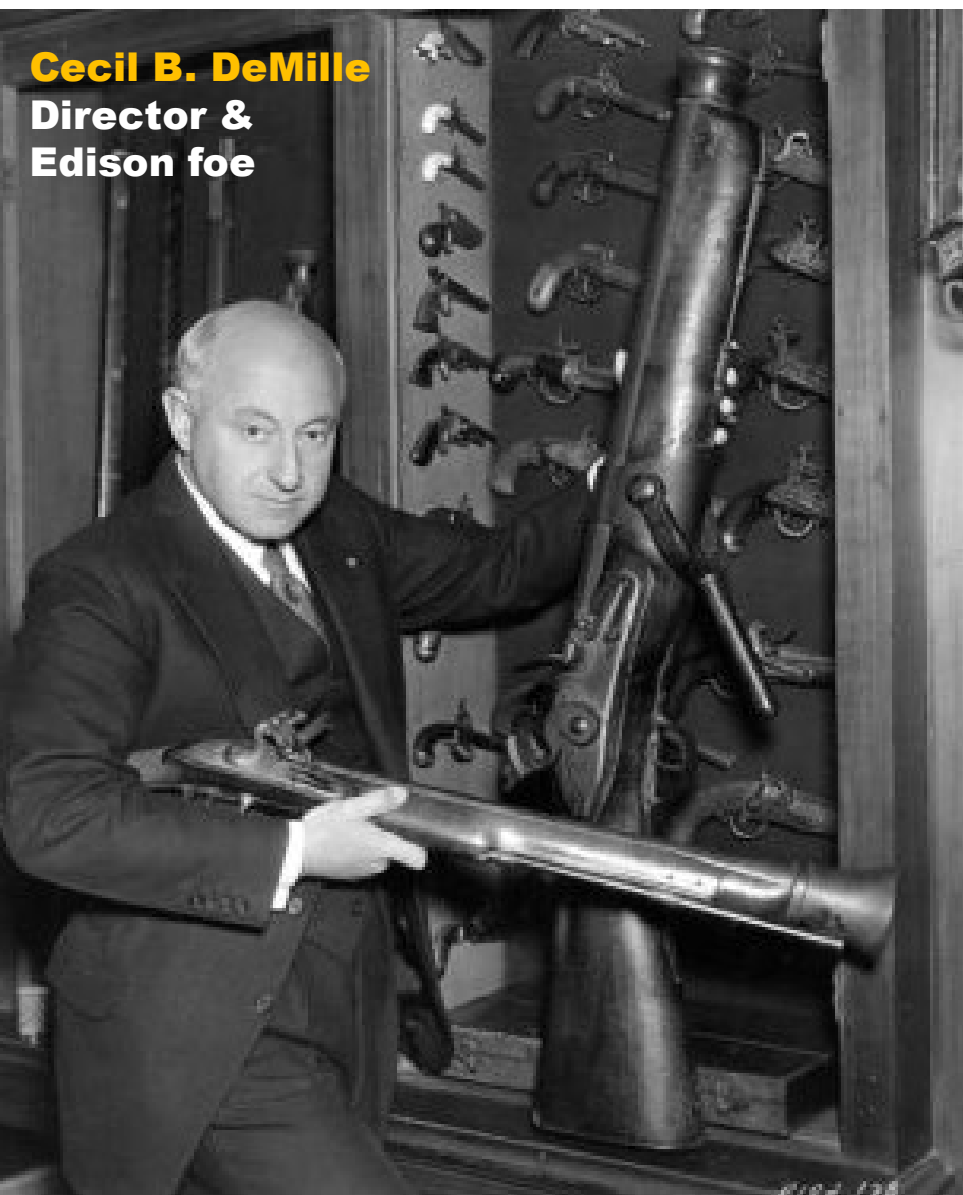
two Edison Trust

**Thomas A. Edison (and associates)
1908 - 1915**

**Edison holds all US patents on motion pictures.
