

TFE THE FILM ENTREPRENEUR:

A Newsletter for Independent Filmmakers and Investors



LOUISE LEVISON, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

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WITHOUTABOX SHUTS DOWN SUBMISSION SERVICE

Withoutabox will end festival submissions after more than 17 years. The game-changing festival service will be phasing out over the next year with the ability to submit disabled starting September 16, 2019, and any access to the website disabled on October 30, 2019. “We are working with current film festival customers to fulfill Withoutabox’s commitments through October 30, 2019 and are working with filmmakers to ensure their submissions are properly processed during this transition,” the company said in a statement on its website. “We are grateful to all the filmmakers who have shared their stories through Withoutabox and the film festivals who have discovered talented artists around the world using our service. . . Please visit the website of the festival that you are interested in to find out how to submit [in the future].” You also should contact them about items currently on the site.

Evidently this news came as a surprise to everyone. Earlier in the year IMDb, which bought the company in 2008 as a subsidiary of Amazon, and the Sundance Film Festival announced three-year extensions on their exclusive partnership to run through 2021. In the last 10 years, Sundance alone has received over 100,000 submissions from WAB. Withoutabox has a patent that gave it intellectual protections for an “internet-based film festival digital entry and back office services suite model” for 20 years. Along with Amazon’s legal resources, the patent scared off competitors. Nevertheless, Canadian company, FilmFreeway managed to start a separate system for festival submission in 2014 which reportedly has cut Withoutabox’s customers 50 percent by 2018. Although *IndieWire* reached out to IMDb about the reasoning for shuttering Withoutabox, there was no immediate reply. For more information, go to <http://www.withoutabox.com/browse/filmmaker/faq/detail?section=update-2019>

TOTAL DIGITAL SALES CONTINUE TO CLIMB

Total U.S. home entertainment spending was \$16.95 billion or a rise of 10.9 percent year-to-date over the same period in 2017, according to The Digital Entertainment Group (The DEG). Consumers continued to expand their digital libraries of filmed entertainment with electronic sell-through (EST). The spending gain also was driven by a 31 percent surge in spending on movies that played theatrically generally two weeks prior to their release prior on Blu-ray Disc and DVD.


Other highlights from The DEG's "Home Entertainment" report are:

- ◆ Digital Electronic sell-Thru (EST) rose 12.4 percent with total digital going up 23.7 percent to \$12.7 billion.
- ◆ Subscription streaming (SVOD) rose more than 30 percent in both the third quarter and for the first nine months of 2018, according to data compiled by global information provider IHS Markit.
- ◆ In physical sell-through, 4K Ultra HD remains the hottest market with a 68 percent increase in sales during the third quarter from a year earlier as more consumers purchased new TVs and 4K Ultra HD Blu-ray players equipped with the advanced technology.
- ◆ Transactional video-on-demand (TVOD), the digital equivalent of renting a movie, also realized significant gains, with consumer spending up nearly two percent helped by a 10 percent rise for the third quarter. The big digital sellers of content, such as Apple iTunes, FandangoNow and Redbox On Demand, also offer consumers the chance to stream movies for on-demand viewing, generally for a 48-hour period and a start time within 30 days of the transaction date, reports mediaplaynews.com.

The website also has a report from NPD's VideoWatch Digital service that among the top five digital movie providers, iTunes users have the highest propensity to buy over rent. In the 12-months ending August 2018, nearly 24 percent of iTunes movie transactions were motivated by a desire to build a digital collection, leading to more buying than renting. NPD says that Apple's movie consumers are more affluent and more apt to collect movies and is driven by "in part, by access to TV-connected devices as an increasing number of viewers can simply buy and rent movies right in their living room," John Buffone Executive Director/ Industry Analyst, NPD Connected Intelligence, said in a statement. "While greater access begets consumption, certain digital movie providers facilitate ownership over renting."

