



THE FILM ENTREPRENEUR:

A Newsletter for Independent Filmmakers and Investors

LOUISE LEVISON, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER



VOL. 28 No. 10

October 2020

Special Edition

INDIE, GENRE & FAMILY FILMS IN DEMAND!

- **Cupboards Bare? Distributors seeking indie films**
- **Investors eyeing ROI on new indie film projects**
- **Hollywood Studios struggling, indies strengthening**
- **Call now for free consultation on your new Business Plan**

Distributors wasted no time at the Toronto Film Festival acquiring films for release later this year and next year. And some do not even realize that some local theaters are open. “Next year is going to be incredibly busy because many people are waiting to show their movies [then],” says CAA Media Finance Co-Head Roeg Sutherland.

“It’s also a good time for indie genre films as I keep hearing from distributors that what they need more than anything right now are family films and genre films. Those are normally supplied by the studios. But the studios have gone quiet,” Gabrielle Stewart, Managing Director of London-based HanWay Films, told screendaily.com.

The film business is down but not out. To paraphrase author Mark Twain, “The reports of its death have been greatly exaggerated.” At press time, Cineworld announced that the company was closing its theaters in the UK and Regal Cinemas in the U.S.” The postponement, not cancellation, is due to MGM’s *No Time to Die* being moved from November 2020 to April 2021. The next day AMC and Cinemark chains announced they are staying open. Meanwhile, feature films continue to be scheduled for U.S. distribution in late November this year.

“There are a number of uncertainties surrounding when theaters will re-open, how quickly moviegoers will return and when production can safely resume. But our confidence in the future of our theatrical business is undiminished,” said Lions Gate Films CEO Jon Feltheimer. 🍿

BUYERS BUSY AT 2020 TORONTO FILM FESTIVAL

Being control freaks in how films are seen, as one sales rep told *Variety*, the 3,926 international professionals (buyers, sellers, filmmakers and executives) may have had a hard time getting used to the new routines. The 46th edition of the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) opened September 10th with Spike Lee's *American Utopia* and closed on September 20th with Mira Nair's *A Suitable Boy*. "It's a different environment than festivals past, but we saw the success of numerous titles at Virtual Cannes, and the hunger that traditional distributors and streamers have for content. We believe millions of consumers want to go back to the theaters and consume content in a safe manner when that is available," stated Teddy Schwarzman of Black Bear Pictures.

TIFF had to approach everything in a new way due the pandemic. Forced to let employees go, the Fest fortunately had help from the Canadian government's subsidy program and some loyal sponsors. While planning, Co-directors Cameron Bailey and Joana Vincente consulted their counterparts at other festivals such as Telluride, Venice and New York. "Every negotiation was different. We were constantly moving and adjusting," Vincente told *deadline.com*. "We collaborated in a way we never have done before." Being another hybrid, TIFF had both a limited physical festival and an online experience. Screenings took place at the TIFF Bell Lightbox, two drive-ins, an open-air cinema and a public online platform geoblocked to Canada, as well as digital screenings, press conferences and industry talks. A total of about 60 features and 36 shorts screened, which is drastically fewer titles than in a normal year, according to a TIFF press release. Last year's festival had 245 features and 82 shorts. This year there were 48-hour windows for online press and industry screenings. Outside of the festival itself, TIFF used a digital platform to offer film rentals, talks and interviews. The organization says 48,280 public tickets were scanned for the festival's mix of online and in-person screenings. Attendance for last year's regular, in-person event alone was 307,362. American buyers and press did not attend because most were not allowed over the Canadian border. Besides, American buyers could not go there without quarantining. Interestingly, some buyers commented that they were able to see more of the available product being home instead of all the time they spent on Festival Street, at parties and doing face-to-face networking.

Everyone was in for a pleasant surprise at the acquisition of films. For the U.S. market, 19 independent features were acquired, only four less than last year. Solstice Studios ponied up \$20 million for *Good Boy Joe*, and Vertical Entertainment joined Redbox in acquiring *Shadow in the Clouds* for \$5.0 million. The 800-lb gorilla of the streaming business, Netflix, was back as a buyer and acquired three films for a total of \$60 million. Last year the company sold films but bought none. "We continue to be a society that thrives on entertainment culture." Sony Classics Co-President Tom Bernard commented, "The independents need to buy movies now though. If they haven't bought any by now, they're going to have some problems in the spring." ■

