



THE FILM ENTREPRENEUR:

A Newsletter for Independent Filmmakers and Investors

LOUISE LEVISON, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER



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AFM BUYERS PURSUE INDIES, COVID CURE? FILM PERMITS IN L.A. COUNTY INCREASE

- Distributors Focusing on New Product to Fill Slates
- New COVID Vaccine Could Cure What Ails Film Biz
- Despite Setbacks, Production Increasing in Early 2021
- Make Plans for Your Production, [Call for Free Consultation](#)

New optimism is running wild in the business due to a possible cure-all for COVID, creating opportunities for independent filmmakers and their projects. A ScreenDaily.com panel of U.S. indie producers and sales executives, on the eve of the first **online American Film Market (AFM)**, pointed out as studios continue to push releases into 2021, opportunities for independent features have emerged. “This is one of those periods of time where independent films of a certain quality actually have a shot of being able to be released theatrically because so many studio films have been pushed,” said Brian Beckmann, CFO of Arclight Film. “**There are a lot of people looking for content right now,**” he said.

BREAKING NEWS: Pfizer’s announcement of a COVID vaccine, **possibly 90 percent effective and available in January 2021**, was a shot of adrenalin for both movie theaters and filmmakers, hoping to get back to business-as-usual and regain a sense of normalcy. The startling timeline created a sense of urgency for sidelined filmmakers and, of course, opened many doors for new projects. Coupled with news that “**On-location film permits for the Los Angeles area grew by 24 percent in October,**” reported by FilmLA, there was both a sense of guarded optimism and urgency careening throughout the industry.

Independent films are not part of Hollywood definitions and have been busy filling the theatrical void, even during the pandemic, as seen in the BoxOfficeMojo data, from April to December. Horror films, such as *The Wretched*, were the first out, quickly followed by other thrillers totaling 67 percent of the indie segment of the box office. Comedy films have been well received making up 27 percent. Family and a mix of other genres comprise the rest. In summary, **indies remain strong, the market is heating up, filmmakers are gearing up and buyers are ready for better days and new product.** 🍿

AMERICAN FILM MARKET UPDATE

The American Film Market started on November 9th and is taking place wholly online until the 13th. Times are 8:00AM – 8:00PM PST. More than 300 exhibitors from 35-plus countries have already registered, including such sales companies as AGC Studios, Arclight Films, Cornerstone, Fantawild Animation Inc., Filmexport Group, Film France, GAGA Corporation, Gaumont, Highland Film Group, Lionsgate, Millennium Media, Mister Smith Entertainment, Protagonist Pictures, Screen Media, Sierra/Affinity, Solstice Studios, STUDIOCANAL, The Exchange, TrustNordisk and XYZ Films. The United States has the biggest exhibitor presence with 132 companies followed by Russia (26), the United Kingdom (22), France (14) and Germany (12) with many other countries' exhibitors adding to the diversity of the market.

If you missed the AFM 2020 Online Tour and Q&A live, the recording is now available! This webinar is a great resource to help you to prepare and plan for the market. Watch it on the AFM Vimeo Channel here: <https://vimeo.com/476424463>

Attendee registration includes: Online credentials which include unrestricted access to:

MyAFM – The place to create your profile, discover other participants, send messages, and have Zoom meetings from inside the platform.

LocationEXPO – Meet Film Commissions with billions of dollars in production incentives that can quickly get films moving, and connect with facilities, service companies and institutions.

Industry offices – Connect with over 300 production and sales companies, and industry organizations from around the world.

Networking Pavilion – AFM's most interactive experience for attendees to meet. Over 50 video discussions every hour offer endless opportunities to join small groups that share your vision, passion, and goals.

Stage 1 & Stage 2 – Over 200 speakers will participate in more than 70 live sessions – conferences, panels, workshops, conversations and presentations – all with on-demand replays.

On Demand Theatre – Discover hundreds of films from around the world – all on demand for convenient viewing.

Credentials also include a one-year subscription to Cinando and one Next Level Webinar from STAGE 32.

Register: <https://americanfilmmarket.com/attendee/>

You also can buy Routledge and Focal Press books, including *Filmmakers & Financing: Business Plans for Independents* by Louise Levison at 20 percent off. Enter code AFM20 at checkout: <https://www.routledge.com/go/american-film-market-bookstore>

Other Producer Resources can be found at: <https://americanfilmmarket.com/producer-resources> 

AFI FEST AWARDS

The AFI FEST, presented by Audi, showcases films from across the globe. With a diverse and innovative slate of programming, the eight-day film festival presents screenings, panels and conversations, featuring both master filmmakers and new voices. Each year, the fest features more than 125 films. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences recognizes AFI FEST as a qualifying festival for both Short Films categories of the annual Academy Awards®.