Looking ahead to 2019, Indiewire reports that while Netflix won round one of the streaming wars, and with very little competition, "[with] several new services preparing to launch next year, the end game is far from over. Audiences are about to face more choice — and may soon have to shell out more subscription fees depending on their interests, as content is splintered across more services. Disney, Apple and WarnerMedia are expected to unveil their own over-the-top digital services next year, and there could be even more beyond that as conglomerates

realize this may be their last chance to get their foot in the door.” The company’s plans likely mean continually increasing costs to consumers. For more details on any or all these reports, go to:

https://www.degonline.org/portfolio_page/deg-q3-2018-home-entertainment-report/
<https://www.mediaplaynews.com/home-entertainment-on-a-roll-as-consumer-spending-soars-15/>
<https://www.mediaplaynews.com/?s=NPD%3A+Digital+Movie+Transactions+Up+19%25+in+First+Half+of+2018>
<https://www.indiewire.com/2018/10/netflix-debt-streaming-wars-amazon-hulu-disney-apple-warnermedia-1202014438/> 

LOS ANGELES FILM FESTIVAL

This year’s L.A. Film Festival was a big one, reports Film Independent (FIND). Partially it was due to the late-September calendar spot, but the fest also launched the new Portal VR Showcase and “We the People” inclusion summit plus “nine amazing days of screenings, panels, performances, special events and more.” The event also honored 2018 Guest Director Lauren Greenfield (*The Queen of Versailles*, *Generation Wealth*) with the Spirit of Independence Award, presented by LA Film Festival Director Jennifer Cochis.

Unfortunately, as *TFE* goes to press, FIND announced that the following list of winners will be the last one due to ending the festival. “While we are very proud of what we’ve accomplished with the LA Film Festival over the past eighteen years, the truth is that it has struggled to thrive, and the time has come for us to try something new,” said Josh Welsh, President of Film Independent.” The organization plans to shift to a variety of year-round events, such as the ones name above, aimed at building community and broadening its support of the type of visual storytellers which are enumerated in the link below.

AND THE WINNERS ARE:

AWARD	FILM	FILMMAKER
U.S. Fiction	<i>This Teacher</i>	Mark Jackson
U.S. Fiction Special Mention	<i>In Reality</i>	Ann Lupo
World Fiction	<i>Border</i>	Ali Abbasi
World Fiction Special Jury, Directing	<i>The Day I Lost My Shadow</i>	Soudade Kaadan
Documentary	<i>hillbilly</i>	Sally Rubin, Ashley York
Documentary Special Jury, Excellence in Social Justice Storytelling	<i>False Confessions</i>	Katrine Philp
L A Muse		
Fiction	<i>Staycation</i>	Tanuj Chopra
Documentary	<i>Fire on the Hill</i>	Brett Fallentine
Special Mention, Best Ensemble Cast	<i>Solace</i>	Tchaiko Omawale

Nightfall		
Fiction	<i>The Dead Center</i>	Billy Senese
Special Jury, Lead Actor	<i>Head Count</i>	Ashleigh Morghan
Special Jury, Ensemble Cast	<i>Spell</i>	Brendan Walter
Short Fiction	<i>The Passage</i>	Kitao Sakurai
Short Documentary	<i>One Leg In, One Leg Out</i>	Lisa Rideout
Web Episodes Jury	<i>Psusy</i>	Anna Duckworth
Audience Award		
Fiction Feature Film	<i>Brian Banks</i>	Tom Shadyac
Documentary Feature Film	<i>Stuntman</i>	Kurt Mattila
Music Video	<i>Clutch</i>	Christopher Ripley
Short Film	<i>Weekends</i>	Trevor Jimenez
Episodic Story	<i>Revenge Tour</i>	Andrew Carter
Episodic Pilot	<i>40 & Single</i>	Leila Djansi
Seattle Story	<i>I'm Sorry Happy Birthday</i>	Claire Buss
TikTok Real Short	<i>In Reality</i>	Ann Lupo

https://s3.amazonaws.com/PressReleasesLAFF/2018_LAFilmFestival_Winners.pdf
https://s3.amazonaws.com/PressReleasesLAFF/2018_LAFilmFestival_NewInitiatives.pdf



MOVIEPASS CAST OFF BY PARENT COMPANY

Helios & Matheson Analytics Inc., the parent company of MoviePass, plans to spin it off as a separate, publicly traded company called **MoviePass Entertainment Holdings Inc.** The new company will include: MoviePass Films, the production arm launched via the acquisition of Emmett Furla Oasis Films earlier this year; financing unit MoviePass Ventures and Moviefone. HMNY (H & M's NASDAQ designation) has lost nearly all of its value in the last year and risks being delisted from the stock exchange if it can't boost its price to at least \$1 a share. "Since we acquired control of MoviePass in December 2017, HMNY largely has become synonymous with MoviePass in the public's eye, leading us to believe that our shareholders and the market perception of HMNY might benefit from separating our movie-related assets from the rest of our company," HMNY Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Ted Farnsworth said in a statement.

