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Hope For Film: From The Frontline Of The Independent Cinema Revolutions



Synopsis

An inspiring, tell-all look at the indie film business from one of the industry's most passionate producers, Hope for Film captures the rebellious punk spirit of the indie film boom in 1990s New York City, its collapse two decades later and its current moment of technology-fueled regeneration. Ted Hope, whose films have garnered 12 Oscar nominations, draws from his own personal experiences working on the early films of Ang Lee, Eddie Burns, Hal Hartley, Michel Gondry, Nicole Holofcener, Todd Solondz and other indie mavericks, relating those decisions that brought him success as well as the occasional failure. Whether navigating negotiations with Harvey Weinstein over final cuts or clashing with high-powered CAA agents over their clients, Hope offers behind-the-scenes stories from the wild and often heated world of low-budget cinema where art and commerce collide. As mediator between these two opposing interests, Hope offers his unique perspective on how to make movies while keeping your integrity intact and how to create a sustainable business enterprise out of that art while staying true to yourself. Against a backdrop of seismic changes in the indie-film industry, from corporate co-option to the rise of social media, Hope for Film provides not only an entertaining and intimate ride through the ups and downs of the business of art-house movies over the last 25 years, but also hope for its future.

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Customer Reviews

"A relentlessly useful insider's guide to independent film from a longtime practitioner."
—Kirkus "Filled with tidbits of earned wisdom and stories from the proverbial trenches..."

—SF Weekly"For anyone who is a producer, dreams of being a producer, or just wants to understand how the movie world really works, this book is a must-read…Hope for Film is written in an admirably honest, conversational voice..." — Cultural Weekly"One of the things I like about Hope's assessment is the way he looks at...the larger ecology, in this case, the sustenance provided by journalistic criticism..." —Culture Crash"Hope for Film: From the Frontline of the Independent Cinema Revolutions by Ted Hope is required reading for anyone that aspires to enter the world of filmmaking." —Flicksided --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Ted Hope is one of the most respected voices in independent film. In 1990 he cofounded with James Schamus the production and sales powerhouse Good Machine. His 65-plus films includes many highlights and breakthroughs in independent cinema, including The Ice Storm, American Splendor, 21 Grams, Happiness, Martha Marcy May Marlene, and Adventureland. Known within the industry for having an extraordinary ability to recognize emerging talent, Hope has more than 20 first features to his credit, including those of Alan Ball, Todd Field, Michel Gondry, Hal Hartley, and Nicole Holofcener. As the creator, editor, and regular contributor to HopeForFilm.com blog, Hope provides a must-read forum for discussion and engagement about the critical issues filmmakers and artists face. Anthony Kaufman is a highly respected film journalist who has covered independent cinema since 1997. He was one of the founding editors of Indiewire.com and continues to write about films and the film industry for a variety of publications, including Variety and The Village Voice, for which he wrote the July 1999 cover story on The Blair Witch Project. He has also been published in The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Chicago Tribune, The Wall Street Journal, and Slate, among others.

I read this book twice-- I was so blown away by it! Veteran producer Ted Hope's war stories in the field were endlessly fascinating and inspiring. As someone who grew up in NYC, the changing landscape of cinema mirrors the changing landscape of the city. As a filmmaker, I cannot help but imagine what it was like to shoot Claire Denis' first short film in NYC. Ted saw something in her even at that nascent period in her life as artist. This book was a revelation- the creative collaboration between the producer and the director. To hear Ted's dedication to understanding the directors process- like giving Ang Lee time to think and translating his method to a crew that might grow hostile--was inspiring. Ted's questioning of filmmakers' rush to make compromises even before we begin shooting and the detriment it has on creative process and ultimately the film was truly