TORONTO FILM FESTIVAL 2019 SALES FOR U.S. RIGHTS SEPTEMBER 1ST TO SEPTEMBER 19TH

FILM	DISTRIBUTOR	MILLION \$
<i>Another Round</i>	Samuel Goldwyn Films	n.a.
<i>Boy from Medellin, The</i>	Amazon**	n.a.
<i>Bruised</i>	Netflix**	20.0
<i>Echo Boomers</i>	Saban Films*	n.a.
<i>Good Joe Bell</i>	Solstice Studios	20.0
<i>I Care A Lot</i>	Netflix	10.0
<i>Joy Womack: The White Swan</i>	Film Movement*	n.a.
<i>Malcom and Marie (a)</i>	Netflix**	30.0
<i>MLK/FBI</i>	IFC*	n.a.
<i>New Order</i>	Neon*	n.a.
<i>Night of The Kings</i>	Neon	n.a.
<i>Pieces of a Woman</i>	Netflix**	n.a.
<i>Pixie</i>	Saban Films*	n.a.
<i>Salvatore: Shoemaker of Dreams</i>	Sony Pictures Classics**	n.a.
<i>Shadow in the Clouds</i>	Vertical Entertainment & Redbox Entertainment**	5.0
<i>Shiva Baby</i>	Utopia Media**	n.a.
<i>Shoplifters of the World, The</i>	RLJ Entertainment	n.a.
<i>Summer of 85</i>	Music Box Films	n.a.
<i>Wander</i>	Saban Films*	n.a.

*North American Rights **World Rights (a) first post-pandemic film to complete production.
Note: The festival started on September 10th. A few films were picked up earlier, but the information on dates was not clear.

AND THE TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL WINNERS ARE...

AWARD	FILM	FILMMAKER
Grolsch People's Choice First Runner Up Second Runner Up	<i>Nomadland</i> <i>One Night in Miami</i> <i>Beans</i>	Chloé Zhao Regina King Tracey Deer
Grolsch People's Choice Documentary First Runner Up Second Runner Up	<i>Inconvenient Indian</i>	Michelle Latimer
Grolsch People's Choice Midnight Madness First Runner Up Second Runner Up	<i>Shadow in the Cloud</i>	Roseanne Liang
FIPRESCI (International Critics) Best Special Presentation Film Best Prize Discovery	<i>Beginning</i>	Dea Kulumbegashvili
NETPAC Best Asian Film	<i>Gaza Mon Amour</i>	Tarzan Nasser, Arab Nasser
Amplify Voices Canada Goose Best Canadian Feature Film Special Mention	<i>Inconvenient Indian</i> <i>Fauna</i>	Michelle Latimer Nicolás Pereda
Amplify Voices Special Mention	<i>The Disciple</i> <i>Night of the Kings</i> <i>Downstream to Kinshasa</i>	Chaitanya Tamhane Philippe Lacôte Dieudo Hamadi
Short Cuts Films Best Short Trophy Best Film Best Canadian Changemaker	<i>Sing Me a Lullaby</i> <i>Dustin</i> <i>Benjamin Benny, Ben</i> <i>Black Bodies</i>	Tiffany Hsiung Daila Guiguets Paul Shkordoff Kelly Fyffe-Marshall



SUBMISSIONS OPEN FOR SPIRIT AWARDS!

The 36th annual Film Independent Spirits awards will take place once again Oscar eve, April 24, 2021.

Early Deadline: Tuesday, October 13, 2020 (Film submissions only)

Regular Deadline: Tuesday, October 27, 2020

Final Deadline: Tuesday, November 17, 2020

Extended Film Independent Member Deadline: Friday, November 20, 2020

Go to <https://www.filmindependent.org/spirit-awards/submissions/> for more information.

This year the organization is adding six categories to the program, recognizing TV and episodic work alongside its long-established film honors. “As tough as this year has been, there’s so much great filmmaking and yes, television, that has sustained us throughout the pandemic,” Executive Director Josh Welsh said.

“The independent, diverse creators we’ve supported for decades now straddle the feature and episodic worlds,” Board Chair Mary Sweeney added. “Our mission supports and celebrates visual storytellers wherever they practice their craft. The addition of the TV Spirit Awards recognizes this expansion by celebrating diverse independent, creative voices across platforms.”

Nominations will be announced on Tuesday, January 26, 2021. The categories are:

New TV Awards:

- Best New Scripted Series
- Best New Non-Scripted or Documentary Series
- Best Male Performance in a Scripted Series
- Best Female Performance in a Scripted Series
- Best Ensemble Cast in a Scripted Series

Feature Film Awards:

- Best Feature
- Best First Feature
- Best Director
- Best Screenplay
- Best First Screenplay
- John Cassavetes Award
- Best Male Lead
- Best Female Lead
- Best Supporting Male
- Best Supporting Female
- Best Cinematography
- Best Editing
- Robert Altman Award
- Best International Film
- Best Documentary



SUBMISSIONS OPEN FOR 2021 TRIBECA FILM FESTIVAL

The 2021 Tribeca Film Festival, taking place in New York City from June 9 thru June 20, 2021 is marking the 20th-anniversary of the fest. “We’re excited once again to provide a platform for new stories and ideas, the organization said in a statement.