Begins threatening competitors with lawsuits**

1902



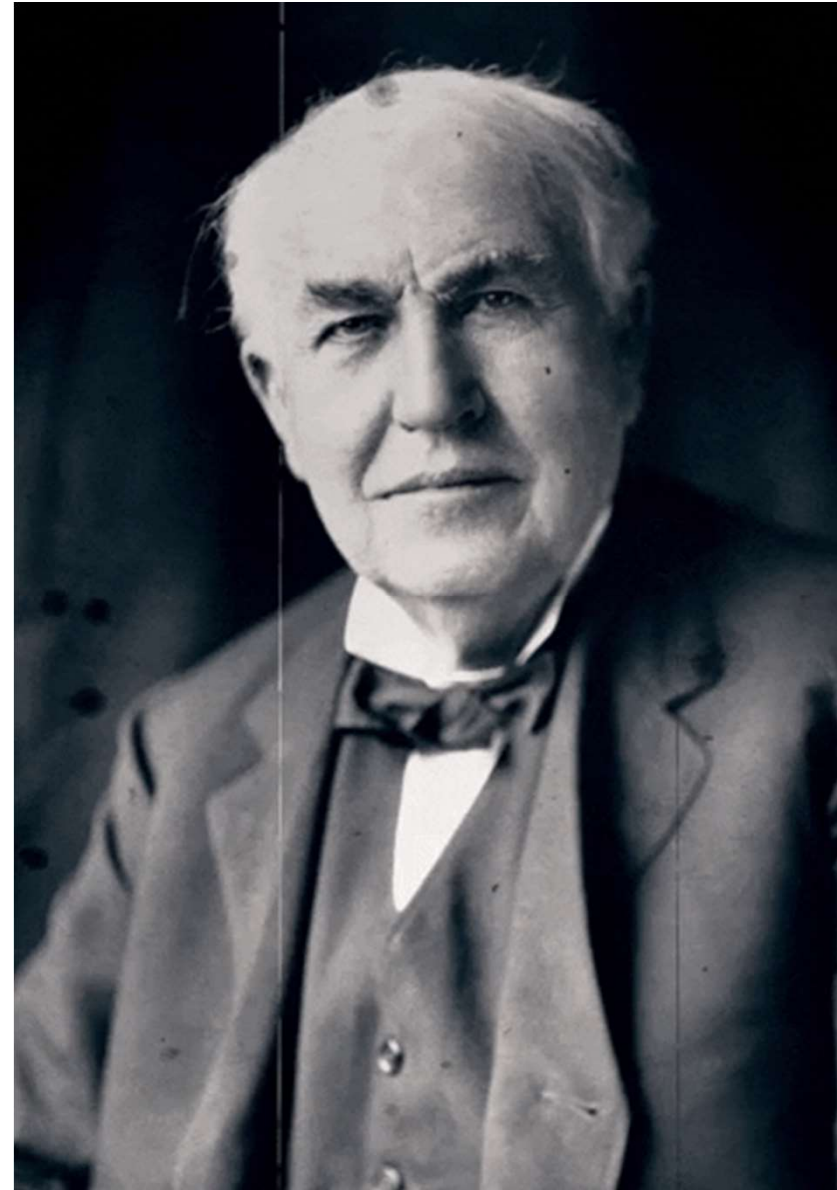


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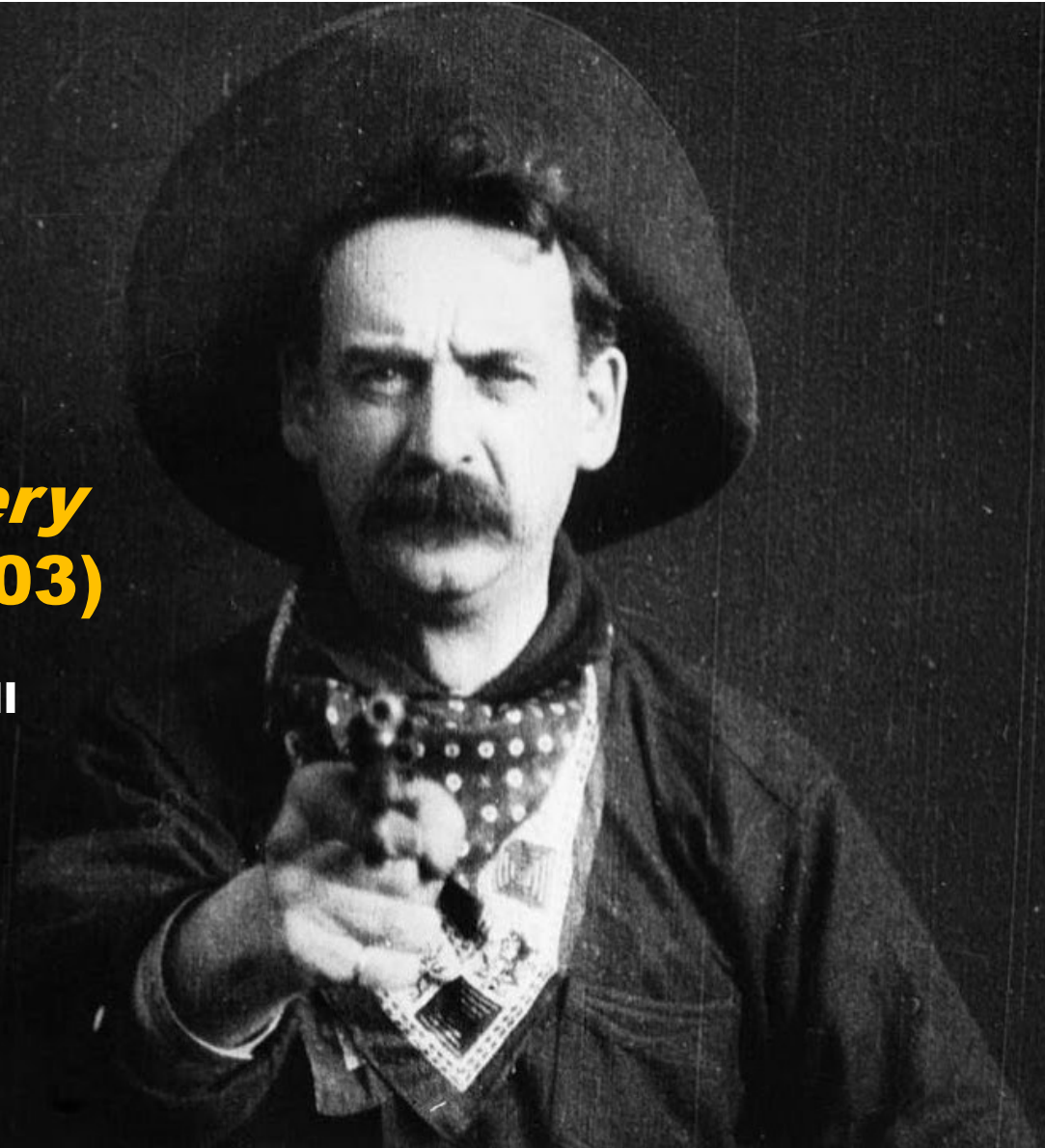
**Due to demand for European films, Edison begins
producing narratives like *The Great Train Robbery*** 1903



The Great Train Robbery
(d. Edwin S. Porter, 1903)

