

TFE THE FILM ENTREPRENEUR:

A Newsletter for Independent Filmmakers and Investors



LOUISE LEVISON, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

VOL. 30 No. 12

December 2021

BREAKING NEWS: MOVIES ROARING BACK **INDEPENDENT BOX-OFFICE UP 516.8%!** **(Y-T-D 2021 VS. TOTAL YEAR 2020)**

- ✓ **“People love the communal experience of going to the theater.”**
Courtney Valenti, *President, Production & Development, Warner Bros.*
- ✓ **One size does not fit all. The film *Pig* kept on doing business in cinemas even when it was available digitally. “That’s a strong testament to show that these . . . forms of distribution can co-exist.”**
Elissa Federoff, *President of Distribution, NEON*
- ✓ **Hot Tip: Prepare your film now for release when most theaters will be re-opened.**
- ✓ **Start with a professional, top-notch Business Plan, don't be left behind . . . Contact financial expert Louise Levison today for a "Free Consultation."**

>>> LEVISON DOCUMENTARY TO DEBUT IN THEATERS AND STREAMING <<<

- Producers of the new documentary feature film *Movie Money CONFIDENTIAL* inspired by Louise Levison's book *Filmmakers & Financing* have secured a release date for their project.
- Worldwide distribution will begin with **multiple international streaming sites** and a **limited theatrical release** in select American cities on March 1, 2022.
- L.A.-based **Nemours Marketing, Inc.** provided funding. The **Think Visual Group** Production was made in association with Palm Beach-based **Pamplin Film Company** and features **Burt Reynolds** and **Salma Hayek**. It was produced by **Scott duPont** and **Maggie Pamplin**, written and directed by award-winning filmmaker **Rick Pamplin** - a long-time Levison client.

GOTHAM FILM AWARDS

The 31st Gotham Awards were held virtually on November 29th. The first major awards show of the season, it has been an Oscar bellwether. Presented by the Gotham Film & Media Institute, which was formerly known as the Independent Filmmaker Project, kicked off several months of awards which will conclude with the Oscars on March 27, 2022. Eligibility for the Gothams is restricted to films made for less than \$35 million that qualify as “filmmaking with a point of view.”

This year’s awards featured a variety of updates, including acting awards that are not defined by gender, a kudo for breakthrough nonfiction series and the inclusion of international documentaries in the doc feature category. “In this continuing movement towards inclusion we wanted to find a way to embrace international docs,” said the Gotham Award’s Executive Director Jeffrey Sharp. “Also, our nominating committees in prior years were really asking questions like ‘why can’t international documentaries also be recognized and considered for a Gotham?’ So, this year was an opportunity to make that step.” Ben Fowlie, founder of the Camden Intl. Film Festival, has been a member of Gotham’s documentary feature nominating committee for the past several years and has advocated for the inclusion of global nonfiction. “Expanding the Gotham Awards this year to include international docs has provided an exciting opportunity to highlight the phenomenal diversity of forms and techniques being used by storytellers across the globe and underscoring the lack of borders between the artistic exploration of the form and the risks that filmmakers take, wherever they work.” This change comes on the heels of a big push by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Science documentary branch to be more inclusive of films outside the U.S.

AND THE WINNERS ARE . . .

AWARD	FILM	WINNER
Best Feature	<i>The Lost Daughter</i>	Maggie Gyllenhaal
Best Documentary	<i>Flee</i>	Jonas Poher Rasmussen
Best International Feature	<i>Drive My Car</i>	Ryusuke Hamaguchi
Bingham Ray Breakthrough Director	<i>The Lost Daughter</i>	Maggie Gyllenhaal
Best Screenplay	<i>The Lost Daughter</i>	Maggie Gyllenhaal
Outstanding Lead Performance tie	<i>The Lost Daughter</i> <i>The Killing of Kenneth Chamberlain</i>	Olivia Colman Frankie Faison
Outstanding Supporting Performance	<i>Coda</i>	Troy Kotsur
Bingham Ray Breakthrough Director	<i>The Lost Daughter</i>	Maggie Gyllenhaal
Breakthrough Series-Long Format (40min)	<i>Squid Game</i>	Kim Ji-yeon, Hwang Dong-hyu
Breakthrough Series-Long Format (20min)	<i>Reservation Dogs</i>	Sterlin Harjo, Taika Waititi
Breakthrough Non-fiction Series	<i>Philly D.A.</i>	Ted Passon, Yoni Brook, Nicole Salazar
Outstanding Performance, New Series tie	<i>The Underground Railroad</i> <i>The Good Lord Bird</i>	Thuso Mbedu Ethan Hawke
Breakthrough Performer	<i>Coda</i>	Emilia Jones