Learn more and submit your work at: <https://tribecafilm.com/festival/submissions>

Due to the on-going COVID-19 pandemic, some projects that premiered online as part of a limited festival screening or were previously invited to other festivals that were subsequently cancelled, may still be eligible for Tribeca in 2021. This does not apply to all submission categories, however. Films will still need to comply with the complete rules and regulations, which can be found in the link above.

Please contact entries@tribecafilm.com for more information.

DEADLINES & ENTRY FEES

All fees are in USD. Submitters will be informed of their status mid-April.

	Features	Shorts	Tribeca NOW	Tribeca Immersive	Tribeca X Award	Features Virtual Festival	Shorts Virtual Festival
Open	Sept 8, 2020	Sept 8, 2020	Sept 8, 2020	Sept 8, 2020	Sept 8, 2020	Sept 8, 2020	Sept 8, 2020
Early Deadline	Oct 21, 2020 \$65	Oct 21, 2020 \$45	Oct 21, 2020 \$40	Oct 21, 2020 \$40	Oct 21, 2020 \$325	Oct 21, 2020 \$35	Oct 21, 2020 \$20
Official Deadline	Dec 2, 2020 \$85	Dec 2, 2020 \$50	Dec 2, 2020 \$60	Dec 2, 2020 \$60	Dec 2, 2020 \$425	Dec 2, 2020 \$45	Dec 2, 2020 \$30
Final Deadline	Jan 13, 2021 \$110	Jan 13, 2021 \$60	Jan 13, 2021 \$80	Jan 13, 2021 \$80	Jan 13, 2021 \$525	Jan 13, 2021 \$55	Jan 13, 2021 \$40

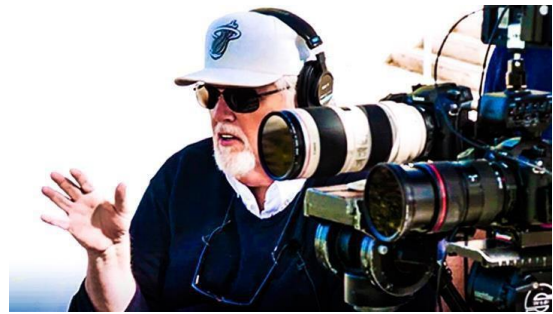


RICK PAMPLIN'S MOVIE MONEY CONFIDENTIAL INSPIRED BY FILMMAKERS & FINANCING BOOK

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 Louise Levison.

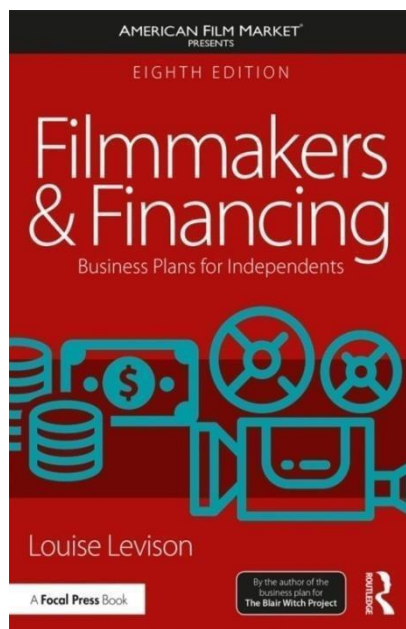
Pamplin and his crew shot 100 hours of footage and interviewed about 60 people including actress-producer **Salma Hayek** (*The Prophet*) and filmed one of the last interviews with the late screen legend **Burt Reynolds** at his acting school in North Palm Beach, Florida. The movie also filmed seminar-style panels with students at Saint Andrew's School in Boca Raton and an open-to-the-public event with artists and writers at 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*** is a Think Visual Group Production in Association with Pamplin Film Company. Go to MovieMoney.com for upcoming screenings and release information.



Rick Pamplin on the set of *Movie Money CONFIDENTIAL*

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



<https://www.routledge.com/Filmmakers-and-Financing-Business-Plans-for-Independents/Levison/p/book/9781138947443>

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*.

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 a Film Business Consultant to work creating a business plan for your film.

THE FILM ENTREPRENEUR is published by Business Strategies

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