Has a thrilling plot

**Uses editing to build suspense & tell
simultaneous stories**



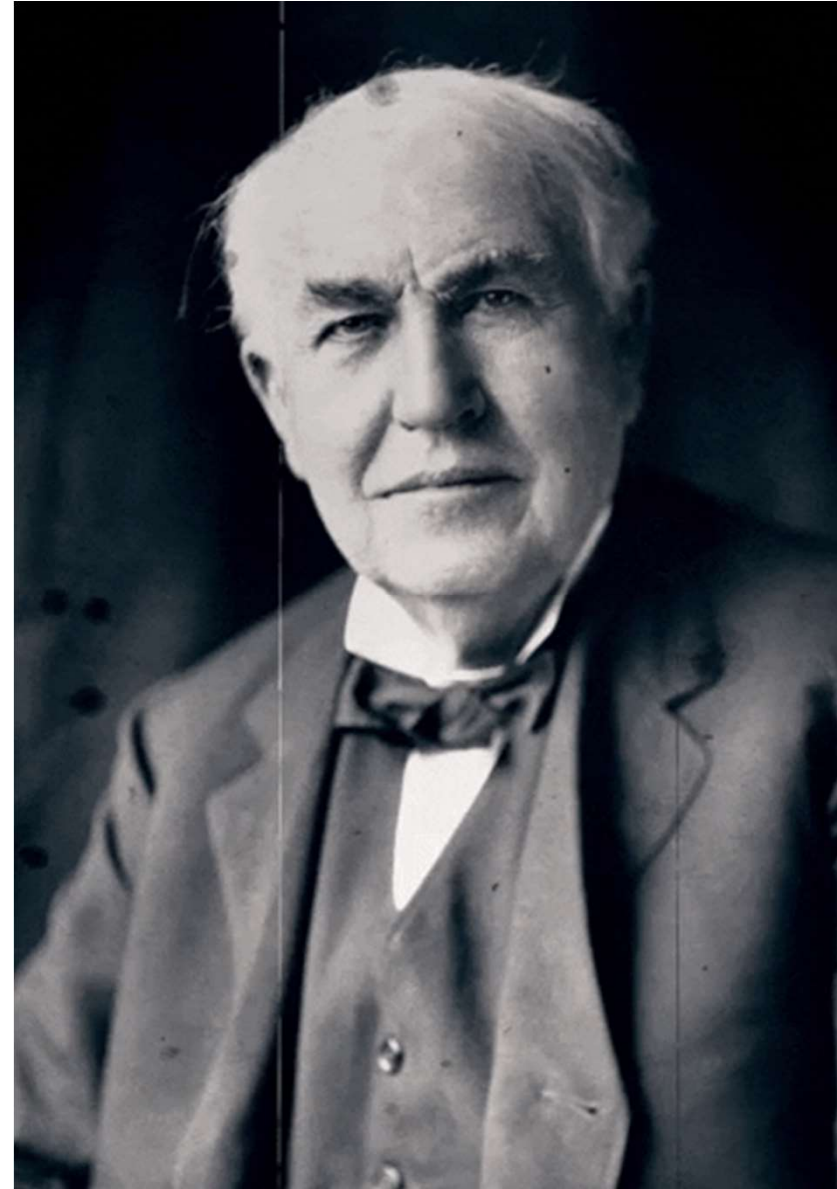
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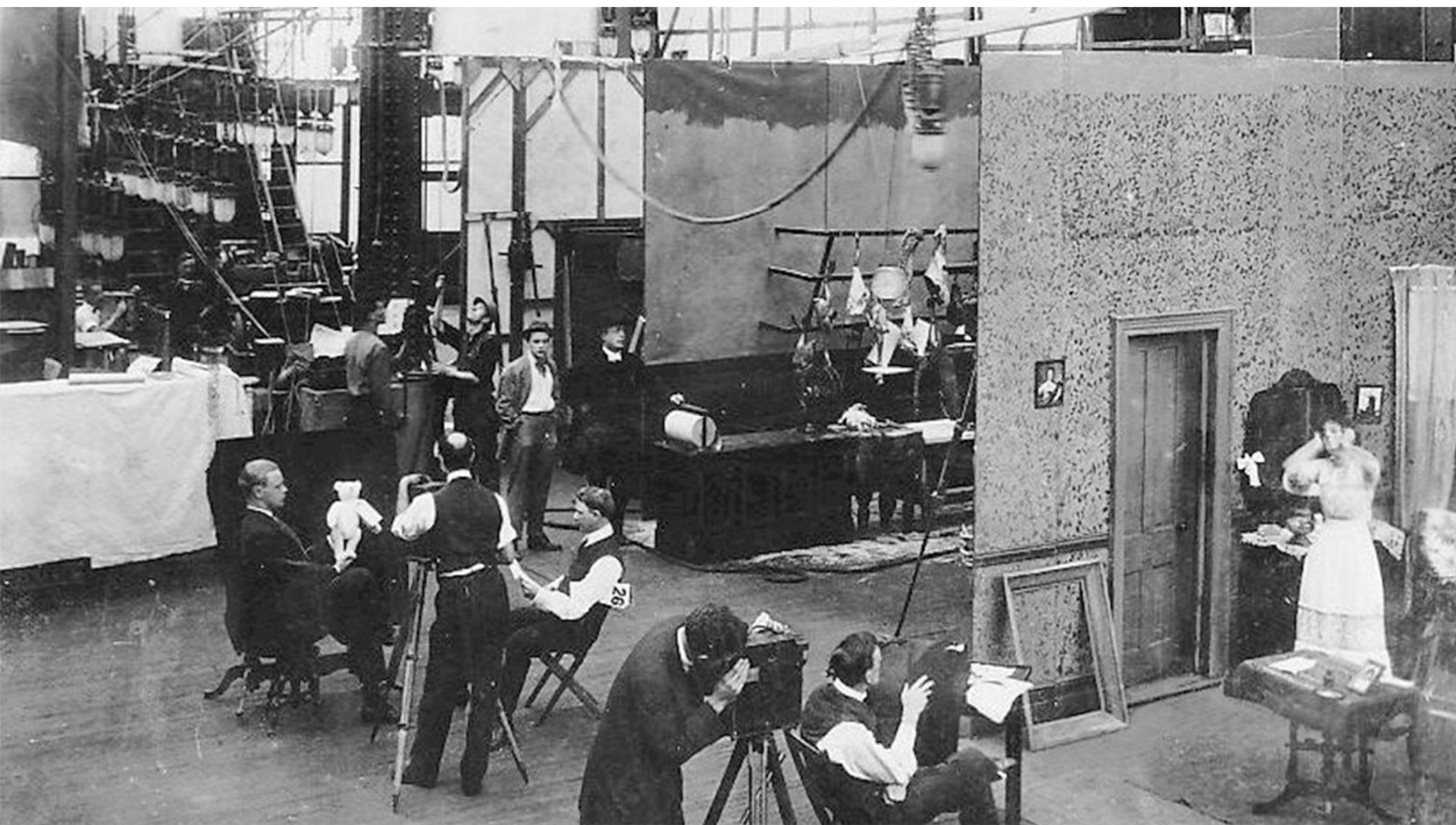
