

TFE THE FILM ENTREPRENEUR:

A Newsletter for Independent Filmmakers and Investors



LOUISE LEVISON, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

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BOFFO BOND BOX-OFFICE ELEVATES INDIE FILM

- ✓ **No Time to Die** smashes naysayers w/ \$300M Global Opening
- ✓ **Movie audiences over age 45** sprint back to theaters
- ✓ **Death of DVD discs exaggerated** - DVDs are alive and well!
- ✓ **Documentaries now prime target for Box-office and Streaming**
- ✓ **Start your Business Plan today, don't be left behind . . .**
- ✓ **Contact consultant "Levison, Louise" for FREE CONSULTATION**

The light at the end of the pandemic box office tunnel may be in sight. (indiewire.com)

The theatrical audience wants quality. “...if you look at what happened in England, [No Time To Die] did do that. People of all ages came.” - Michael Barker, Sony Pictures Classics

“When you look at the festivals that have happened this year, like Venice or Cannes, they have reemerged stronger than ever. And we’re no different. The quality of films is really extraordinary, and that’s going to play a key role in bringing audiences back.” - Dennis Lim, NYFF Director of Programming

“Right now, everything is aligning for theaters. On the pandemic front, we are seeing infection rates starting to drop again while vaccine rates have been steadily increasing, improving moviegoer confidence.” - Cinemark CEO Mark Zoradi

* BREAKING NEWS *

- > Producers have signed a formal, long-form distribution contract for the new documentary feature film **Movie Money CONFIDENTIAL** inspired by *Filmmakers & Financing* by **Louise Levison**.
- > The film was written and directed by DGA award-winning filmmaker **Rick Pamplin**, produced by PGA producers **Scott duPont** and **Maggie Pamplin** and funded by L.A.-based Nemours Marketing.
- > Details will be released soon, including plans for a **worldwide release** on multiple platforms.

TORONTO 2021: A QUIET AFFAIR

This year's Toronto Film Festival, which ran from September 9th to 18th, was hybrid again. Festival Co-Heads Cameron Bailey and Joana Vicente said that all films had been invited to premiere both in-person and virtually for Canadian audiences, while the press and industry screening platform launched last year will remain in place. "This will be a part of the festival going forward," Bailey added. "We saw so many festivals going online as a necessity, but it's a feature for us now."

The festival received a record number of submissions estimated at 7,000 films. There were 130 films in its Official Selection, compared to more than 330 in 2019. The documentary lineup consisted of 14, significantly fewer than the average of 22 in pre-COVID years. The Short Cuts program comprised 38 films, and there were 22 beyond the Official selection in the Industry Selects program. In addition, the new Filmmaker Lab had 20 participants. There also were eight new Rising Stars, who participated in intimate development labs with program governors and a special guest speaker. Close to 4,000 industry and press professionals from around the world attended both digitally and in-person. There were 37 digital sessions for industry and press delegates from filmmakers to advocates and funders. In a joint interview with IndieWire,

Strict COVID regulations remained in place. In addition to reduced screening capacity, there were travel restrictions on attendees. Festival staff, audience members and visitors entering the venues at the fest were required to show "either proof they had been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or that they have tested negative for COVID-19 within 48 hours prior to entering any TIFF venue, per a statement by the festival." In addition to fewer stars attending due either to the pandemic or country restrictions, there were fewer buyers. The former either couldn't or did not want to deal with the restrictions. They also had less interest in going through the process with fewer agents and potential backers in attendance. "We had 670-something screenings and we're talking about one person [COVID-positive]," said Vicente. "For us, it was important to be upfront and transparent. We feel confident that we did it right."

While the buyers may have been prevented by their own or the festival's policies, they also knew that many of the promising films in the lineup already had distribution. "We do have films playing in the (Toronto) festival, but it seems like most of the industry is not attending this year. So it feels like it's probably a festival that we can attend virtually this year," IFC Films president Arianna Bocco told *The Hollywood Reporter* after doing business on the ground in Telluride. "The good and bad news is we're becoming very experienced at these virtual festivals," said Kent Sanderson, Bleecker Street's President of Acquisition and Ancillary Distribution. Toronto also is more of a global Entertainment and Roadside Attractions Vertical Entertainment and Roadside Attractions substantial number of acquisitions for domestic distribution at the festival with buyer. While buyers still had slots in their slates for 2022 distribution, they still had Sundance in their headlights.

As of October 8th, *TFE* has seen reports of only five films acquired for domestic distribution since the lineup was announced:

Huda's Salon was acquired by Neon before the first day of the festival.

Silent Night was acquired by RLJE on September 9th.

Beba was acquired by Neon on Oct. 1st.

