

TFE THE FILM ENTREPRENEUR:

A Newsletter for Independent Filmmakers and Investors

LOUISE LEVISON, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER



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ALERT: MOVIE THEATERS ARE NOW OPEN!

“April was Full of Good News for Theatrical Exhibition, Despite Lagging Grosses. Best of all: Signs of life for original, risky films at the box office.”

Tom Brueggemann indiewire.com

“We’ve licensed some films to streamers during Covid, but our long-term big business model will always be driven by theatrical.”

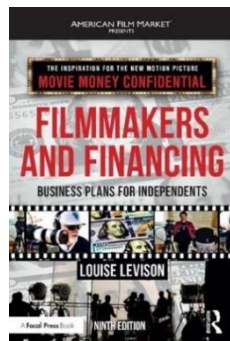
Josh Greenstein Sony Pictures Motion Picture Group President

“Our study shows moviegoers are happier than ever to be back at the theater. With more in-theater releases on the horizon, film fans plan to see multiple movies in the cinema.”

Melissa Heller, Fandango Ticketing Vice-President, Domestic VP Domestic

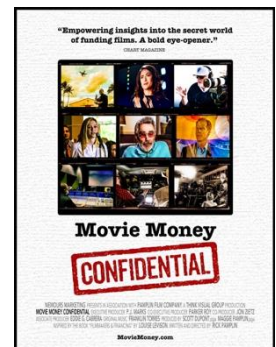
“The January - April independent segment of the box office was 158 percent more than the same period in 2021.”

Louise Levison, Film Finance and Business Plan Expert



TIME TO RAISE MONEY & PRODUCE YOUR FILM

- ✓ **Filmmakers & Financing:** Updated 9th Edition now available
- ✓ **Special Discount:** 20% off with code until May 31, 2022
- ✓ **See the Film it Inspired:** Movie Money CONFIDENTIAL
- ✓ **Watch now:** Complete V-O-D List @ MovieMoney.com
- ✓ **FREE Consultation:** Pitch your project to Louise Levison
- ✓ **Save on New Business Plans:** 20% off until May 31, 2022



CINEMA CON CELEBRATES FILM'S FUTURE

"This is the end of the tunnel and beginning of the light. It's a takeoff point for the resurgence of the industry," announced John Fithian, President and CEO of the National Association of Theater Owners (NATO) in an interview the day before CinemaCon, the group's annual meeting. "We are back. We are back!" Marcus Theaters CEO Rolando Rodriguez chanted during the conference at the Colosseum in Caesars Place to introduce Motion Picture Association Chairman and CEO and his annual "State of the Industry" presentation. "Motion picture production and the movie theater industry are now rebounding from one of the biggest challenges we've faced in a century. On the studio side, we're seeing a strong recovery for production," Rivkin reported. "The global theatrical and home/mobile entertainment market grew to \$99.7 billion, a 27 percent increase vs 2021. In the first quarter of 2022, the domestic box office surpassed \$1 billion."

While others want the industry to be just like 2019, 2022 is showing progress for both studio and independent films. Although fewer films are reaching the screens than in 2019 and many of the elements needed for filming and post production are slow to open, there is forward motion. The length of time for studio films in the theater has gone from a 90 day exclusive run to 45. That number can vary with the distributor. Indies with low-to-moderate budgets tend to be platformed. People want to leave home and see movies in theaters, the smaller artistic films as well as the superheroes. Before the pandemic 50 percent or more of the films would remain in theaters for three or four months while going on to home entertainment during that period. It is too early in 2022 to see what a new pattern might be. It seems clear, though, that for some of those films, streaming also will be a better fit.

The blockbuster films from studios are necessary to keep the movie theaters open. Independents with lower budgets often stay longer on screens even while moving on to the home entertainment windows, such as DVD/Blu-ray, VOD, SVOD and direct downloads. Of course, getting the audience back to the theaters was an ongoing discussion during the four days. Watching a movie in a theater with other people makes them a cultural event. "That tells you everything you need to know, about how we feel about windows, and that windows work," said Josh Greenstein, Sony Motion Picture Group President. "We are thrilled distributors are releasing movies with windows, and studios and exhibitors are working together," Fithian said.

How theaters and streaming will exist in the future also was a main topic of discussion. When streaming took over during the closure of theaters, many film companies started their own streamers, or as is the case with many of the indie distributors, made deals with Hulu and other streamers. The industry spent a lot of money to catch up to Netflix, Amazon and other OTT companies. Now that cinemas are regaining control, however, they are not as thrilled with day-and-date releases of films. Studios know that you can't make as much money when a movie has a streaming premiere.

Fithian was strong that showing a movie in the theaters and online at the same time not only brought in less money but made pirating easier. "Robust theatrical windows protect against piracy," he said from the Caesars Palace stage. "If a major title that people are clamoring to see in theaters is released too quickly to the home and then pirated, the temptation to stay home and watch pirated films becomes greater for many potential moviegoers. . . I am pleased to announce that simultaneous release is dead as a serious business model, and piracy is what killed it." Rivkin said that he couldn't comment on the issue, since his member companies include both the studios and Netflix. Fithian replied, "Each company has their own strategy." Rivkin did say, however, that he was "encouraged by our progress in this ongoing fight against piracy, and I'm also encouraged by the surges that we are currently seeing at the global box office."