NYFCC AWARDS

The New York Film Critics Circle (NYFCC) is the first major critics group to announce their film awards for 2021. With almost 500 members, the group is composed of working professional film and television critics and reporters whose job it is to cover new films and shows. These prizes are considered the third big awards of the season after the National Board of Review and the Gotham Awards. In the past, the NYFCC also recognized action, horror and sci-fi fantasy movies along with acting categories for each genre, but those have now been incorporated into the Critics' Choice Super Awards, which launched this year.

Last year's Best Film, *First Cow*, was the first NYFCC winner to not be nominated for Best Picture at the Oscars since 2015's *Carol*. This year's top pick, *Drive My Car*, continues the theme of the NYFCC going its own way.

AND THE WINNERS ARE . .

AWARD	FILM	WINNER
Best Film	<i>Drive My Car</i>	Ryusuke Hamaguchi
Best Director	<i>The Power of the Dog</i>	Jane Campion
Best Actor	<i>The Power of the Dog</i>	Benedict Cumberbatch
Best Actress	<i>House of Gucci</i>	Lady Gaga
Best Supporting Actor	<i>The Power of the Dog</i>	Kodi Smit-McPhee
Best Supporting Actress	<i>The Tragedy of Macbeth</i>	Kathryn Hunter
Best Screenplay	<i>Licorice Pizza</i>	Paul Thomas Anderson
Best Nonfiction Film	<i>Flee</i>	Jonas Poher Rasmussen
Best Animated	<i>The Mitchells vs. The Machines</i>	Mike Rianda, Jeff Rowe
Best Cinematography	<i>West Side Story</i>	Janusz Kaminski
Best First Film	<i>The Lost Daughter</i>	Maggie Gyllenhaal
Best Foreign Language	<i>The Worst Person in the World</i>	Joachim Trier

SPECIAL AWARDS

Maya Cade	Creation of the Black Film Archive
Diane Weyermann (posthumous)	Supporting daring and impactful filmmaking at Sundance and Participant
Marshall Fine	His year of service as NYCC's general manager and decades on the New York film scene.



IDFA FESTIVAL

The 34th edition of the International Documentary Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) 2021 ran from November 17th to 28th as an in-person event with twelve special online screenings for audiences and an extensive library of films, talk and consultancies available to guests around the world. Although the event started as the Netherlands moved into semi-lockdown, the festival's Head of Industry Adriek van Nieuwenhuijzen was happy. "In general, people have been extremely happy they came to Amsterdam," he said of attendees at both the project pitch event the IDFA Forum and Docs For Sale. "Overall, it was very positive experience."

There were cancellations as Covid cases rose across Europe. Major broadcasters including ZDF, ARTE Strasbourg and ORF didn't make it. Denmark's CPH: DOX delegation also stayed at home, screendaily.com reported. However, some US buyers did turn up, Magnolia among them, as well as several Netflix execs.

The IDFA Forum, which was chosen from over 700 submissions, aimed to offer a wide selection of documentaries. Intimate family stories, VR projects, polemical political docs, films about gender identity and cultural docs are all thrown into the mix. Budgets in the Forum can range from €200,00 (\$226,100) to over €1 million (\$1.13M). This year marked the first edition of the IDFA Forum's Producer Connection. The aim was to show 15 projects at an early stage and to give their directors and producers the chance to meet potential coproduction partners. "It is about getting input from different eyes and different cultural perspectives on a project," van Nieuwenhuijzen explained.

An IDFA panel asked: "What's Next for Hybrid Distribution?" As theatrical markets find surer footing after nearly 18 months of stops and starts - with the threat of further lockdowns still present - industry pros now face a set of concerns quite different from those of last year: How best to build on the recent gains in VOD models while incorporating them into more traditional frameworks? The panel was similar to one in 2020 except for one difference - this time all but one was there in person, reported Variety.

"We need to start standardizing [technology and asking questions] . . . Who is it for? How to access it? What are their benefits? Right now we need to talk about marketing, and giving it a real value," said Modern Films CEO Eve Gabereau. She stressed the value of partnerships with cultural organizations or thematically linked companies and brands when positioning upcoming releases.