Lakewood was acquired by Vertical Entertainment and Roadside Attractions on Oct. 1st

You Are Not My Mother was acquired by Magnet Releasing on Oct. 2nd

On September 29th a TIFF media release said that that effective October 31st: “After three years as Executive Director & Co-Head of the Toronto International Film Festival, Joana Vicente is stepping down to return to her home country of the United States and roots in independent film, where she will assume the role of CEO of the Sundance Institute.”

THIS YEAR’S PRIZE WINNERS ARE...

AWARD	FILM	FILMMAKER
Grolsch People’s Choice	<i>Belfast</i>	Kenneth Branagh
First Runner Up	<i>Scarborough</i>	Shasha Nakhai, Rich Williamson
Second Runner Up	<i>The Power of the Dog</i>	Jane Campion
Grolsch People’s Choice Documentary	<i>The Rescue</i>	E. Chai Vasarhelyi, Jimmy Chin
First Runner Up	<i>Dionne Warwick: Don’t Make Me Over</i>	Dave Wooley, David Heilbroner
Second Runner Up	<i>Flee</i>	Jonas Poher Rasmussen
Grolsch People’s Choice Midnight Madness	<i>Titane</i>	Julia Ducournau
First Runner Up	<i>You Are Not My Mother</i>	Kate Dolan
Second Runner Up	<i>DASHCAM</i>	Rob Savage
FIPRESCI (International Critics) Best Special Presentation Film Best Prize Discovery	<i>Anatolian Leopard</i>	Emre Kayis
Platform Program Honorable Mention	<i>Yuni</i> <i>Mlungu Wam</i>	Kamila Andini Jenna Cato Bass
NETPAC Best Asian Film	<i>Brava Costa, Lebanon</i>	** Mounia Akl
Shawn Mendes Foundation Changemaker	<i>Scarborough</i>	Shasha Nakhai, Rich Williamson
Amplify Voices Canada Goose Best Canadian Feature Film Special Mention	<i>Ste. Anne</i> <i>Scarborough</i> <i>The Gravedigger’s Wife</i>	Rhayne Vermette Shasha Nakhai, Rich Williamson Khadar Ayderus Ahmed
Other Amplify Voices Prizes	<i>A Night of Knowing Nothing</i>	Payal Kapadia Payal Kapadia
IMDbPro Short Cuts Films Best Film	<i>Pa Displaced/Pa Vend</i>	Samir Karahoda Rakan Mayasi
Honorable Mention	<i>Trumpets in the Sky</i>	Zacharias Kunuk
Best Canadian	<i>Apprentice</i>	Jack Weisman,
Honorable Mention	<i>Nuisance Bear</i>	Gabriela Osio Vanden
Her Journey	<i>ASTEL</i>	Ramata-Toulaye Sy
Honorable Mention	<i>Love, Dad</i>	Diana Cam Van Nguye



SUNDANCE 2022

While the 2022 edition of the festival, which runs January 20th to 30th, will continue being hybrid, Park City is readying to mount a larger in-person event as well. The Sundance Institute further details on Satellite Screen partners and locations, ticket package details and on-sale dates, plus further elaboration of its earlier health and safety guidelines. “Our programming team, led by the fearless Kim Yutani, is deep into screening the mountain of submissions we have already received this year,” said Festival Director Tabitha Jackson in an official statement. “As our press and industry offices open in preparation for the next edition of our festival we are excited to share what details we can today, anticipate sharing more as we know more, and can’t wait to meet audiences wherever they are, including in Utah, in January.”

All attendees will be required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Today’s announcement adds that all vaccinations must be completed at least two weeks prior to traveling to the festival. Further information on how to provide proof of vaccination will be provided closer to the festival. Additionally, the festival will require that masks are worn at all times in interior spaces and in queuing lines (including outdoor areas such as tents, restrooms, and temporary structures).

The selected Satellite Screen theaters are Amherst Cinema (Amherst, MA), a/perture cinema (Winston Salem, NC), Indie Memphis (Memphis, TN), mama film (Lawrence, Kan), Media Arts Center of San Diego/Digital Gym (San Diego, CA), Northwest Film Forum (Seattle, WA) and SNF Parkway Theater (Baltimore, MD).

Individual tickets start at \$20. After an early sale for Sundance Circle members (October 15), package sales and/or selection begins on December 15 for Sundance Institute’s Sundance Circle, Storyteller and Supporter Members and December 17 for the general public. Individual ticket sales for Institute Members begin January 5, and for the public, January 6. Satellite Screens are independently ticketed. Each ticket product has limitations on the number of units that may be purchased. For the variety of ticket packages go to:

<https://www.sundance.org/blogs/news/2022-sundance-film-festival-announcement>

The Institute also released a statement welcoming Joana Vicente. She will commence her new role at the start of November working between the Institute’s Park City, Los Angeles, and New York City offices. She will work with a core staff of 200 and oversee Sundance Film Festival, the Institute’s year-round labs and programs, Sundance Collab, public and field-building programs, advocacy work and strategic planning.

