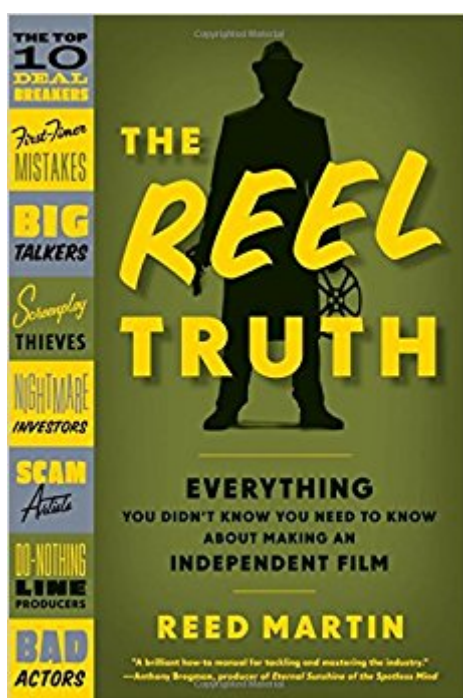


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The Reel Truth: Everything You Didn't Know You Need To Know About Making An Independent Film



Synopsis

Did you know that most of the biggest indie filmmakers, screenwriters, and producers working today each made the same avoidable mistakes early on in their careers? *The Reel Truth* details the pitfalls, snares, and roadblocks that aspiring filmmakers encounter. Reed Martin interviewed more than one hundred luminaries from the independent film world to discuss the near misses that almost derailed their first and second films and identify the close shaves that could have cut their careers short. Other books may tell you the best way to make your independent film or online short, but no other book describes so candidly how to spot and avoid such issues and obstacles as equipment problems, shooting-day snafus, postproduction myths, theatrical distribution deal breakers, and dozens of other commonly made missteps, including the top fifty mistakes every filmmaker makes. From personal experience and his years as a freelance reporter covering independent film for *USA Today* and *Filmmaker* magazine, Martin uncovers the truth about the risks and potential rewards that go with chasing celluloid glory. Whether you're writing a screenplay, looking for financing, about to start shooting, or thinking about investing time and money (or someone else's money) in an independent film, *The Reel Truth* is a must-read.

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Customer Reviews

Film marketer and business professor Martin has created a step-by-step guide on how to make an indie film and includes stories from and about such industry insiders as producer Christine Vachon and directors Doug Liman and Kimberly Peirce. Martin covers everything from raising money to

distribution, while including invaluable details such as the average cost of a soundtrack song (about \$15,000, but \$500,000 if it's the Rolling Stones) or the price of renting a New York City theater for a one-week run (\$10,000–\$50,000). Using current examples like the trial and tribulations of Sideways director Alexander Payne or the financing behind Swingers, Martin dispenses practical advice culled from real-life indie hits and misses that is both inspiring and cautionary. For certain technical information (sample budget breakdowns and representation contracts), Martin includes a solid appendix in what is ultimately an informative and very entertaining account of the indie film for would-be independent filmmakers and producers. (Jan.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

“This is an amazingly well-researched and accurate chronicle of independent filmmaking. I learned so much—things I wish I'd known when I was in the middle of it all myself. It is hard sometimes to make filmmaking advice flow with dramatic interest, but Reed Martin keeps it clear, eloquent, and fresh. I would definitely suggest The Reel Truth to aspiring filmmakers—it would make a great textbook—and I am personally looking forward to the next volume, especially now.”

Tom DiCillo, director of *Living in Oblivion*, *Johnny Suede*, *Delirious*, and *When You're Strange*

“The Reel Truth is definitely a book every filmmaker should read. Reed Martin does a great job of covering everything from first-timer mistakes to new paths in distribution and gets some really great advice from leading producers, distributors, writers—pretty much everyone.”

Brian Newman, CEO, Tribeca Film Institute

“Reed Martin has written a production guide filled with indispensable information and enlightening anecdotes. The novice filmmaker can learn something by opening to any page in The Reel Truth.”

Mark Pogachefsky, President MPRM Communications

“[Martin] interviewed Danny Boyle, Christine Vachon, Doug Liman, Barbara Kopple, Alexander Payne, Darren Aronofsky, and Werner Herzog along with dozens of indie film execs. He says he asked everyone two questions: ‘What's the worst advice you ever got?’ and ‘What do you wish somebody had told you that would have saved you a lot of trouble?’ . . . Martin peppers The Reel Truth's tales of woe with inspirational stories about tough-minded auteurs who refuse to give up.”