These actions do not come as a surprise, as the company's problems have been reported in recent *TFE* issues. The vast majority of consumers remain leery of movie ticket subscription services — and it doesn't necessarily have anything to do with the rise and fall of MoviePass, which at one time allowed customers to see one movie a day for the low monthly cost of \$9.99. "Only six percent of 2,201 adults surveyed said they are certain or very likely to sign up for a monthly plan, while 23 percent say they are split down the middle," in a *Hollywood Reporter* Morning Consult poll taken between Oct. 11th and 14th. "Another 32 percent say they aren't very likely, and 29 percent said they have no interest." Morning Consult Vice President Tyler Sinclair said, "Theaters need to convert casual moviegoers." If he is assuming they are converted to frequent moviegoers before you offer the pass, how do you do it?

In addition to the ongoing problems in running MoviePass, the New York Attorney General's office launched a probe of HMNY earlier in October examining whether MoviePass' parent company, according to CNBC. Presumably it was prompted by a shareholder's lawsuit. "MoviePass' business model was not sustainable because there was no reasonable basis to believe MoviePass could monetize the model to a degree that could be maintained before being too buried in debt to survive," shareholder Jeffrey Braxton argued in his suit, which seeks class action status. MoviePass confirmed the investigation, saying it is cooperating with the New York Attorney General's inquiry. "We believe our public disclosures have been complete, timely and truthful and we have not misled investors," Helios & Matheson said in a statement. <https://www.hmny.com/press-release/>
<https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/sites/default/files/custom2/Hollywood%20Reporter%20Mo rnin%20Consult%20Movie%20Subscription%20Services%20Poll.pdf> 📄

MORE COMINGS AND GOINGS

Tom Ortenberg has formed the distribution company **Briarcliff Entertainment**. The company's first two films are *Fahrenheit 9/11* and *El Chicano*, which was acquired at the 2018 Los Angeles Film Festival. Ortenberg was CEO of Open Road Films from 2011 until August 2017 when the company was acquired by Tang Media Partners as part of Global Road Entertainment. Prior to ORF, he led Lionsgate's film division and left in 2009 to join The Weinstein Company as President of Theatrical Films.

In the run-up to the AFM former Warner Independent Pictures head Mark Gill launched **Solstice Studios** with \$400 million in capitalization including \$150 million through Ingenious Media. The Los Angeles-based company plans to develop, fully finance, produce, and distribute in order to supply global independent buyers with studio-level content with commercial films for wide theatrical release. The targeted genres are action, thriller and action comedy. The company's goal is to produce three to five a year in the \$30-\$80 million range and acquire another two to four from any broad genre for wide U.S. distribution. Gill, old screendaily.com that it was too soon to name titles; however, thrillers and action comedies in the vein of *London Has Fallen* and *Hitman's Bodyguard* are similar to the type of content he is seeking.

Top French sales agents Agathe Valentin and Bérénice Vincent are joining forces with cinema finance expert Laure Parleani to create Paris-based **Totem Films**, a sale and financing company. The new outfit will handle around ten titles a year spanning fiction, documentary and animation. "We came together gradually through the complementary nature of our professional profiles. We were all three looking for new outlooks, new horizons and had long been dreaming of getting involved in something with a collective spirit," said Valentin. The trio has already begun scouting for acquisitions with the aim of launching Totem's first slate at the beginning of 2019. "The name Totem evokes the influence of cultural differences in creation, but also the idea of a collective work," said Parleani. 📄

NUMBERS! NUMBERS! NUMBERS!
 (North American Box Office)
LOW-BUDGET INDEPENDENT FILMS (\$10.0M and under)