As a producer she had 13 features and six shorts debut at the festival and said, “Sundance has been an essential part of my career - I feel that I grew up as a producer with the support of the festival and the Sundance labs,” said Vicente. “It is such an extraordinary opportunity to lead an organization that has defined independent storytelling for 40 years. This opportunity combines all of my passions: film, working with storytellers throughout the world.” 🍷

BERLIN FESTIVAL RETURNS TO IN-PERSON EVENT

The Berlin International Film Festival has confirmed its 2022 edition will take place as an in-person event running February 10th to 20th. The 2021 fest ran as a shortened online-only edition in March, followed by an audience-facing Summer special in June. “We’re very pleased to bring the festival back to the big screen in February: with a multifaceted program, the red carpet, stars and the amazing Berlinale audiences,” said Berlinale Directors Mariette Rissenbeek and Carlo Chatrian. “The need for a physical festival experience and face-to-face encounters is strongly evident in both the industry and the public. The experiences of the last months have shown that on-location events can take place safely and successfully, and how important they are for dialogue and exchange.”

More information on COVID regulations and on the online ticketing process will be announced in the first half of November. The main festival venue will once again be the Berlinale Palast at Potsdamer Platz, where other festival cinemas are located. As in past years, the Berlinale will also present films at numerous cinemas city-wide. The Berlinale has also confirmed the dates for next year’s European Film Market (EFM, February 10-17), the Berlinale Co-Production Market (February 12-16) and Berlinale Talents (February 12-17), with all set to “focus on on-site offerings” but provide “online formats”.

Next year’s Berlinale will occur before the Baftas and the Oscars, which will take place on March 13 and 27 respectively. 🍷

COMINGS AND GOINGS

Solstice Studios, which was founded in 2018, “is not closing, it is being streamlined and will focus entirely on getting *Hypnotic* produced and released,” a spokesman for Solstice said in a statement. “*Hypnotic* is fully funded and in production now. Principal photography is scheduled to be completed November 19. Post-production is set for completion on July 15, 2022. Solstice is targeting a wide theatrical release in North America in September or October 2022 on a minimum of 2,000 screens. The U.S. release will either be handled by a team purpose-built by Solstice for this picture - or by a third-party U.S. distributor.”

The “winding down” includes the exit of CEO Mark, a longtime indie executive who helped start Solstice after the proposed venture raised a hefty sum. Among others leaving are leaving along with Gill, who serves as CEO, is among those exiting alongside marketing chief Vincent Bruzzese, production chief Lia Ellzey, distribution chief Shari Hardison and international sales head Crystal Bourbeau. An estimated ten people are remaining to see the release of complete films. Reports are that most of the company’s financing came from a wealthy family that has remained in the background, and they apparently had enough as that funding dried up. Even though the theatrical box office has finally begun to show some vibrancy, it was too late for Solstice. Most of the company’s financing came from a wealthy family that has remained in the background and apparently that funding had dried up. Even though the theatrical box office has finally begun to show vibrancy, it was too late for Solstice. Solstice had seasoned founding executives, but they launched at a time a theater-shutting viral pandemic was unthinkable, said *deadline.com*. “The company’s demise is a real blow to the fragile ecosystem of the independent film business, which needs ambitious companies like this one.”

Elie Samaha, entrepreneur and producer of movies including *The Whole Nine Yards*, *Battlefield Earth* and *The Pledge*, is making a comeback with LA-based Luminosity Entertainment. The company plans to finance, produce and distribute movies in the U.S., as well as selling internationally. Financing for the company includes investments by Samaha, Steven Markoff, Sherwin Jarol, and Dr. David Wood. The Board of Advisors includes former Warner Bros Domestic Distribution President, Dan Fellman, former William Morris Chairman, Jim Wiatt, and former General Counsel of Warner Bros, David Sagal. Samaha currently owns The Bucharest Studios (formerly owned by Warner Bros) in Romania, which is one of Eastern Europe’s largest film and TV facilities. The company tells us it plans to develop and produce 15 films over the next two years, with budgets up to \$50M per title. Genres will include action, thriller, urban, faith-based, comedy, family, fantasy, and sci-fi with an eye towards diversity and global appeal.

Former Revolution Studios CEO Vince Totino and former Orion Pictures President John Hegeman are opening the doors to **Wayward Entertainment**, a multi-platform studio which will focus on producing and distributing low budget genre and alternative content.