AWARDS	FILM	FILMMAKERS
Audience		
Narrative Feature	<i>Wolfwalker</i>	Tomm Moore, Ross Stewart
Documentary Feature	<i>76 Days</i>	Hao Wu, Weixi Chen
Short Film	<i>Lonely Blue Night</i>	Johnson Cheng
Grand Jury		
Live Action	<i>Pillars</i>	Haley Elizabeth Anderson
Animation	<i>Tiger and Ox</i>	Seunghee Kim
Special Mentions		
	<i>Black Goat</i>	Yi Tang
	<i>Maalbeek</i>	Ismaël Joffroy Chandoutis
	<i>Umbilical</i>	Danski Tang



CINEMACon POSTPONED

The National Association of Theatre Owners who produce this event have decided to postpone CinemaCon until August 2021. This event is where studios and indies display new films for distributors and merchants sell items such as theater seats and popcorn machines to exhibitors on a large convention floor. Since the convention depends on large gatherings which we are now avoiding due to the coronavirus, it was necessary to delay the event. The 2020 event at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas was cancelled in March after President Trump imposed a 30-day travel ban from Europe to the U.S. (that excluded the U.K.).

“With all the travel, logistical, and capacity concerns for the convention, our 7,500 attendees, vendors, and studio distribution partners, we couldn’t guarantee we could present the kind of show the industry expects in April,” said CinemaCon’s managing director Mitch Neuhauser. “In close consultation with our studio and industry partners, we are rescheduling CinemaCon for August, when we think we can put on the kind of showcase we do best and celebrate the moviegoing experience with the entire industry.” ■

COMINGS AND GOINGS

Spyglass Media Group is teaming up with Propagate Content, Artists First and Off-Road Productions to form the new comedy film joint venture **Artists Road**, which will focus on the financing and production of moderate-budgeted commercial comedy movies with marquee talent. Artists Road has named Lakeshore Entertainment alum Mark Korshak as CEO and he'll report to joint venture's co-founders Gary Barber, Chairman, and CEO, Spyglass; Ben Silverman, Chairman, and Co-CEO, Propagate Content; Peter Principato, CEO of Artists First; and Todd Garner, for Off-Road Productions. Principato will run the company with a majority interest stake owned by Propagate. "Artists Road collectively brings together some of the boldest and brightest creative talents in comedy production, Barber said. "By combining Artists First's powerful roster of comedic talent with Propagate's production expertise and Off-Road's creative ingenuity, Spyglass is uniquely set up to distribute breakout comedy hits for worldwide audiences."

MGM is relaunching **American International Pictures** and making Tate Taylor's *Breaking News In Yuba County* its first acquisition. The newly launched AIP label will release the film, starring Allison Janney, Mila Kunis, Regina Hall, Awkwafina, Wanda Sykes and Matthew Modine, theatrically in January 2021 via MGM's joint venture distribution company United Artists Releasing. Films released under the AIP banner are overseen by MGM across all downstream media. Formed in the mid-1950's, American International Pictures was founded as an independent film production and distribution company.

Visual effects and animation company Goodbye Kansas has launched production company **Infinite Entertainment**, which like its parent company, will have a presence in LA, London and Stockholm. The company will create, acquire and manage intellectual property for development across film and TV with a focus on projects with "extraordinary worlds and characters, in stories that reach international audiences," according to a company statement. Infinite has multiple projects in the pipeline, all of which are said to feature state of the art visual effects, including an original, supernatural adventure feature, a sci-fi adventure and a sci-fi thriller. Peter Levin, CEO and founder of Goodbye Kansas said: "Goodbye Kansas is founded on the idea of creating a Universe of Artists to work on the most iconic characters and stories of popular culture, and Infinite Entertainment is an extended arm of that vision."

Spire Animation Studios was co-founded by veteran animation producer Brad Lewis (*Ratatouille*; *How to Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World*) and industry entrepreneur P.J. Gunsagar. The company revealed development of its first computer-animated feature, an original contemporary musical titled *Century Goddess*. The studio is backed by Connect Ventures, an investment partnership between CAA and venture capital firm New Enterprise Associates. CAA talent is not part of the deal, but Lewis, the studio's chief creative officer, sees the access to its talent as an advantage. Spire intends to focus on feature animation and currently has five projects in development. Gunsagar, who serves as Spire's CEO, says of the studio's creative goals, "we're creating universal stories, lifting them up larger than life and culturally and bringing new creative voices to the animation space." 🍷

