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## The box office shrugs at 'Atlas'

By PATRICK GAVIN | 10/15/12

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"Atlas Shrugged: Part II" opened over the weekend to lukewarm results — \$1.6 million — prompting Deadline to write, "Serious drama to Ayn Rand acolytes, hilarious comedy to the rest of us, its gross fell from Friday to Saturday — never a good sign — for #10 for the weekend."

Harmon Kaslow and John Aglialoro, two producers of the film, talked to POLITICO about the film's close release to the election.

"We definitely think the message of Ayn Rand can have an influence on the election," said Kaslow. "What a lot of people see when they see the film are things that are depicted that we pull right out of the book that are relevant to things that are going on today. And it's easy to connect the dots between what we're experiencing today and what Ayn Rand wrote about more than 50 years ago."

The film is the second installment in Kaslow and Aglialoro's planned three-part movie based on the 1957 novel that has come to represent a powerful case for capitalism and individualism. The first film took home only \$4.6 million, according to BoxOfficeMojo.

To achieve better box office results the second time around, the two brought in Hollywood marketer Russell Schwartz.

"We have expanded our marketing now into more traditional media, really, to create an awareness of that group" of Rand fans, said Kaslow. The film series was initially marketed primarily to conservative groups, including the tea party, and continues to target those individuals: It was screened in September at The Heritage Foundation and the CATO Institute and held its D.C. premiere at the Ronald Reagan Building.

The timing of the film's release is no accident. "We were asked the question, 'Did you have this movie edited and made in time for the election?' And there was only one honest answer: Hell yeah," said Aglialoro. "It is a movie that entrepreneurs are comfortable with, that the wealth creators, the job creators in our society want the message to get out, of free markets, limited government.

Because the political class is the enemy of the entrepreneur, so we need to say to the public, look, there has never been a job and there never will be a job created by any government. It's private citizens, it's people who have an idea, a yearning for success, an aspiration to become self-sufficient. That's the way our society was created."

Both Kaslow and Agliandolo say that the selection of Rep. Paul Ryan as Mitt Romney's running mate has been a boost to the film, given Paul's occasional touting of some of Rand's views.

"What we noticed is that a lot of people went to the Web and started looking at Ayn Rand, started looking at 'Atlas Shrugged' after he got picked," said Kaslow.