

## ***Introduction***

Film is the media commodity. Even if some movie fans and critics are talking about the movie as art, primary its business, very good business. Film has many benefits, for example it can influence lot of people in good or in bad way. It can be also very good instrument for advertisement. Movies were here in the past and definitely they will be here in the future. Most of the time people are amazed by Hollywood movies. Hollywood creates one of the largest and most influence film business in the world. Because of the Hollywood we have star system, blockbuster film, new technologies f.e. 3D and so on. But Hollywood rules are not for everyone, we can find many critics of this system, also lot of film consumers prefer to watch movies from other countries. We can say that against Hollywood system stands national film industry system. But my commodity analysis is focused on American independent movies, specifically film named *The Bling Ring* from Sofia Coppola.

I chose this movie because of the two aspects. First one is the name of the director Sofia Coppola. Second, topics of her movies are mostly about Hollywood system, but she produces them as independent ones. This commodity is mixture of Hollywood system ( famous name, topics as a celebrity culture, fame) and antihollywood system.

*The Bling Ring* is based on true stories. Group of teenagers robbed many celebrities in Los Angeles. They stole clothes, jewellery, mobile phones. For long time police couldn't catch them, but later they found them and arrested them. The whole case has been widely publicized. Nancy Jo Sales wrote article in *Vanity Fair* *The Suspects Wore Louboutins*. Sofia Coppola wrote screenplay based on this article. She made movie about young adults, who are obsessed by life style and celebrities and their life is on the social media.

I will make commodity analysis of this movie, I wanna reflect how its created independent movie and what actually independent movies means today.

## ***Sofia Coppola***

Coppola can be categorised as female author director. Her name is trademark, which guarantee that the film will contain certain aspects. Her movies are more cinematic than narrative, main domaine of her movies is visual style (it contains minimum of dialogue, long shots, distinctive music). Most of her topics are focused on women, who are lost in their world and try to find the sense of life. Sometimes she strays from the main line, but most of the time we can find similarities that are repeated in her movies. This is important note, because it also plays very big role for the producers and distributors of her movies. But this didn't came overnight.

Sofia Coppola is the daughter of the famous director Francis Ford Coppola (mainly known for the film named Godfather). She began as actress in her father's movies. Her acting career was very short and her performance some critics marked as a rigid. She studied photography, but she didn't finished her studies. Later on Coppola founded fashion brand Milkfed.

Her director debut the *Virgin Suicide* was released at the independent American film festival called Sundance. It received very good critical responses and it was very well received by audiences. Her second movie *Lost in translation* won an Oscar for the best original screenplay. She established herself as independent female director, who doesn't make movies for big audiences but brings an unusual topics wrapped in specific aesthetics. These mentioned facts opened her doors to the Cannes film festival. Her next movies were debuted here.

Because of her visual style she often shoots advertisement for fashion brands f.e. Marc Jacobs or Calvin Klein.

Sofia Coppola's name indicated certain trademark, which plays important role for the producers and distribution company. Producers can use these aspects as part of advertisement for her movies. I would like to prove this claim on the following example of *The Bling Ring*.

### ***Production***

*The Bling Ring* has two main production companies American Zoetrope and Nala films. We can assume, that they are sharing main budget. Then we have subsidiary companies, which are also producers, but they are also distributors in other countries. I couldn't find any document which provide detailed division of share, where we can find individual investments each company. Pathe distribution, Studio Canal, Tobis film, Tohokushinsha Film Corporation distributing the movie in their home country, we can consider them as "helpful" producers, not the main ones.

### ***Main producers:***

**American zoetrope** is film studio company owned by Coppola's family. It was founded by Francis Ford Coppola and George Lucas in 1979.<sup>1</sup> Lucas a Coppola separated and Lucas started his own company Lucas film. Zoetrope producing mostly art movies, this company brought some foreigner director like Akira Kurosawa, Agnieszka Holland and many others. Right now company is owned by Sofia Coppola and her brother Roman Coppola. . Expect movies, company conduct in wine, italian restaurants, cafes and holiday residences. Its family business, which Francis Ford Coppola started and his kids are continuing.<sup>2</sup>

American zoetrope produced every film from Sofia Coppola.

**Nala films** belongs to the ***NALA Investments***. Emilio Diez Barroso founded in 1999 ***NALA Investments - North America Latin America***, it is private holding company operates across various

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2011/nov/17/zoetrope-coppola-lucas-star-wars>

industries f.e. communications, energy, transportation, consumer products, real estate, technology in Latin America and United States. Nala films was founded in 2005, company is based in Santa Monica in Los Angeles. Its production company focuses on quality, character driven projects for tv, film and new media. They are producing 3 or 5 films per year from Latin America and USA. Their budget is from 6 millions to 300 millions dollars.

**Pathe distribution** is french major film and distributing company. Its one of the older operating film company in the world. Nowadays Pathe owns television networks across Europe, cinemas in France. The revenue of the company is around 905 millions euros.

**Studio Canal** is owned by *Vivendi SA*, french mass media conglomerate. Company has activities in music, video games, television, films, telecommunications.

**Tobis film** was one of the biggest production and distributing company in Germany. But in the 1970's french Studio canal took major share of the company. In 2002 Tobis film broke away from the Studio canal. Two producers connected together and have revived the company.

**Tohokushinsha Film Corporation** japanesse company focusing on media production, distribution, broadcasting and commercial film production. They are operating mostly in Japan.