It is too early to know what the new reality will be. We know the business is going through an historic change; however, people want to leave home and see movies in theaters, the smaller artistic films as well as the superheroes. The current box office successes show that moviegoers still enjoy the sanctity and the enjoyment of watching a film with others. Warner Bros. Discovery CEO David Zaslav said he was less inclined “to really collapse the entire motion picture business.” Greenstein pointed out that “streaming is additive to our business. It’s not our core business. We participate in the streaming economy strategically with certain films. We’ve licensed some films to streamers during Covid, but our long-term big business model will always be driven by theatrical.” As everyone knows, Netflix has refused to follow conventional theater release times. Peace evidently will reign if the streamers would agree to leave their Oscars hopefuls in theaters longer than the minimum required for a nomination.

I have been seen comments about the “death” of theatrical movies since television channels received permission to air them. Theatrical films have always survived and grown; however, the way forward may not be a straight line on a chart. “As Bob Marley once said: ‘You never know how strong you are, until being strong – is your only choice.’ Well, we’ve always recognized that maxim, and we have rediscovered that strength in ourselves – every single time,” Rivkin reminded the gathering. Something else that has never changed is William Goldman famous statement in his book *Adventures in the Screen Trade*, “Nobody knows anything . . . Not one person in the entire motion picture field knows for a certainty what’s going to work. Every time out it’s a guess and, if you’re lucky, an educated one.” 🍷

COMINGS AND GOINGS

STX Entertainment is remaining an independent studio, as The Najafi Companies acquired the company from Eros International. Robert Simonds remains a Chairman and Noah Fogelson, previously company president, became the CEO. “We are excited to work alongside this highly respected investment company and are thankful for their continued support as we expand our library of star-driven content, said Simonds.” Fogelson added, “In a relatively short amount of time, STX has helped create and distribute over 70 movies, many with stars and filmmakers who have made multiple projects with us. We’re thrilled that an investor as savvy as Jahm (Najafi) and The Najafi Companies see the value of the platform today, and also what’s possible tomorrow.”

Amazon and **MGM** finally closed their \$8.5 Billion merger. Reports still are that MGM will continue to make its own projects and distribute them through United Artists Releasing as a joint venture with Amazon. On the other hand, an insider told *indiewire.com*, “At this moment, there’s some hope, we understand, that Amazon will allow MGM to operate autonomously, unlike the Disney-20th Century Studios merger, however, it’s still very early in this marriage.”

Jonathan Glickman, former MGM Picture Group President, has launched **Panoramic Media**, a multi-platform content venture. The new company will expand upon Glickman’s existing slate of projects set up at Netflix, Amazon, MGM, Warner Media, Paramount and MRC, as well as a joint podcast venture with iHeartMedia. Funding comes from Gary Barber, Spyglass Media Group, Eagle Pictures, Lantern Entertainment, Pinky Promise and United Talent Agency. Glickman is currently in production on *Creed III*, directed by and starring Michael B. Jordan; the Netflix *Addams Family* spinoff series *Wednesday*, directed by Tim Burton and starring Jenna Ortega; *California King* with Travis Bennett and Jimmy Tatro; and is in pre-production teaming with MRC (formerly Media Rights Capital) on director Janet Mock’s *Scandalous!* 🍷

MOVIE MONEY CONFIDENTIAL INSPIRED BY FILMMAKERS AND 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 and 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 - and the previously untold behind-the-scenes story of *The Blair Witch Project*," he added. 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 the last interview 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**.

Worldwide distribution rights for ***Movie Money CONFIDENTIAL*** have been acquired by Kaczmarek Digital Media Group (KDMG). It is presented by Nemours Marketing, Inc., in association with Pamplin Film Company, a Think Visual Group Production produced by Scott duPont and Maggie Pamplin, co-producer and editor Jon Zietz, associate producer and director of photography Eddie G. Cabrera. For more information and up-to-date streaming platform links

visit: ***MovieMoney.com***



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 and 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.

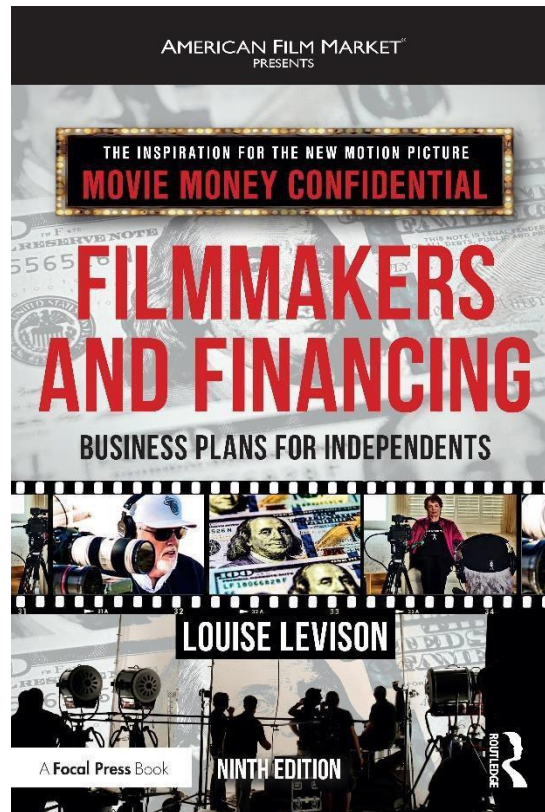
The review says, "With great advice from start to finish, *Movie Money Confidential* gives important details on how to create a film with little to no budget." It continues on, "This documentary is full of great information, including tips for people to start making their own films. It includes many 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

NINTH EDITION AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE

https://routledge.pub/Levison_Financing9e

20% discount until May 31, 2022, if ordered directly from Routledge (code MMC22)

**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 *MovieMoney 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