Hugh Hart, *The San Francisco Chronicle*

“The road to making an indie film can seem more like the stations of the cross at times. Reed Martin's *The Reel Truth* is the gospel telling of a journey that many martyrs have taken before. Bring it with you for inspiration, and as a reminder that any movie that gets made is a miracle.”

Matt Tyrnauer, director/producer, *Valentino: The Last Emperor*

“Reed Martin's *The Reel Truth* is not only a terrific guide for

aspiring filmmakers and a modern textbook for film school students everywhere. The advice and anecdotes in the chapters covering production, marketing, distribution, and online exhibition are useful for working filmmakers as well. For anyone hoping to make a successful independent film--especially in today's hyper-competitive environment--The Reel Truth is required reading.

—Miguel Arteta, director, *Youth in Revolt*, and *The Good Girl*

—Anthony Bregman, producer of *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*

—“This book is indispensable.

—Tom Bernard, Copresident, Sony Pictures Classics

—“The path to the premiere and beyond of any feature film is a minefield. With *The Reel Truth*, Reed Martin has given new filmmakers the battalion of bomb detectors necessary for survival.

—Ted Hope, producer of *The Ice Storm*

—“Reed Martin has created a smart, engaging read that is also one of the most comprehensive and cutting-edge looks at the changing face of independent-film production and distribution today. This is the one book I would call essential for anyone who really wants to make a career out of filmmaking.

—Drew McWeeny, aka Moriarty, *Ain't It Cool News*

—“Packed with practical advice and anecdotes from successful indie icons, Reed has written a guidebook essential for any aspiring filmmaker.

—Tom Ortenberg, President of Theatrical Films, The Weinstein Company

—“The most up-to-date guide readers could want

—No one who embarks on a feature of his or her own after reading *The Reel Truth* can say he or she has not been warned--and, more important, not been prepared.

—Jim Hemphill, *American Cinematographer Magazine*

—“A must-have manual of knowledge and entertainment for beginning and experienced filmmakers...To not have this information is like scuba diving by yourself, skydiving without packing your own parachute...why risk it?

—Chris Eyre, director of *Smoke Signals*

—“What's great about *The Reel Truth* isn't simply its usefulness, but its thoroughness...Martin's invaluable book will help you navigate the treacherous terrain of the modern independent film scene.

—Chris Bolton Powells.com

—“An invaluable resource for those striking out on their own

—From production, post-production, marketing and distribution, the book also covers such areas as dealing with music licensing, investors, script theft and securing legal help. However, it is Martin's personal interviews with leading directors, writers, producers and studio executives that offers "*The Reel Truth*" an extra layer of validity and insight to make it a true "insider's guide.

—Jorge Carreon, *Examiner.com* (Los Angeles)

—“Making a movie, be it a five-minute short or a two-hour feature, takes more than vision. In his witty and addictively readable book *The Reel Truth*, author Reed Martin provides 500 pages of how-to advice for would-be De Palmas--everything from

financing to casting, scoring to marketing--and backs it up with cautionary anecdotes and tips from famous directors. "Reed Martin interviews some of the brightest minds in independent cinema, including Danny Boyle ("Slumdog Millionaire") and Christopher Nolan ("Memento"), for riveting first-person accounts of their own success stories as well as the moments when their careers could have ended right then and there if they opted to give up. More importantly, Martin offers practical lessons for those still dedicated enough to want to make a film." Christian Toto, Examiner.com (Denver)

