



A FACE IN THE CROWD

IS CROWDFUNDING THE ANSWER FOR LONDON'S INDEPENDENT FILMMAKERS?

The British film industry is having a boom. At the BAFTAs in February, it was great to see how many of the critically-acclaimed blockbusters of the year had British involvement. Gravity, starring American-as-apple-pie George Clooney and Sandra Bullock, winning the Best British Film gong sparked great debate about what constituted a British film. However, Gravity was produced by Brit David Heyman and was shot almost exclusively at Shepperton Studios using a crew of British artists and technicians. Its award-winning visual effects were overseen by British company Framestore. It seems that even if a film doesn't appear outwardly British, you need only peek behind the curtain to find a union flag.

So how do you get started in the film industry? There are countless courses and degrees that can teach you pretty much everything you need to know, but, like so many industries, it's all about experience. If you want make a film, it helps to have a few of your own under your belt. However, as any film student will tell you, making a film is expensive. You only have to look at the multi-million budgets for Hollywood blockbusters to know that even for a short film, the budget is going to be in the thousands.

Enter crowdfunding, the newest way to gain financial support for your project. Crowdfunding sites work similarly to Just Giving; people give

money to your project. However, rather than a donation, it is an investment; you get something back for your money. These can vary from a film poster to a VIP ticket to the film screening. Through companies like Indiegogo and Kickstarter, young filmmakers are finding the funds to turn their filming dreams to reality.

Matt Diegan, has been working professionally in the film industry since he was a student in a variety of production roles from production assistant to producer. He works freelance, so funding for personal projects is crucial, but often hard to come by:

"Funding for short films is nigh on impossible. Short films don't make money, they are an opportunity for you to show skill, develop technique and get noticed for bigger products. As a result there are incredibly few options out there for private investment and traditional funding."

Matt had previous experience running campaigns through crowdfunding, and so chose to use Indiegogo to part-fund his recent short film, The Red Line. Adapted from a short story written by Charlie Higson, The Red Line explores what it is to live in a big modern city, and deals with the crisis of identity.

"I chose Indiegogo as it offers flexible fundraising, so if you don't hit your target you still get to keep the money you have raised and can still make your film. Crowdfunding through Indiegogo also gives you complete



The Sleeping Dogs crew 'on location'.

ownership over the film, in both a financial and creative sense - something some big directors would kill for!"

Indiegogo's flexible approach to fundraising is something that appealed to filmmaker, Joe Jones, who is currently raising money for his student film, Sleeping Dogs.

"I went with Indiegogo, but I actually prefer Kickstarter—it has a really professional appeal to it. However Indiegogo is set up for arts-based projects, and if we reach our goal Indiegogo will only take 4% commission, whereas Kickstarter will take 5%. I'm confident that we will reach our goal, and that 1% extra could make a difference."

Like all crowdfunded projects, an investment in Sleeping Dogs will get you something back, an incentive or perk for investing. One of the ones on offer for an investment of £500 is an invite to a private screening at the BFI in early July, where Sleeping Dogs will be screened as part of a graduate film showcase. Without crowdfunding this wouldn't be possible. So how important is crowdfunding for the future of indie filmmakers?

For Francis Newell, who wrote, directed and shot his crowd funded film Echo Restless, the concept is better for gaining publicity than for funding: "Throughout the process of making a micro-budget feature-film, I came to realise that crowdfunding is never going to become an essential part of indie filmmaking. It's fantastic for gaining an audience and creating a buzz for when that film is released (for example, the premiere of the film last March was sold out, with some people being denied entry due to safety regulations), but on the whole, it's friends and family donating to help you make the film you've always wanted to. People's attention span to what is put online is so short-lived, that crowdfunding is a good tool for raising funds and creating a buzz, but in the majority of cases, crowdfunding will

never replace major budgets or studios, or finance companies."

Having said that, for Francis, it isn't necessary to work with a comparatively large budget. His campaign raised just over half the production budget, and he thinks it's perfectly feasible to work on a budget of £1,500 for a micro-budget film.

"With the increasing availability of very high quality cameras for low prices, it's perfectly feasible to shoot feature length films on a tight budget. I was lucky that I had a small crew on the two-week shoot: a producer, two actors and a sound recordist, all of whom were willing to give up two weeks of their lives to go travelling around South Wales in a van!"

Crowd funding may not put traditional investments out of business, but for our three filmmakers, it has enabled them to create films that will lead on to more and more work. And who knows, at the next BAFTAs we may see Matt Diegan, Francis Newell or Joe Jones nominated in the category for Outstanding Debut by A British Writer, Director or Producer, continuing the great tradition of British film.

- Francis Newell works independently as a director and editor, and with Matt Diegan, in their film company Moral Hangover. Their film, *Echo Restless*, which Francis directed and Matt produced, is released on 3 March. www.moralhangover.co.uk
www.facebook.com/EchoRestless
- Matt Diegan produced *The Red Line* with What Elephant Films www.whatelephantfilms.co.uk
- Joe Jones is in his third year of studying film, and the film he is producing, *Sleeping Dogs* is campaigning on Indiegogo until 9 March. www.indiegogo.com/projects/sleeping-dogs-short-film

WORDS: Emily Taylor



Echo Restless still, and poster.