Neon distribution chief Elissa Federoff argued for greater "fluidity and flexibility" when considering theatrical windows. "No film is one-size-fits-all," said Federoff. "There are different audiences who want to see films different ways, and there are different ways of capitalizing our films." The American exec offered three different case studies from her company's recent lineup, citing *Pig*, and *In the Earth* as examples of genre and younger-skewing fare that benefited from 17-days of theatrical exclusivity before hitting PVID services, the IDFA-programed *Flee* as a title that would need a longer theatrical window and the upcoming roadshow release of Apichatpong Weerasethakul's *Memoria* – which will only play in one theater in one city at a time, "like a band touring" – as a kind of extreme of the theatrical model.

Anke van Diejen, Co-Founder of Picl (a project of Stichting Nederlandse Filmpromotie, initiated by Herrie Film & TV). rounded out the panel by explaining her company's method. The VOD service shares revenues with exhibitor partners, making selected titles available during a limited window, intended to fill in the gaps for customers still invested in the theatrical experience. "These two models can co-exist," said van Diejen. "Maybe they can even become collaborative. [We need to be] comparing our partners' physical data to our online date, to see if there's something like a hybrid consumer."

AND THE WINNERS ARE . . .

AWARD	FILM	WINNER
International Competition		
Best Film	<i>Mr. Landsbergis</i>	Sergei Loznitsa
Best Directing	<i>Children of the Mist</i>	Diem Ha Le
Best Editing	<i>Mr. Landsbergis</i>	Danielius Kokanauskis
Best Cinematography	<i>Where Are We Headed?</i>	Ruslan Fedotow
Envision Competition		
Best Film	<i>Octopus</i>	Karim Kassem
Best Directing	<i>O, Collecting Eggs Despite the Times</i>	Pim Zwier
DocLab Competition Immersive Non-Fiction		
Immersive Non-Fiction	<i>Museum of Austerity</i>	Sacha Wares, John Pring
Special Jury, Creative Technology	<i>Symbiosis</i>	Marcel van Brakel, Mark Meeuwenoord
Digital Storytelling	<i>Un(re)solved</i>	Tamara Shogaolu
Special Jury, Creative Technology	<i>Ravi and Emma</i>	Kylie Boltin, Ella Rubeli, Ravi Vasavan, Emma Anderson.
Short Documentary	<i>Wolf Whispers</i>	Chloé Belloc
Youth Documentary		
Best Youth Film	<i>Shabu</i>	Shamira Raphaëla
Special Mention	<i>Water, Wind, Dust, Bread</i>	Mahdi Zamanpoor Kiasari
Cross Section Awards		
Best First Feature	<i>Where Are We Headed?</i>	Ruslan Fedotow
Special Mention	<i>Children of the Mist</i>	Diem Ha Le
<i>Best Dutch Film</i>	<i>Jason</i>	Maasja Ooms Hoogendijk
FIPRESCI	<i>Makeup Artist</i>	Jafar Najafi
ReFrame Award, Creative Use of Archive	<i>Ultraviolette and the Blood-Spitters Gang</i>	Robin Hunzinger
Forum Awards		
Best Pitch	<i>La Casa</i>	Bettina Perut, Iván Osnovikoff
Rough Cut	<i>The New Greatness</i>	Anna Shishova-Bogolubova
DocLab	<i>Continuum VR</i>	Daniela Maldonado, Tomas Espinosa, Paula Gempele



COMINGS AND GOINGS

MoviePass is back? Co-founder Stacy Spikes bought his old company out of bankruptcy in November and is moving to relaunch the service for the 2022 summer movies season. “At the end of the day, the playbook is: great service, great product, reliability, transparency, meeting with consumers on a regular basis. All of those are things that we did before that made the company great . . . we want to bring those back,” he told *thewrap.com*. Evidently, though, he has not figured out all the details. In addition, any personal information data or emails from the previous regime was not included in the deal, which means the company will be acquiring new customers from scratch. “I see it as being very easy to help put butts in seats at not just one theater or one circuit but to all theaters . . . We were the ones who created this marketplace and brought the idea, and now I think about 50 percent of theaters are covering some form of subscription. The difference will be, we’ll offer the customer the freedom to go wherever they want.” Learn more at moviepass.com when it relaunches.

Only one year after their merger, Eros STX Global Entertainment is selling **STX Entertainment** to The Najafi Companies for \$173 million. The private equity company makes investments across industries with significant holdings in consumer, retail, ecommerce, sports, media and technology. “We are thrilled to announce this new chapter with STX,” said Najafi. “Foremost, we believe in the power of storytelling and fostering an entertainment studio that is artist-friendly and supportive of storytellers. We are also happy to exclusively partner with The Forest Road Company on this new and multi-faceted endeavor.” STX Entertainment, which is behind hits such as *Hustlers* and *Bad Moms*, has struggled to find other successes. The purchase agreement gives Eros a “go-shop period,” per a release, during which time the board (with help from financial advisor Lazard) will solicit other proposals for 45 days.

