

TFE THE FILM ENTREPRENEUR:

A Newsletter for Independent Filmmakers and Investors



LOUISE LEVISON, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

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BREAKING NEWS: INDEPENDENT BOX-OFFICE FOR YEAR-TO-DATE INCREASES 420% OVER 2020!

- ✓ **October 2021 indie box-office increased 37% from September 2021**
- ✓ **"The total box office in North America is projected to come in at \$4.7 billion, compared to \$2.2 billion in 2020." — Gower Street Report**
- ✓ **Movie audiences over age 45 continue to sprint back to theaters**
- ✓ **Experts proclaim, "A fantastic year for documentary storytelling"**
- ✓ **Prepare your film for release in 2023 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"**

"People often look to come to the cinema to escape the outside."

Lucy Jones, Executive Director of Comscore

"In a time where truth itself is under siege, our artform, which uses real life as the raw material to tell powerful stories that examine the complexities of truth, is engaging with audiences more than ever before."

Director R. J. Cutler, describing the 2020s as the "decade of the doc"

PRODUCTION UPDATE: LEVISON BOOK MADE INTO FEATURE DOCUMENTARY **FEATURING SALMA HAYEK AND BURT REYNOLDS DEBUTS IN MARCH 2022**

- > Producers signed a formal, long-form distribution contract for the new documentary feature film ***Movie Money CONFIDENTIAL*** inspired by **Louise Levison's** book *Filmmakers & Financing*.
- > The film was written and directed by DGA award-winning filmmaker **Rick Pamplin**, produced by PGA producers **Scott duPont** and **Maggie Pamplin**, funded by L.A.-based Nemours Marketing.
- > Details will be announced soon with plans for **worldwide distribution** on multiple international platforms beginning with a **theatrical and streaming** release in **March of 2022**.

HOME ENTERTAINMENT SPENDING ↑9% 3RD QTR

With theatrical releases restarting, spending on home purchases have begun to pick up, also. The increase is expected to continue in a positive direction as theatrical releases across the industry return to a typical pattern, reports The Digital Entertainment Group (The DEG).

The trade group noted that during the third quarter of 2021, physical media sales of new theatrical releases rose 38%, with digital sales** up 73%, “according to one reporting source.”

Fewer theatrical releases, which historically are the key driver in home entertainment revenues, were a limiting factor in the first nine months, particularly in the earlier period.

Overall U.S. consumer spending across digital and physical home entertainment formats in the first nine months of 2021 was \$23.6 billion, a more than 6 percent increase from the \$22.2 billion consumers spent in the same period a year earlier. In the third quarter, consumers spent nearly \$8 billion to watch movies and TV shows for home and personal viewing, an almost 10 percent increase over the same period in 2020

Additional Highlights:

- In the third quarter, box-office spending rose to \$1 billion, however, from almost nothing in the same period in 2020, reflecting the ramp up of theatrical releases as COVID-19 conditions improve around the country.
- Spending on digital formats (including EST**, VOD** and subscription streaming) rose 12 percent, while streaming spending grew 17 percent, fueled by consumer interest in the offerings of multiple major new services.
- Sales and rental of physical discs showed some resiliency in the third quarter, falling only 11% from last year after trending down more than 20% per quarter in recent quarters. The release of some new theatrical titles, as well as continued engagement with catalog, shows more people shopping at retail this year.
- Premium window rental and sales results currently are not included in industry reporting; however, early insights suggest that interest is high, and results are strong.
- The 6 percent increase in U.S. home entertainment spending in the first nine months of 2021 came amid a nearly 63 percent drop in box-office.

** Digital sales (EST) and rental (VOD) spending does not include premium releases (PVOD/PEST). Including PVOD/PEST would increase the total consumerspend on digital.

For more info, go to:

https://www.degonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/f1_3Q2021-DEG-Home-Entertainment-Report-with-grid.pdf

<https://www.mediaplaynews.com/deg-streaming-now-accounts-for-80-of-home-entertainment-spending>



AMERICAN FILM MARKET

The American Film Market (AFM®) was held virtually from November 2nd-5th 2021. There was a sense of 1990s nostalgia,” reports deadline.com. Technically this year’s AFM, with its Zoom meetings, on-demand screenings, virtual keynotes and discussions, was innovative. But the projects on offer and the stars attracting the most attention at AFM felt very old school.” Big-budgets reminiscent of the 1990’s, either with the same stars or people resembling them, were easy acquisitions. Many attendees seemed surprised that the theatrical business was not back to pre-pandemic levels, but the growth of streaming alone points to a new normal. Nevertheless, the theatrical outlook continues to improve, and the future of independent film looks good,