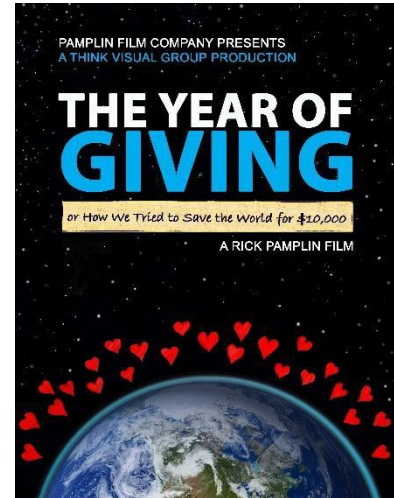
Wayward Entertainment will kick things off partnering with Nick Frost and Simon Pegg’s *Stolen Picture* to produce the horror feature *Svalta* which they previously worked on together when Hegeman was at Orion. Totino and Hegeman stated “Wayward is focused on working with creative people with something interesting to say and share. We couldn’t think of another project or partnership that would better define what we are trying to do,” said Totino and Hegeman. “The indie world needs a home for adult based horror and alternative movies with such a high level of passion and expertise. This is going to be fun” added Frost and Pegg. ■

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

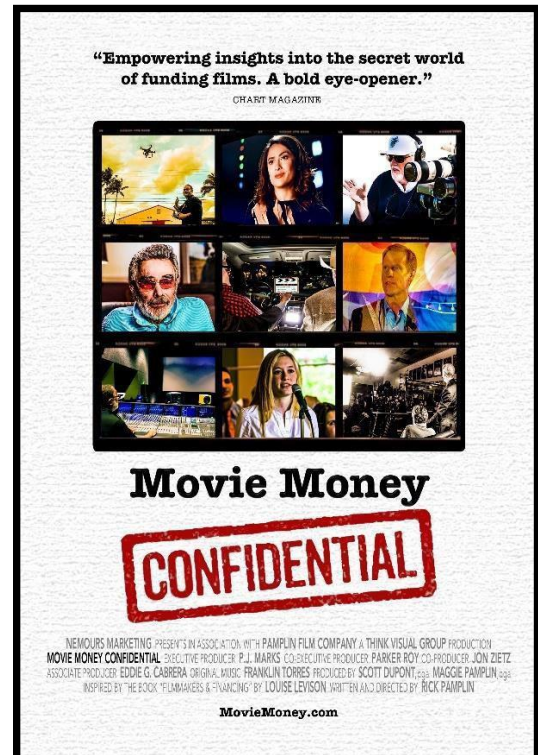
Movie Money CONFIDENTIAL, the feature length documentary film inspired by **Louise Levison's** best-selling book *Filmmakers & Financing*, has been awarded a prestigious Dove Foundation seal of approval, a "12+" rating and a "fantastic" review. The much-coveted Dove Awards are given "to encourage and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

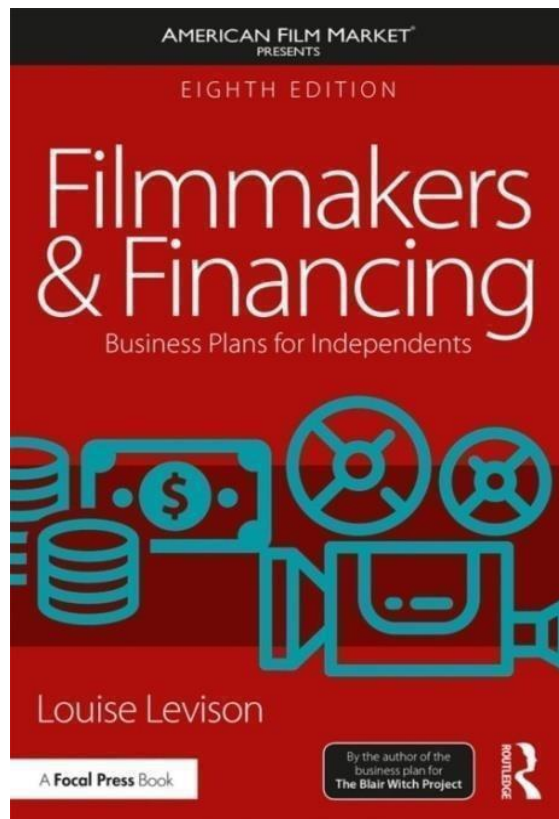
The review says, "With great advice from start to finish, *Movie Money Confidential* gives important details on how to create a film with little to no budget." It continues on, "This documentary is full of great information, including tips for people to start making their own films. It includes many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