German media giant ProSiebensat 1 is selling the independent film distributor **Gravitas Ventures** to Anthem Sports & Entertainment, a holding company that owns AXS TV, HDNet Movies, Impact Wrestling, Fight Network and Game TV. The deal includes Gravitas’ 3,000 title catalogue, which Anthem says it hopes to exploit to bolster its linear and streaming offerings, and to help it forge relationships with other streaming platforms. While the company distributes its films for theatrical release, in recent years it has also embraced streaming and on-demand business models, selling its films through on-demand platforms like Amazon Prime Video and Google Play, as well as to streaming services such as Netflix and Hulu.

A new development alliance of nine companies, called **The Creatives**, includes France's Haut Et Court, Israel's Spiro Films, Razor Film in Germany and Dutch group Lemming Film and has signed a three-year partnership deal with production giant Fremantle. The move by these independent outfits to unite is a response to seismic changes in the global television and film industries driven by the explosion of streaming services. Fremantle Group COO Andrea Scrosati told *The Hollywood Reporter* that the biggest struggle between independents and global streams is over talent. The Creatives are committed “to offer fair conditions to the talent we work with and to strengthen the long-term relationships with our writers, showrunners, and directors as well as with new talent,” a nod to concerns among the creative community that the new boom in production could come at the cost of worsening conditions for the creatives themselves.

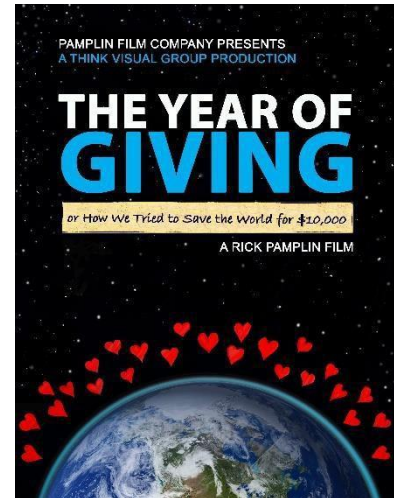


THE YEAR OF GIVING **or How We Tried to Save the World for \$10,000**

Award-winning independent filmmakers **Rick and Maggie Pamplin** have begun production on their next feature film ***The Year of Giving or How We Tried to Save the World for \$10,000***. The documentary follows their efforts for one year as they give away \$25 a day in donations and micro-loans to make a better world.

“A few years ago, we began giving micro-loans to artists and small businesses throughout the world, helping people in desperate situations survive, become self-supporting and successful,” said producer Maggie Pamplin. “We then started developing a movie about how a single \$25 investment could literally change the world,” said writer-director Rick Pamplin. “In one year, we want to do as much good as possible, document it on film and inspire others to step forward and do the same,” he added.

Partnering with Pamplin Film Company is 10-time Telly Award-winning **Think Visual Group**. Production is currently underway, slated for 14 months, ending in February 2022. See more at twitter.com/PamplinFilmCo



MOVIE MONEY CONFIDENTIAL INSPIRED BY **FILMMAKERS & FINANCING BOOK**

Award-winning independent filmmaker Rick Pamplin has created, written and directed a new feature length documentary inspired by Louise Levison's best-selling book ***Filmmakers & Financing: Business Plans for Independents***. Pamplin says, “We made a bold, truthful movie, which reveals many secrets about the often-mysterious world of film financing.” Pamplin, a Levison client, sees the film “as empowering a new generation of filmmakers” with insight, information and real-life advice from filmmakers, fundraisers, investors, lawyers, producers, movie stars and, of course, Louise Levison.

Pamplin and his crew shot 100 hours of footage and interviewed about 60 people including actress-producer **Salma Hayek** (*The Prophet*) and filmed one of the last interviews with the late screen legend **Burt Reynolds** at his acting school in North Palm Beach, Florida. The movie also filmed seminar-style panels with students at Saint Andrew's School in Boca Raton and an open-to-the-public event with artists and writers at the legendary Harold's Coffee Lounge in the Northwood Arts Village.