Filmmakers, distributors and investors have found ways to survive making and selling films despite the pandemic. “I don’t think any of us can say the classic pre-sales or indie model is dead,” says Cornerstone Co-Head Mark Gooder. “If you have a truly clear commercial project where all the elements fit – concept, director, and talent – you’ll still get the market’s attention. But if the story is ultimately about proof of concept, about needing to see the film to prove it has value, well, that’s a lot trickier.” Lower-budget films are still the way to go. As in other AFMs, films in the \$20-\$40 million range don’t do well. “Unless you have a very high-profile movie to sell, it’s often tough to get more than around \$5 million out of international sales up front, and we’re therefore largely focused on films with a budget range of between \$5 million and \$10 million; but, of course, we stray outside those boundaries at both ends.” added Mister Smith CEO David Garrett.

Arianna Bocco, IFC Films President said the biggest challenge for independent distributors right now is how competitive the market is. “... so we’re looking at getting in a little bit earlier on things, and we are trying to think outside of the box in terms of the kinds of films that are working.” She also cited global services including Net flix and Amazon, as well as indie out fits Neon, Bleecker Street, Magnolia and Sony Pictures Classics as competitors.

Documentaries also continue to do well. “This has been and continues to be a fantastic year for documentary storytelling. And the number of first-time feature documentarians in the mix of nominees, alongside proven veterans, shows that nonfiction cinema continues to have a very bright future,” said Christopher Campbell, President of the Critics Choice Documentary branch. “Our world, from its most amazing wonders to its greatest challenges, is being reflected back on the screen so immediately and creatively by today’s filmmakers...”

On the other hand, COVID-19 did not end December 31, 2020. The Indie box office has grown but not that fast. Not surprising is that distributors were going for the “sure thing” - thriller, horror, mystery and comedy (often included in a film with one of the other three). Those give them their biggest audiences evidently around the world. On the panel “Limited Budget Features with Huge Profit Potential, Bleecker Street president of acquisitions and ancillary Kent Sanderson told an AFM panel that theatrical releases for the specialty market were far off pre-pandemic levels and now “one tool on the Swiss Army Knife...more than ever we’re having to consider what makes it a film that will travel well on VOD.” Black Bear Head of Production and Finance Michael Heimler said, “The reality is today there are covid costs that are necessary line items you need to be prepared for...to protect your production.” His goal is to put as much of the money on the screen as possible...“making sure filmmakers can have as many days as they need, to not compromise the creative at all and give our team the resources they need to achieve their creative vision and what the script calls for.”

Much of the discussion before, during and after the market was about virtual markets, of course. AFM President & CEO Jean Prewitt said, “People are so enthusiastic about coming back to Santa Monica that there isn’t any question in our minds that next year we will be back with the full presentation, and the world will greet that with enthusiasm. Clay Epstein of Film Mode added, “If the virtual markets proved anything, it’s that the industry needs markets, maybe now more than ever.” Zoom has brought a new life to all the markets. Part of the new normal In addition to buyers being able to stay in one place and still engage with attendees at live Much of the discussion before, during and after the market was about virtual markets, of course. “It has been a good opportunity to explore different ways of accessing people...we’re pitching projects with great positioning, stimulating presentations [with] access to the director and actors talking about the projects,’ said Gabrielle Stewart, Managing Director of HanWay Films. “...A huge selling point is getting a sense of commitment straight from the actors.”

Production and sales companies, as well as international trade organizations from 75 countries participated in the market, including A24, Altitude Film Sales, Entertainment, Blue Fox Entertainment (a division of Capstone Entertainment}, Campfire Studios, Cornerstone, Dogwoof, The Exchange, Gaumont, HanWay, Highland Film Group, IFC Films, Lakeshore Entertainment, Lionsgate, Millennium Media, Myriad Pictures, Neon, Pathé International, Protagonist Pictures, Radiant Films International, Sierra/Affinity, Global Screen – A TELEPOOL Brand, Toei Company, Ltd., Warner Brothers, West End Films, and XYZ Films among others. During the most recent reporting, The United States had the largest exhibitor presence participating followed by the United Kingdom, Germany, and Japan. 🍷