FILM	DISTRIBUTOR	REVENUE	COST
		thous. \$	thous. \$
<i>A.X.L.</i>	Global Road	6,501	10,000
<i>Death of a Nation</i>	Quality Fix	5,886	6,000
<i>Dog Days*</i>	Amazon/ LD Entertainment	6,809	10,000
<i>Fahrenheit 11/9*</i>	Briarcliff	6,352	5,000
<i>First Reformed</i>	A24	3,448	3,500
<i>Forever My Girl</i>	Roadside Attractions	16,376	3,500
<i>Halloween*</i>	Universal	139,394	10,000
<i>Hell Fest*</i>	Lionsgate	11,074	5,500
<i>Hereditary</i>	A24	44,069	10,000
<i>I Am Not Your Negro</i>	Magnolia	7,124	1,000
<i>I Can Only Imagine</i>	Roadside Attractions	83,477	7,000
<i>Lady Bird</i>	A24	48,958	10,000
<i>Leave No Trace</i>	Bleecker Street	6,046	<5,000
<i>Let There Be Light</i>	Atlas Distribution	7,242	3,000
<i>Life Itself</i>	Amazon Films	4,095	10,000
<i>Paul, Apostle of Christ</i>	Sony	17,560	5,000
<i>Show Dogs</i>	Global Road	17,857	5,000
<i>Slender Man*</i>	Sony/Screen Gems	30,569	10,000
<i>Sorry to Bother You*</i>	Annapurna	17,493	3,200
<i>Traffik</i>	Lionsgate	9,186	4,000
<i>Truth or Dare</i>	Universal	40,717	3,500
<i>Unfriended: Dark Web</i>	BH Tilt	8,784	1,000

*Still in North American distribution as of October 31, 2018. Revenues are from boxoffice.com and boxofficemojo.com. Negative costs (production prior to prints and ads) are approximate, based either on industry estimates, and published interviews with filmmakers or personal conversations with filmmakers.

MORE NUMBERS! NUMBERS! NUMBERS!
(North American Box Office)
HIGH-BUDGET INDEPENDENT FILMS (Over \$10.0M)

FILM	DISTRIBUTOR	REV.	COST
		thous. \$	thous. \$
<i>Adrift</i>	STX Entertainment	31,445	35,000
<i>Alpha*</i>	Sony	35,771	51,000
<i>American Assassin</i>	Lionsgate Films	36,250	33,000
<i>Atomic Blond</i>	Focus Features	51,574	30,000
<i>Bad Mom's Christmas, A</i>	STX Entertainment	72,110	28,000
<i>Chappaquiddick</i>	Entertainment Studios	17,395	34,000
<i>Commuter, The</i>	Lionsgate Films	36,343	30,000
<i>Darkest Hour</i>	Focus Films	56,443	30,000
<i>Den of Thieves</i>	STX Entertainment	44,947	30,000
<i>Happytime Murders, The</i>	STX Entertainment	20,706	40,000
<i>Hitman's Bodyguard, The</i>	Lionsgate/Summit	75,455	30,000
<i>I Feel Pretty</i>	STX Entertainment	48,796	32,000
<i>Mile 22*</i>	STX Entertainment	36,109	35,000
<i>Operation Finale*</i>	MGM	17,610	24,000
<i>Peppermint*</i>	STX Entertainment	35,419	25,000
<i>Sicario 2: Day of the Soldado</i>	Columbia	50,072	35,000
<i>Simple Favor, A*</i>	Lionsgate	53,296	20,000
<i>Spy Who Dumped Me, The</i>	Lionsgate	33,562	40,000
<i>Three Billboards Outside of Ebbing, MO</i>	Fox Searchlight	54,514	15,000
<i>Tyler Perry's Acrimony</i>	Lionsgate Films	43,549	20,000
<i>Uncle Drew</i>	Lionsgate/Summit	42,469	17-19,000
<i>Wind River</i>	The Weinstein Co.	33,801	11,000
<i>White Boy Rick*</i>	Studio 8	23,992	29,000

*Same references as low-budget table.