Pamplin's storied career spans 18 years in Hollywood and 14 years at Universal Studios in Florida before he relocated to Palm Beach. He has written and directed several award-winning films including ***Hoover***, starring Academy Award winning actor **Ernest Borgnine**. ***Movie Money CONFIDENTIAL*** (1:40 minutes) is a Think Visual Group Production in Association with the Pamplin Film Company. Go to MovieMoney.com for upcoming screenings and release information.



Rick Pamplin on the set of ***Movie Money CONFIDENTIAL***

MOVIE MONEY CONFIDENTIAL WINS DOVE AWARD, RECEIVES APPROVAL AND "FANTASTIC" REVIEW

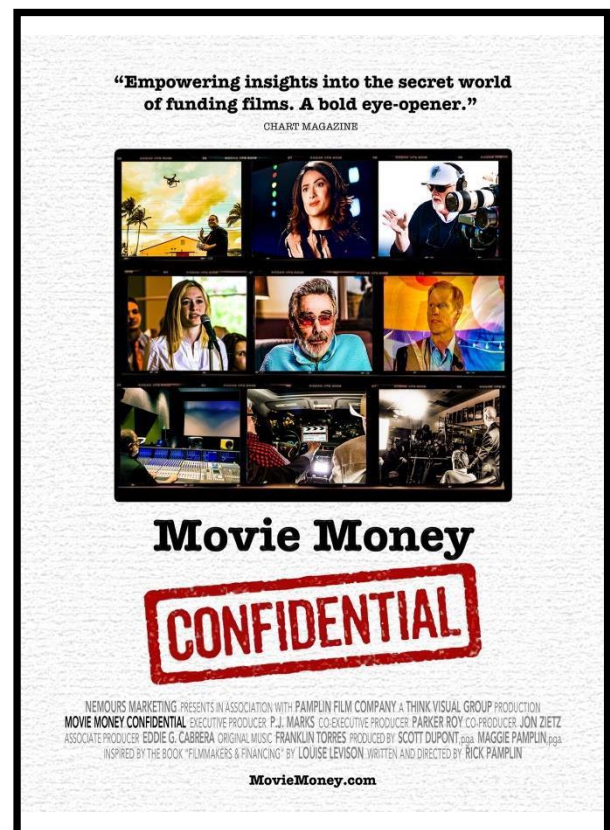
Movie Money CONFIDENTIAL, the feature length documentary film inspired by **Louise Levison's** best-selling book **Filmmakers & Financing**, has been awarded a prestigious Dove Foundation seal of approval, a "12+" rating and a "fantastic" review. The much-coveted Dove Awards are given "to encourage and promote wholesome family entertainment" and are used by schools, libraries, streaming services and churches for purchasing and licensing guidelines.

Producer **Scott duPont** was notified of the award in Hollywood and sent an advance copy of the review, now published online at **Dove.org**. "It is a great honor and achievement for our creative team and crew, and this award helps us reach an even wider audience," he said.

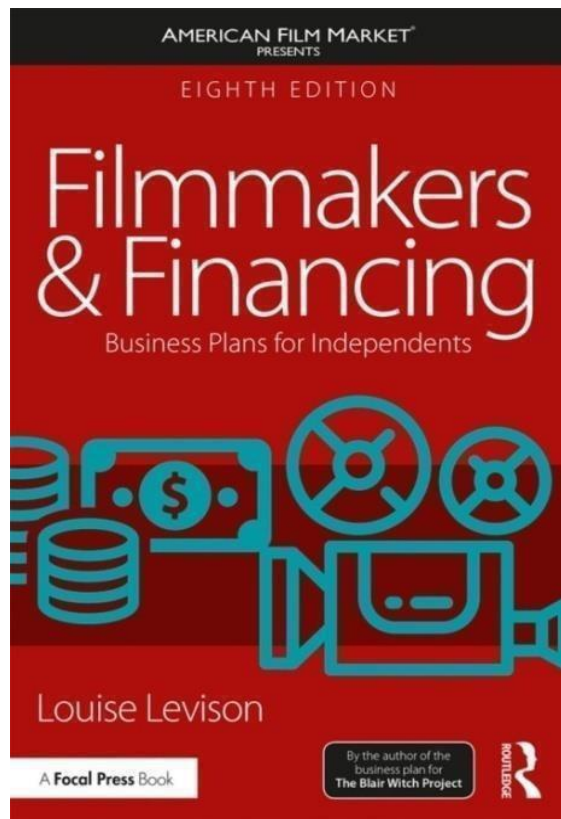
The review says, "With great advice from start to finish, **Movie Money Confidential** gives important details on how to create a film with little to no budget." It continues on, "This documentary is full of great information, including tips for people to start making their own films. It includes many one-on-one interviews and panels with questions asked by real actors and aspiring producers."