GOTHAM AWARDS

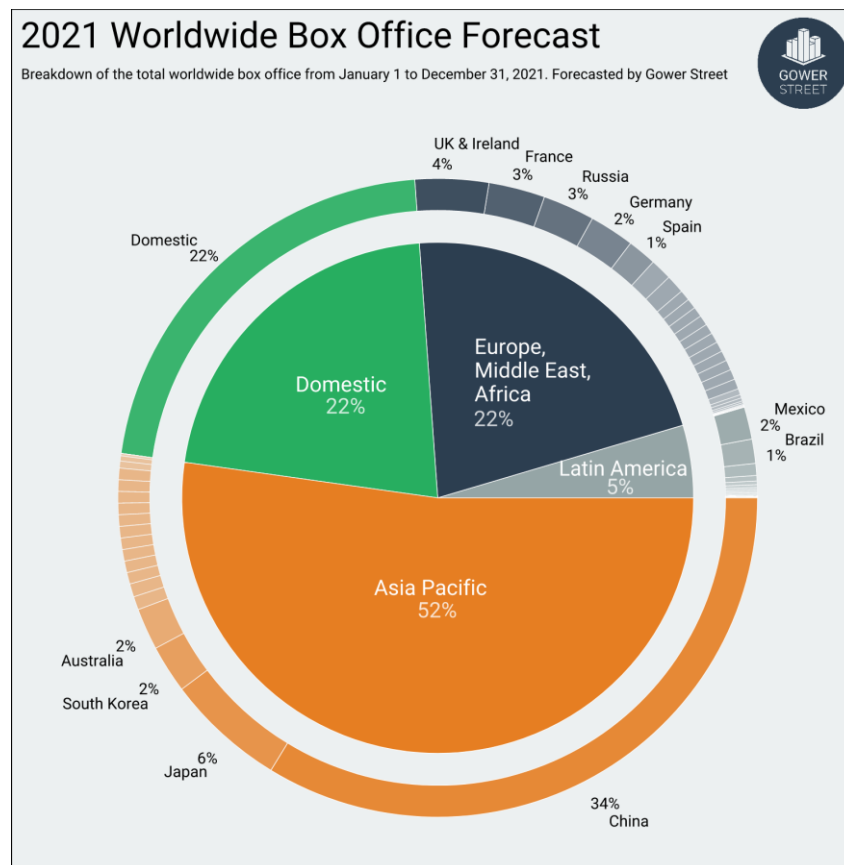
The 31st annual Gotham (formerly IFP), presented by the Gotham Film & Media institute, take place on November 29, 2021. The organization made changes this year. Perhaps the most significant is that acting awards for feature films will no longer be defined by gender. The best actress and actor categories are now combined into outstanding lead performance and outstanding supporting performance, joining the already existing Breakthrough Performer category. Likewise, there are new television categories: breakthrough nonfiction series and outstanding performance in a new series and international documentaries are eligible in the best documentary feature category for the first time. The Gotham Breakthrough Actor Award, which was already gender neutral in practice, was renamed the Gotham Breakthrough Performer Award. The live awards can be watched on Facebook (or whatever it is called by then.) 🍷

GOWER STREET BOX OFFICE FORECAST

Gower Street has raised its end of year estimate for Global Box Office in 2021. The estimate has been revised up to \$21.6 billion, from a previous estimate of \$20.2 billion. Further we anticipate a potential additional upside that could see the current year finish around \$22 billion globally. The \$21.6 billion estimate would put 2021 80% ahead of 2020, but still 49% behind 2019's record global tally. This is the final estimate Gower Street plans to publish for 2021 before actuals are announced in early January. The market share of global box office represented by the Domestic (down from 21.8% to 21.6%) and Latin American (down from 4.9% to 4.6%) regions is expected to remain relatively unchanged between 2020 and 2021. In contrast, APAC is expected to expand its market share from just over 50% in 2020 to 52.2% in 2021. EMEA drops from 23.1% to 21.6%.

The \$1.4 billion gain to the global prediction since our previous estimate, which was based on eight months of actuals and estimates for the final four months of the year, is primarily due to the blockbuster boost brought about by October. The combined successes of China's Golden Week holiday, led by *The Battle of Lake Changjin*; James Bond title *No Time To Die*; and Marvel anti-hero sequel: *Venom: Let There Be Carnage* ramped up cinema-going around the world.

Gower Street's year-end calculation combines global box office actuals, provided by our partners at Comscore Movies, with monthly forward-projections by market based on our predictive box office service forecast and analyst assessment. All projection figures are based on the current release calendar.