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**Edison Studio moves to the Bronx; begins
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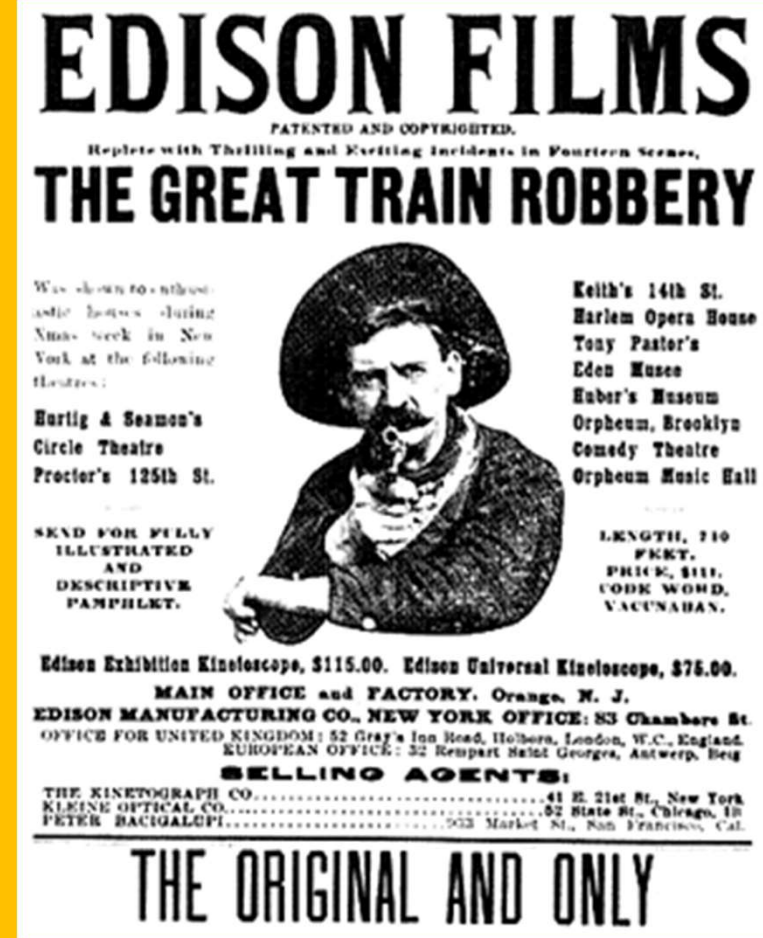