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

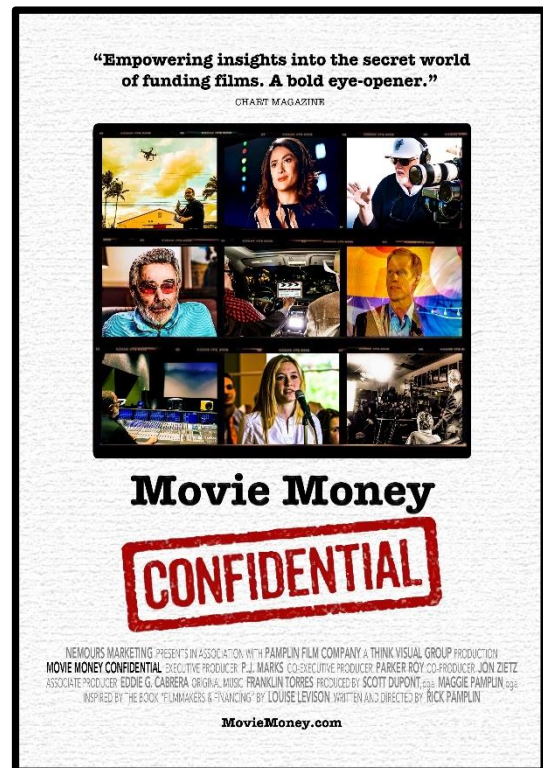
Movie Money CONFIDENTIAL, the feature length documentary film inspired by **Louise Levison's** best-selling book *Filmmakers & Financing*, has been awarded a prestigious Dove Foundation seal of approval, a "12+" rating and a "fantastic" review. The much-coveted Dove Awards are given "to encourage and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

Producer-Production Designer **Maggie Pamplin** noted the recognition for director **Rick Pamplin** and his collaborative partners at **Think Visual Group**: "*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."



ANTONIO SABÁTO JR. PLANS NEW MOVIE STUDIO, ANNOUNCES FEATURE FILM *TRAIL BLAZERS*

Hollywood actor, model, filmmaker, activist and author (*Sabato: The Untold Story*) **Antonio Sabáto Jr.** is launching **ConFlix Studios** as a place for conservatives and people of faith to tell stories that promote God, family and country. “There are so many people blacklisted over the years. I thought, ‘Why don’t we start a studio where we can produce and make our own stuff, have our own distribution and make movies we want to make?’”



After the 2016 election Sabáto found out he was virtually blacklisted in Hollywood. His agents and manager deserted him. Work dried up after a 30-year-career. He moved to Florida and got a job in construction. His comeback is producing (w/ **Kaya Jones** and **Nik Tizekker**), co-writing, directing and starring in *Trail Blazers*. The western feature film for his new studio has an all-star cast of Hollywood friends including **Kevin Sorbo**, **Scott Baio** and **Kristy Swanson** and is about an outlaw band of brothers who decide to change their ways to fulfill their father’s dying wish.

Sabáto, an international star who has over 40 movies to his credit, recently has been making media appearances, gathering public support on social media and connecting with like-minded **filmmakers and investors**. “We are putting together a plan to create a conservative movie studio for all patriots to do projects that Hollywood would never do,” he adds. For more information go to **conflixstudios.com** and join the mailing list for updates.

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.

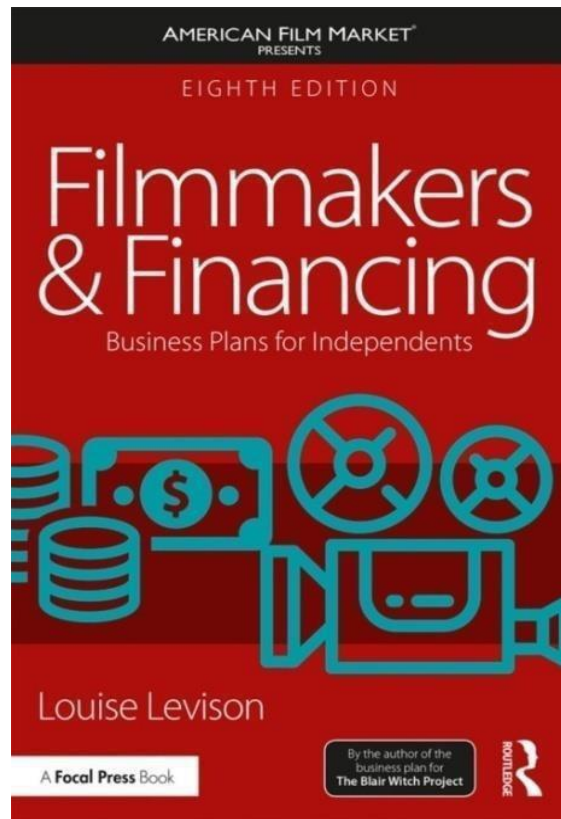
Pamplin and his crew shot 100 hours of footage and interviewed about 60 people including actress-producer **Salma Hayek** (*The Prophet*) and filmed one of the last interviews with the late screen legend **Burt Reynolds** at his acting school in North Palm Beach, Florida. The movie also filmed seminar-style 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*



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

<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.

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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