### *Distribution*

#### **US distribution:**

**A24** is independent entertainment company. Daniel Katz, David Fenkel, and John Hodges founded A24 in 2012. Its into film production, television production and distribution. Its private company, which is focusing on independent movie, their most famous film are *The Room* and *the Ex Machina* ( both movies won Academy award for the best actress - *Room*, best visual effects - *Ex Machina*)

#### **Worldwide distribution:**

Distributor for all media ( soundtrack, DVD, Blue-ray) worldwide was ***FilmNation Entertainment*** . But in each country theatrical distributor was different, it depended on the company, if they will buy the rights for the movie. In Czech Republic it was ***Bontonfilm***.

***Bontonfilm*** is private stock company based in Czech Republic. Its one of the first company, which was founded in 1990s, they are distributing movies to the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary. They are largest publisher of DVDs, Blu-rays, online movies. Firm is owned by ***Redbloom s.r.o.***, the owner of this concern is Martin Palán, who is manager of ***Bontonfilm***.

We might mark the film *The Bling Ring* as independent, because of the low budget and small amount of the production company. But as we can see from the list of production companies, most

of them are part of the multinational conglomerate. This point brings us to the movement *indiewood* in USA.

In 90's hollywood studios began to cooperate with independent companies. They realized the cheap potential of independent movies. So they offer to these small companies, that they can distribute their films.<sup>3</sup> Later there was a symbiosis between the two rivals. It was hard to recognise independent movie, so critics became with the name *Indiewood*. In reality it means that the film has low budget and it is different from the classic hollywood movies. *Indiewood* means border between independent movie a hollywood system.

This is the case of Sofia Coppola, Wes Anderson or Steven Sodenbergh, they are all part of the Indiewood.

### ***Budget + Gross***

Total estimated budget was 8 millions us dollars.

Total Lifetime Grosses		
Domestic:	\$5,845,732	30.5%
+ Foreign:	\$13,300,000	69.5%
<b>- Worldwide: \$19,145,732</b>		
Domestic Summary		
Release Dates: <b>June 14, 2013</b>		
(limited)		
<b>June 21, 2013 (wide)</b>		
Limited Opening Weekend: <b>\$214,395</b>		
(#21 rank, 5 theaters, \$42,879 average)		
Wide Opening Weekend: \$2,001,903		
(#11 rank, 650 theaters, \$3,080 average)		
% of Total Gross: 31.2%		
<a href="#">View All 13 Weekends</a>		
Widest Release: 550 theaters		
Close Date: September 12, 2013		
In Release: 91 days / 13 weeks		

Home Market Performance	
Domestic DVD Sales	\$981,645 <a href="#">Details</a>
Domestic Blu-ray Sales	\$267,577 <a href="#">Details</a>
<b>Total Domestic Video Sales</b>	<b>\$1,249,222</b>

As we can see from the tables above us. Worldwide grosses for all media was around 19 millions dollars. The movie has successfully exceeded itself budget. The largest income was from the foreigner market.

### ***Advertisement***

Advertisement and marketing provided InSync Plus company. They made complete campaign for the Bling Ring. This contains print media, trailer, social network, tv ads. They mostly focused on three aspects of this movie: famous story, name of the director, actress Emma Watson. Their

<sup>3</sup> JIRMANOVÁ, Kristýna. *Fantastický pan Anderson: Neoformalistická analýza filmu Grandhotel Budapešť*. Brno, 2014. Masarykova univerzita, Filozofická fakulta.

campaign was targeted to adolescents. The Bling Ring has their own instagram account, facebook profile and even pinterest.

When we analyse the marketing campaign in print media, posters show the whole gang and stolen things. In trailer, we can watch slogans like: from the oscar winning director, it was released at the Cannes film festival, based on true story, filmed in Paris Hilton house. Whole campaign reflects the obsession of celebrities, if we are fans of Paris Hilton, we must to watch it. Then there is Emma Watson her first role after Harry Potter saga, we have another famous aspect to see it. And for the demanding audiences we have name of the director, Sofia Coppola represents today's auteur's director.

The film benefits from the famous names and scandalous event.

### ***Productplacement ?***

In whole movie main characters are naming various brands. As Coppola said in interview, she wanted to be authentic, so we see real dresses from Herve Leger, Rolex watches, Louboutin shoes. We can ask the question, is it product placement? Well its definitely free advertisement for fashion brands. We can say that also about celebrities mentioned in the movie. Model Miranda Kerr, Meghan Fox, Orlando Bloom they don't want to be associated with the movie, but they were mentioned in film, its also good PR for them. The only celebrity, who made profit of it was Paris Hilton. Her style, name, house are another aspect of the movie. She made interviews about the incident and whole movie. It was very good opportunity to be on the spotlight.

### ***Conclusion***

This commodity analysis brings us to the statement, that we can understand the movie as firm. Its very good business, even the "independent" movie costs a lot of money. We can perceive the movie as a set of many factors. We have workers, who made the movie, companies distributing and selling the product, advertisements drawing our attention. These aspects made the film, they are its salvation or destruction.

The Bling Ring had mixed reviews, but still it earned lot of money, which have ensured better and stable position to the producers and director. Interesting is that Sofia's Coppola movies received always mixed admissions. Some people like it, some hate it. Still her work is well attended. I dare to say, its based on her reputation as director, casting and topics. She is selling her art in certain way to the certain audiences that likes art, independent movies, even they are not so independent.

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