something to contemplate. The films Ted Hope made early in his career are truly artifacts of a cultural moment that will far outlive us. They are important works of cinema to be entered in the canon of world cinema. This book made me reflect as a filmmaker- in times where the viewers demand instant gratification and access to creators- can a safe be imagined for writer/ director/ producers to not just make products but to question the status quo? Another thing Ted's book did for me was to articulate so much of the frustration of minority/ women filmmakers. Why is it that a great director like Nikki Kassel has a decade between films? How many women/ minority directors have internalized that maybe they aren't good enough or their work not strong enough to continue in this industry? The need for writer/ directors to meet a partner in a producer to develop their career- to create a long term relationship is so so important. This book made me realize that such a relationship is vital to create directors like Ang Lee- so they develop not just a film but push their craft with every film. Try a certain shot, a certain genre- to develop their craft. Ted's emphasis on craft and collaboration is truly inspiring. It's what every filmmaker needs and only dreams to find. Also the book's articulation of a growing need for community in the face of changing models for film financing/ distribution- was so spot on. It creates a mixture of unbridled enthusiasm and sobering financial reality- something that all filmmakers have to face throughout their career. Most of all- the personal/professional anecdotes that Hope shared in the book are amazing. Many of the truths divulged are a sort of no no in the secretive world of film producing/ financing. As I read the book, I could not help but think how brave transparency truly is. Hope has often voiced uncomfortable truths for the filmmaking community- most vehemently how the digital revolution needs to revolutionize both how films are made and how we see their life after its creation. And since reading this book- Hope has moved from Fandor now to the head of productions of Films. So it makes total sense- he was an early adaptor of re-thinking the model of film and now he is leading a company that is precisely trying to that. Scary and exciting times for the future of film!

Hope for Film is one of the most phenomenal books you can read about the independent film scene -- its past, its present, and musings on its future. The stories inside are personal, and yet also universal filmmaker life lessons, hard-earned. Ted Hope documents the ever-changing rules of the marketplace and the impact that technological changes have wrought on low-budget films, both inside and outside of the studios. With each year that passes, the opportunities for independent filmmaking expand due to advances in technology, yet the possibility of monetizing any of these films -- or even getting them seen -- shrinks. Ted Hope explores all of the angles of this conundrum, first as a producer, then from inside a festival organization, and finally as part of the brave new

world of digital distribution. After you've followed his journey, and taken in all of the knowledge gained from his experiences, he sets down a list of challenges that the indie film world now faces. They're problems that the film community as a whole must solve, but you'll see issues here articulated for the first time --- and in such a way that it inspires you to start finding solutions. An incredible read, profoundly inspirational.

Ted Hope's goal is to better the independent film industry through transparency, innovation, collaboration and community. Part fly on the wall memoir, part how-to guide, "Hope for Film" offers a wide breadth of useful and inspiring content, from intimate anecdotes to the ideal outline for getting a film to Sundance. Structured across themed chapters, the book is detailed and honest without being pretentious. Working for a nonprofit film organization, I can easily relate to Hope's passion and struggles (especially as he described his time in San Francisco). Having never worked in the production world, Hope allowed me to be his vicarious production assistant, working with directors such as Ang Lee, Michel Gondry, Alejandro González Iñárritu and James Gunn. The best piece of advice I have ever been given was from former NBC "Today Show" correspondent Mike Leonard. He told me, "Don't compete - create." After reading "Hope for Film," I can tell you that's exactly what Ted Hope was done over the course of his career, and then some. Read this book and be inspired.

Ted Hope's book is filled with professional stories ingrained with soulful pragmatism and heartfelt experience. Hope's tales of years gone by still ring true with lessons for today's filmmaker. The "here is how it happened" reveals of filmmakers such as Ang Lee, Ed Burns, Tamara Jenkins, Nicole Holofcener, Todd Solondz and others is riveting. It's been the only book in years that made me clear time on my calendar - but I love Indie films. Whether it be his right-on conclusions between the Indie film world and American culture, an impassioned story about a high risk flight to deliver a film on time to a festival, or his nuanced and invaluable lessons in dealing with directors, Hope's front-line revelations are engaging and informative. He even dares to give us his "Formula for the Perfect Sundance Film." With different chapters entitled "Patience" - "Commitment" - "Collaboration" - and "Community" one gets a better understanding of what this novel is about. Ted Hope also gives us his personal insight to the business of film with lines like- "It wasn't just about creating one's art, but was about creating and sustaining human relationships in unexpected ways." And finally with his informed take on the future of Indie film, dealing with the "tyranny of choice," the changing platforms of distribution, and the expanding landscape of technology, "HOPE FOR FILM" becomes an ode to

an end of an era and the beginning of an exciting, unstable world of possibilities - BUT ONLY IF WE TAKE ACTION.Thank you.

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