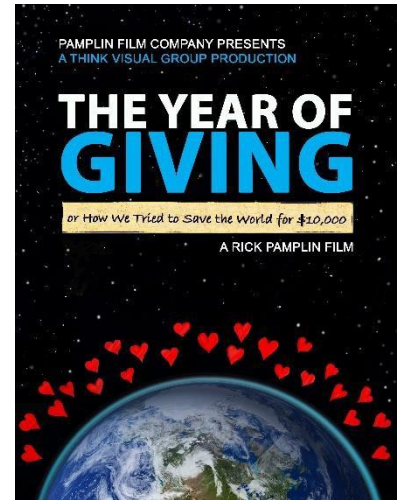
<https://gower.st/articles/october-records-highest-global-box-office/> 

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

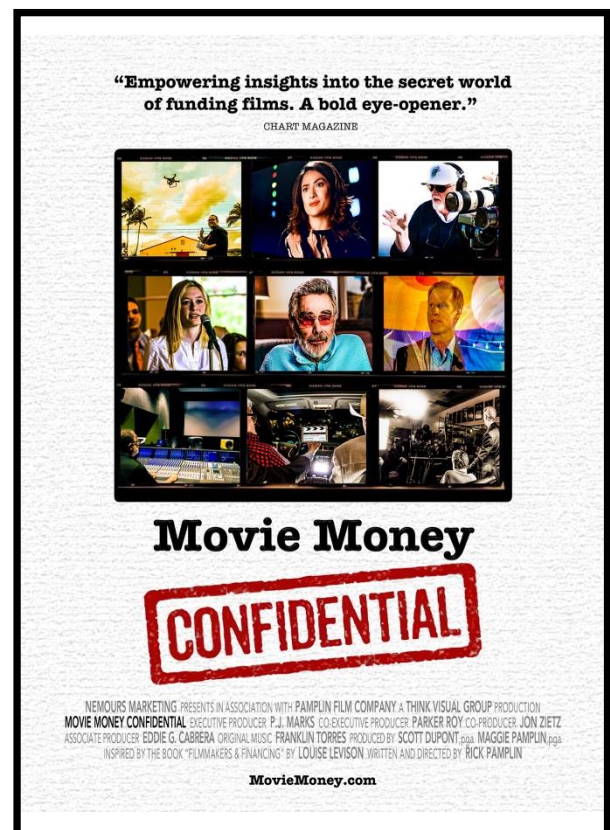
Movie Money CONFIDENTIAL, the feature length documentary film inspired by **Louise Levison's** best-selling book **Filmmakers & Financing**, has been awarded a prestigious Dove Foundation seal of approval, a "12+" rating and a "fantastic" review. The much-coveted Dove Awards are given "to encourage and 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.

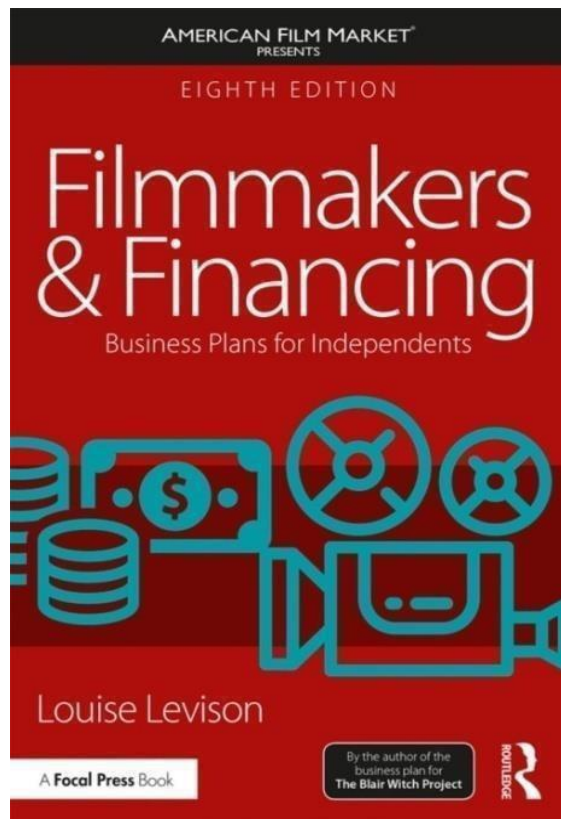
The review says, "With great advice from start to finish, **Movie Money Confidential** gives important details on how to create a film with little to no budget." It continues on, "This documentary is full of great information, including tips for people to start making their own films. It includes many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

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