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## Kelly discusses her work with Olivier Martinez and Jean-Hugues Anglade on the Angelina Jolie film "Taking Lives"

With all the talk of runaway American film and television productions heading to Canada, you don't hear much about Canada's runaways – the thousands of actors, directors, writers and other media professionals who work in Los Angeles.

They include cast members of the NBC drama "American Dreams," a veteran film and TV writer with credits from "Cheers" and "Roseanne," and a dialect coach who has worked for Warner Bros. and teaches Canadian actors to "turn on an American voice."

"There's all this talk about production running away...and people forget that Canadians are here, making very, very strong contributions to the industry," said Roz Wolfe, a senior officer at the Canadian Consulate General in Los Angeles.

More than 2,200 Canadian entertainment professionals are listed on the consulate's online roster of Los Angeles talent.

Among them is Vanessa Lengies, an 18-year-old Canadian actress from "American Dreams," a show that re-creates the "American Bandstand" era. Given the show's name and theme, Lengies' nationality and those of other Canadian cast members are joked about on the set.

But the "American dream relates to everyone," said Lengies, who worked in television in Canada before coming to Hollywood.

For cast member Jamie Elman, being Canadian involves some extra acting.

Elman learned to lose his Canadian accent on the show

"Student Bodies," which was produced in Canada for an American audience.

"They would come out after every take almost and tell me all the words I mispronounced," Elman said.

The practice gave Elman an edge to succeed in Hollywood, he said.

"There's still a film and TV market in Canada that we got to cut our chops on before coming down here," he said.

But Canadian actors who are serious about their work "have to come to Hollywood," he said.

The number of Canadians who leave home to work in film and television in the United States does affect Canada's industry. Telefilm Canada, an agency of the federal government with a \$239 million budget, invests in many Canadian films and is working toward a goal of having Canadian films account for 5 percent of Canadian box office receipts by 2006.

"From the producers' perspective, it may be difficult from time to time when they're competing for talent that is working for larger projects, that might include American projects," said David Forget, director of feature film for Telefilm's Ontario and Nunavut region.

But Canadians who work in the United States are developing their craft and gaining exposure, and they often return to their home country to work on projects there, Forget said.

Leslie Conliffe, an agent from Montreal who works in

Los Angeles, said Canadians who work in the U.S. industry are proud of where they come from. And Canadians, who watch American culture from the sidelines, are good observers, she said.

“So an actor, obviously they are students of observation, so (Canadian actors) are able to pick up on things in a way that other people aren’t,” she said.

They are also good with voices. Kelly Reiter came to the United States from Vancouver in 1988 and works as a dialect coach. She recently worked at Warner Bros. Studios in Burbank on the movie “Taking Lives,” where her job was to help three French actors speak English like French-Canadians.

Reiter conducts six-week programs for Canadian actors, who learn to speak more like Americans – handy when talking to casting directors or at a networking party. Canadians tend to speak with a rising inflection at the end of a sentence, and pronounce words like “sorry” as “soar-y” and “about” as “about.”

Writer Jeff Abugov doesn’t have to worry about how he sounds on-screen. Originally from Montreal, the writer for “Two and a Half Men” – and before that “Roseanne” and “Cheers” – has been in the United States for 18 years. He still finds himself thinking in Canadian terms.

Saint Catherine Street in Montreal comes to mind as a big street, but, when Abugov writes, he will change it to Broadway. “I translate in my head into American,” Abugov said.

Canadian Paul Roberts, who plays a young Dick Clark in “American Dreams,” said most Canadians in the film and television industry “are mistaken for Americans anyhow so...the foreigner bridge that you have to cross isn’t really there.”

“The core of the industry is still here,” said Roberts. “And I think actors work where there is work.”

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