Reed Martin's "The Reel Truth" is without question the best book on the subject of Indie Filmmaking ever published. It reads like a well-written and fast paced novel and yet gets down in the weeds of the actual pitfalls (ex: forming an LLC to avoid being vulnerable in the future to lawsuits, the mishandling of data cards in a rush to see the dailies which leads to digital drop-outs, and the always overlooked importance of good sound recording - as Danny Boyle points out in the book, good sound is probably the most important aspect of indie filmmaking) and details brilliantly all the aspects of creating, funding, releasing, and marketing an independent film. Without this book I have no idea how much more painful the experience would have been - as I have just completed an indie film and am taking it to film festivals. I have used it like a roadmap, and it was the best twenty dollars I could have spent. A tool as essential as any piece of film equipment (even the appendixes in the back of the book which contain sample in-depth budgets and contracts are great). It was required reading for each producer and the director because we felt there was so much to digest reading it that we would all be better off have gone through the book individually and highlighted it. Although I enjoyed the other known works on the subject ("I Wake Up Screening", "Spike, Mike, Slackers, & Dykes", and "Down and Dirty Pictures"), I felt none compared, or - more importantly - were as relevant as the recently published "The Reel Truth". Nor did the other books really elucidate with clarity all the overwhelming aspects an indie film producer, director, or screenwriter faces. Really no comparison. This book stresses Strategy, which I have found out personally is of vital importance when marketing your finished film (no coincidence that the author also taught at some of the best business schools in the country). There is even a separate chapter on documentary films and the newly emerging markets and strategy that are now available for a doc filmmaker to make a great film - and a profit. The chapter on legal issues in "The Reel Truth" is alone worth the price of the book; for example, don't just have your college buddy who is a lawyer to look over the contract, rather hire a professional who knows all the deal points and ways to structure the contract that protects the filmmakers in the event of either failure or success. Which is not to mention the other

fine legal points of knowing what you can and can't shoot - because there is nothing worse as the book points out as having to cut your favorite scene in post because you didn't legally clear something. Nor have I encountered a book yet that has dived into the horribly prevalent state of screenplay theft; example being: How attending screenplay pitch-fests where you tell your ideas and script beats to a room full of professional producers and fellow screenwriters undercuts any claim you might have since you are freely disclosing your ideas without any expectation of compensation. Indeed, my one worry before reading the book was that since the book was published in 2009, it might not be relevant to making a film in 2011/2012. I couldn't have been more wrong. The book feels like the author wrote it for the 2012 indie film market. For example, he especially examines with a microscope the ever-changing world of Indie film and the new ways to market and distribute your film on 's CreateSpace and Youtube. Do yourself a favor: pay \$16 dollars and save yourself a lifetime of heartache and suffering while making your first or second indie film! As the book points out -if there is one constant theme: IT CAN'T BE FIXED IN POST-PRODUCTION. So if you already have the talent and love of film, this book will be more important to you than any MFA a film school could ever provide you.

The Reel Truth is a very comprehensive and helpful guide to the novice and more experienced filmmaker. The book is well written and well researched, offering expert insights into common pitfalls that filmmakers make, and useful tips on how to avoid those mistakes. The reader will need to take some of the fundraising and distribution suggestions in the context of the time in which they were written, as technology and distribution platforms have changed since the book was first published. That being said, the recommendations and suggested resources are still timely and relevant, as are the other suggestions, for ex, around building a compelling narrative and preparing / protecting oneself through the legal system. As someone who is brand new to the filmmaking world, I found the book to be incredibly helpful.

So far this seems to be a really informative book for someone completely new to the film making process. I'm not sure how it holds up for someone who has foundational knowledge, but since I'm less than a year into reading about the actual making of films, this is a good addition to my knowledge base.

As a filmmaker and Producing Faculty member at UNCSCA School of Filmmaking I can honestly say this is the best indie filmmaking guide. If you are just starting out, this is THE guide to giving you

some practical and sound advice. Read it, learn it, and go make a movie! Hats off on this Mr. Martin!
I will use this in my class...

I read this book to weigh the pros and cons of creating and funding a documentary film. Before I read this book, I was under the misimpression that undertaking a film project was not so problematic. I learned this is not so. The book's author provides a blunt reality check as to the probability of success, as well as the financial hurdles that must be addressed before, during, and post-production. The information contained in these pages helped temper my unrealistic expectations with an honest discussion of the barriers to entry that any aspiring film-maker will have to negotiate. Though somewhat dismayed by the odds of success, Martin lays bare the myths which drive the film industry -- all the while providing a clear blue print for how to avoid common mistakes that can ruin your pocket book and/or career. Martin is to film what Carl Sagan is to science -- he is providing the little guy with an inside look at the business, and by so doing, he at least tilts the odds a little more in our favor, and lets everyone know what it takes to have a "shot", as well as the price you might have to pay to follow your passion. It ranks as a must read.~ Â The Reel Truth: Everything You Didn't Know You Need to Know About Making an Independent Film

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