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1908 - 1915

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Begins threatening competitors with lawsuits 1902
- Due to demand for European films, Edison begins
producing narratives like *The Great Train Robbery* 1903
- Edison Studio moves to the Bronx; begins
factory-style production of films 1907
- Tired of lawsuits, Edison's biggest competitors
and the main distributor of film join Edison and
form the Motion Picture Patents Company 1908





“The Edison Trust” & the Motion Picture Patents Company (MPPC) are **the same thing.**

It’s **one giant corporation that controls all the film stock, cameras, movie production, movie distribution, and movie exhibition in the U.S. from 1908-1915.**

The Edison Trust Standards

Films were one reel long (12-14 minutes)

One reel of film = 1000 feet

Films are rented (*not sold*) to exhibitors

Production subsidiaries had to provide one film per week

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and the main distributor of film join Edison and
form the Motion Picture Patents Company 1908
- MPPC controls film production in the United
States until they're broken up by the government 1915

WE HAVE WON.

Decision Handed Down by JUDGE WHEELER,
of the UNITED STATES CIRCUIT COURT, Sus-
tains THOMAS A. EDISON'S Patents on the
Art of Producing Animated Pictures, and Grants
MR. EDISON the Only Right to Manufacture
Motion Picture Machines and Films.

SEND FOR A COPY OF JUDGE WHEELER'S DECISION.

EDISON

1901 MODEL

PROJECTING KINETOSCOPE

Is universally approved by the Professional Exhibitor. Full particulars in Catalogue No. 112.

GET AN EDISON MACHINE AND MAKE GOOD

PAN-AMERICAN EXPOSITION FILMS

AND 100 OTHER NEW SUBJECTS ARE NOW READY.

SEND FOR LATEST SUPPLEMENT FORM 116.

Our Latest Films Are Being Exhibited Daily at the Following New York The-
atres: Proctor's Four Houses, Tony Pastor's and Eden Musee, Which is a Strong
Recommendation as to Their Merit. You Should Follow in Their Footsteps.

Send in your name and ask for our Special Advance Lists of the Latest New
Films. These are All Winners. If you want to get subjects worth owning, send for
our Latest Supplements and Advance Lists.

ALL AT OUR NEW YORK OFFICE AND SEE THEM KINDERPEI FILMS	EDISON MFG. CO., MAIN OFFICE AND FACTORY, ORANGE N. J., U. S. A. NEW YORK SALESROOM, 135 FIFTH AVE. CHICAGO OFFICE, 144 WABASH AVE. Foreign Department, 15 CEDAR ST. NEW YORK. THE PRICE OF FILMS IS \$10.00 PER 100 FEET. Shorter or Longer Lengths in Proportion.	WE HAVE ATTAINED A HIGH STANDARD OF PHOTOGRAPHIC PERFECTION AND HOLD NOTHING BUT PERFECT FILMS.
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Inglorious Basterds
(d. Quentin Tarantino, 2009)

**Louis B. Mayer Conservation Center
Rochester, NY**



Early **cinema is:**

experimental
drawn from theater
drawn from photography
non-narrative...
...or *slightly* narrative
sometimes very spectacular
sometimes very realist
a cinema of attractions



Transitional cinema is:

standardized

measured in reels

increasingly narrative

increasingly long (1 reel to 2-3 reels)

filmic (uses editing, cross-cutting, etc.)

produced by a growing *film industry*

