

Focus Seals "Kids" Deal at Sundance



A scene from Lisa Cholodenko's "The Kids Are All Right." Image courtesy of Sundance Institute.

Confirming reports that it was acquiring rights to "The Kids Are All Right," Focus Features said Thursday afternoon it picked up U.S. rights as well as rights for the U.K., Germany and South Africa, the distributor's head James Schamus announced Thursday. Bart Walker and John Sloss of Cinetic Media negotiated the North American rights deal on behalf of the filmmakers and collaborated with Inferno Entertainment on the international aspects of the pact.

Few movies here at the Sundance Film Festival have generated the sort of immediate sales buzz that followed Monday night's screening of Lisa Cholodenko's "The Kids Are All Right," a last minute addition to the lineup at this

year's Sundance Film Festival. In fact, other than the quick sale of "Buried" to Lions Gate over the weekend, insiders here are hard pressed to think of another film that would generate such a swift sale during this year's fest.

Upstairs at the annual Cinetic party at Zoom, co-hosted this year by YouTube on Monday night, Focus execs Andrew Karpen and John Lyons lingered, expressing their interest in the movie. Given the company's track record with films like "Milk" and "Brokeback Mountain," observers wondered whether the film would in fact go to Focus, or might end up at a company like Summit, which was also well represented upstairs at the party. Fox Searchlight was also in the mix to try to get the film, according to insiders.

In the film directed by Lisa Cholodenko, three-time Academy Award nominee Annette Bening and four-time Academy Award nominee Julianne Moore star as the lesbian parents of two teenaged children conceived by artificial insemination decide to seek out their birth father and introduce him into the family life that their two mothers have built. Upheaval ensues after he is found as family ties are defined, re-defined, and then re-re-defined. Ms. Cholodenko directed the feature from an original screenplay that she wrote with Stuart Blumberg.

"Lisa has made an extraordinary gem of a film that combines comedic surprise with poignant emotional truth," commented Schamus in a statement. "Not only is The Kids Are All Right infectiously funny and touching, but it's also entirely accessible. We're confident that audiences everywhere will fall in love with this family, as brilliantly brought to life by a remarkable cast of actors."

In addition to "Buried," Hannover House's film division picked up "Twelve," according to Variety, while Deadline.com reported that "Hesher" went to Newmarket.

Cholodenko's "Kids" is quite well-regarded among critics and bloggers here at Sundance. It [currently has an "A-" grade](#) in indieWIRE's survey of writers attending the festival.

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