FACING THE CROWD

HOW IMPORTANT IS CROWDFUNDING FOR THE FUTURE OF INDEPENDENT FILMMAKERS?

Not as important as it's made out to be. There are genuine success stories of films that have only been made possible by crowd funding and those should be celebrated but they are few and far between.

Beyond that there's a huge gulf between the small projects and the huge ones that make millions. Due to the sheer volume of projects (especially films) I really don't believe it's a great outlay in terms of generating outside interest in a project. Only around 40% of campaigns for films hit their targets.

At the top end when you see people like Zach Braff running successful campaigns it's another game. They generate a huge amount of interest and money through social media and the like. It's still an incredibly involved process Zach Braff had to hire a whole team of people to specifically work on that campaign and manage it, but what he gets is two to three million dollars whilst retaining 100% of the film rights and creative drive.

Financially that won't remain as he'll still need a distribution deal, which will come at a huge cost, but creatively he makes the film off his own back first with no studio involvement.

At the same time it can be hard not to look at projects like that cynically - Zach Braff doesn't need that money from those people. He has plenty of his own and lots of rich friends. He's also incredibly bankable in terms of the success of his previous work. He'd have had no problem making that film and retaining creative drive without Indiegogo... So it's certainly not the revolution it's billed as in those terms - more of a tool for major players to put a PR spin on their next movie and call it a grassroots effort.

For smaller scale projects it will essentially be only your friends and family who donate - very much similar to a just giving page. If you embrace this, it's a great resource in terms of unifying people you know and actually pushing them to help you and donate.

—Matt Diegan, Producer

The Red Line poster.



The INSIDER

So we survived silly season. Who knew that daily breakfast, lunch and dinner marathons would be such fun? I'll give you a clue, it wasn't and I still have a New Year spare tyre courtesy of Goodman to show for it, thanks. Dieters and dryathletes' now surround me, as do long faces - roll on spring!

Bonus season is now about survival - a lesson in crap expectation management, which, thanks to the British press, means that having a job is considered bonus-tastic! Bring back '07...

Back when I started in the industry, it was all about the colour of your Porsche, whether your LV bag matched your Blahniks and how much Dom Perignon you could sup without throwing up in a bin outside Quaglino's. Now it's all Fiat 500's. Kurt Keiger and Blue Nun.

Banking industry bad press never seems to stop and

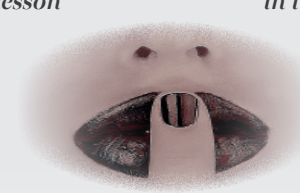
right now it's the turn of currency traders it seems - might be a few awkward chats to read, a la Libor. People seem slow in realising the party is well and truly over - and of course the best parties have the biggest hangovers, right? Bonuses will never see the dizzying heights of the noughties and huge guarantees exist only in the dreams of headhunters these days. Time to brush up my java skills - Dot.com 3.0 anyone?

Maybe finance needed a clean-up, some of it probably needed a damn good wash, but the City of London remains a vibrant, exciting and interesting

place to work. Honestly.

Ok, sermon over. Got to dash, the housekeeper wants to leave early and the Bentley is on double yellows....

HENRIETTA HINDSIGHT



LONDON LIFESTYLE AWARDS 2014

LOVE LONDON

The London Lifestyle Awards turn five this year. Founder, Jason Gale, shares his thoughts for the fifth year of celebrating London.

"Well, March 2014 is upon us, and the year has already sped into flight. You are reading the fourth edition of my [London Lifestyle Magazine](#) and it seems like only yesterday I was dreaming up plans of how we should all be celebrating and consuming more of what London offers.

In fact it was at the end of 2009, and by October 2010 we were hosting our first annual [London Lifestyle Awards](#). The London Lifestyle Awards lifeblood has always been a public celebration of the great businesses and personalities, which in my opinion, make London the greatest city in the world.

14 February 2014 (Love London Day) saw the nomination process start again and we are happy to report that nominations are coming in thick and fast from London's discerning public. We are always looking to find out more and celebrate great London businesses so don't forget to nominate this year. Our 20 categories are listed on [Londonlifestyleawards.com](#) and that is also where you can nominate your favourite restaurant, bar, hotel, London personality and many more. The Awards ceremony, as always, will be held in October and this year the gala event will be on Wenesday 8 October seeing us return to The Troxy.

The Awards are central to everything we do in celebrating this great city. The dream and the passion is that everyone who lives here, or visits, gets to see the best of the city, which is why in the first four editions of My London Lifestyle Magazine (which I am extremely proud of) we have highlighted some of the best restaurants, bars, clubs, health, beauty, fashion and personalities this city holds.

To complement the magazine and the awards we are thrilled to have released a mobile application into the apple store, which allows consumers of London to experience these amazing places and businesses for less. Our mobile app called '[My London Lifestyle Rewards](#)' promotes businesses, while giving the consumer great value and affordability to the finer things that we all crave. It's simple to use, giving you great deals when you choose them.

Through the Awards, The Magazine and now My London Lifestyle Rewards we have created a stunning multimedia platform that not only promotes and celebrates London, but also allows Londoners, visitors and people who run great businesses the knowledge, accessibility and power to consume and enjoy even more of it."

[www.Londonlifestyleawards.com](#)