Producer-Production Designer **Maggie Pamplin** also noted the recognition for director **Rick Pamplin** and his collaborative partners at **Think Visual Group** in the review: "*Movie Money Confidential* is a fantastic documentary with great visuals and audio. The information is thorough about how a filmmaker should deal with investors - telling them facts instead of what they want to hear, asking for their advice and how to avoid promising what you might not be able to deliver."

In summary, the review says "*Movie Money Confidential* contains information that can be valuable in every aspect of life for any person - not just aspiring filmmakers and producers. Its well-thought-out scenes and interviews provide priceless information and answers to questions that people may not have thought to ask. It is great for anyone to watch and learn from."



The latest edition of *Filmmakers & Financing: Business Plans for Independents*



In this new and updated ultimate filmmaker's guide, Louise Levison gives you easy-to-use steps for writing an investor-winning business plan for a feature film, including:

- Comprehensive explanations for each of the eight sections of a plan
- Full financial section with text and tables
- A sample business plan
- A companion website with additional information for various chapters and detailed financial instructions - advanced math not needed
- An explanation on how feature documentary, animated and large-format films differ
- A guide to pitching to investors: who they are, what they want and what to tell them
- Words of advice: Filmmakers share their experiences raising money from equity investors

Eighth Edition available for purchase:

<https://www.amazon.com/Filmmakers-Financing-Business-Independents-American/dp/113894744X>

**NEED MONEY FOR A MOVIE? DON'T GO IN EMPTY-HANDED.
HAVE A BUSINESS PLAN.**

The benefit of using a reliable business plan to raise financing for a film is that it allows the investors and the filmmaker to gauge the potential success of a film. Louise Levison, the President of Business Strategies, is a highly respected financial consultant in the entertainment industry, specializing in creation of film business plans. She is the author of *Filmmakers & Financing: Business Plans for Independents*, currently in its revised and expanded eighth edition (A Routledge/Taylor & Francis book, 2017). She also has a starring role in the feature documentary *Movie Money CONFIDENTIAL* which was inspired by the book. More information at moviemoney.com. Levison also is editor of the newsletter *The Film Entrepreneur: A Newsletter for the Independent Filmmaker and Investor (TFE)*.

A polished business plan with projections based on the worldwide results of other films and with clear explanations of the industry is far more effective than an incomplete document that leaves prospective investors wanting more information. In our “new normal,” *TFE* has developed (and continues to adjust) a new format for forecasting Indie films to include the current hybrid system of releasing films for a shorter span in theaters (currently mostly drive-ins but also the rest of the country’s cinema sites as the industry opens) and, often, into streaming rather than the standard online release pattern of DVD/Blu-ray and downloading.

Levison’s clients have raised money for low-budget films including *The Blair Witch Project*, the most profitable independent film in history, as well as for companies raising as much as \$300 million.

Among other clients’ projects are *The Prophet* (Kahlil Gibran’s), *Unlimited* (Nathan Frankowski), *Burning Bodhi*, *Greater*, *The Redemption of Henry Miller*, *Emoticon*), *Moving Midway*, *Redemption Road*, *Haunted* (2012), *The First of May*, *The Open Road*, *Aluna*, *Yak: The Giant King*, *Visual Acoustics: The Modernism of Julius Shulman*, *My Father and the Man in Black* and *Michael Winslow Live*. Her corporate clients include Danny Glover’s Louverture Films (2008 nominee for Best Documentary Academy Award *Trouble the Water*), Pamplin Film Company (*Hoover*), Majestic World Entertainment, Gundersen Entertainment and Tokuma International Ltd. Levison was an Instructor in the Extension Program at UCLA for 22 years before moving to Florida. She also has been a Visiting Professor at the Taipei (Taiwan) National University of the Arts, Chapman University (Orange County, CA) and the University of Montana (Missoula). She also has presented seminars and/or been on panels at festivals and markets around the world.

Contact Levison at louisel@earthlink.net to find out how you can put her 30 years of experience as Film Business Consultant to work creating a business plan for your film.

THE FILM ENTREPRENEUR
is published by Business Strategies

Louise Levison, Editor
11231 US Highway 1 #308
North Palm Beach, FL 33408
Phone: (818) 427-7108
E-mail: louisel@earthlink.net; <http://www.moviemoney.com>
@predictfilm