LARGE FORMAT FILMS

FILM	DISTRIBUTION	REV.	COST
		thous. \$	thous. \$
<i>Apollo 13: The Imax Experience</i>	IMAX	1,737	n/a
<i>Beautiful Planet, A*</i>	IMAX	15,294	n/a
<i>Born To Be Wild 3D*</i>	Warner Bros./IMAX	25,783	n/a
<i>Bugs!</i>	SK Films, Inc.	18,114	9,000
<i>Deep Sea 3D</i>	Warner Bros.	46,371	1,000
<i>Galapagos: The Enchanted Voyage</i>	IMAX	18,612	7,000
<i>Ghosts of the Abyss</i>	Buena Vista	17,041	13,000
<i>Haunted Castle</i>	nWave	13,652	n/a
<i>Hubble 3D*</i>	Warner Bros.	52,340	n/a
<i>Island of Lemurs: Madagascar</i>	Warner Bros.	11,243	n/a
<i>James Cameron's Deepsea Challenge</i>	DisruptiveLA	236	n/a
<i>Jerusalem 3D</i>	National Geographic	7,880	n/a
<i>Journey to the South Pacific*</i>	IMAX/MacGillivray	7,641	n/a
<i>Magnificent Desolation</i>	IMAX	34,109	3,000
<i>NASCAR 3D</i>	Warner Bros./IMAX	21,337	10,000
<i>Ocean Wonderland 3D</i>	3D Entertainment	11,035	3,000
<i>Roving Mars</i>	Buena Vista	10,408	1,000
<i>Sea Monsters: A Prehistoric Adventure</i>	National Geographic	3	n/a
<i>Sea Rex 3D: Journey to a Prehistoric</i>	3D Entertainment		n/a
<i>Space Station 3D</i>	IMAX		1,000
<i>Thrill Ride</i>	Sony Classics	18,795	9,000
<i>To the Arctic 3D*</i>	Warner Bros.	14,534	n/a
<i>T-Rex: Back to the Cretaceous</i>	IMAX	53,347	14,500
<i>U2 3D</i>	National Geographic	10,362	13,000
<i>Under the Sea 3D*</i>	Warner Bros.	35,980	n/a
<i>Wildest Dream: Conquest of Everest</i>	National Geographic	898	n/a
<i>Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill</i>	Shadow	3,058	n/a
<i>Wild Safari 3D</i>	nWave	16,621	4,500

* Same references as low-budget table.

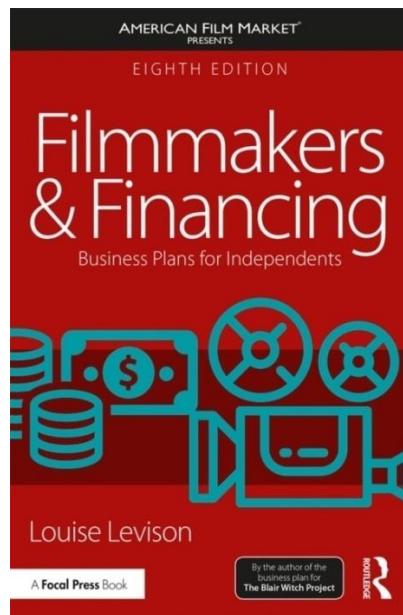
RICK PAMPLIN DIRECTOR OF NEW DOC

Local award-winning independent filmmaker Rick Pamplin has been announced as writer-director of a new feature length documentary inspired by Palm Beach resident Louise Levison's best-selling book *Filmmakers & Financing: Business Plans for Independents*. Pamplin says, "We are making a bold, truthful movie, which will reveal as many secrets as possible." He plans to interview multiple Palm Beach residents on camera and utilize locations throughout the County. 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**. Producers on the new film include Scott duPont, formerly a Jupiter Island resident turned Hollywood-based movie producer, and Palm Beach artist and production designer Maggie Phipps Pamplin. The executive producer is P.J. Marks. Follow updates on the production via Twitter at #ConfidentialFilmProject.



Pamplin and Borgnine

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.**

(Speaking of 21st Century technology, check out the updated [moviemoney.com](http://www.moviemoney.com) site)
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) which inspired the **#CONFIDENTIALFilmProject**.

A polished business plan with projections based on the worldwide results of other films and with clear explanations about the industry, markets and production personnel attached to the film is far more effective than an incomplete document that leaves prospective investors wanting more information. 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.

Levison also is editor of the online newsletter *The Film Entrepreneur: A Newsletter for the Independent Filmmaker and Investor*. 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*. Among her corporate clients are Danny Glover's Louverture Films (2008 nominee for Best Documentary Academy Award *Trouble the Water*), Pamplin Film Company (*Hoover*), Majestic World Entertainment and Tokuma International Ltd (*Shall We Dance*, *Princess Mononoke*). 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