



## Sundance 2010: Buyers Purchase TWELVE, HESHER and THE KIDS ARE ALL RIGHT

by [Steve 'Frosty' Weintraub](#) Posted: January 28th, 2010 at 7:07 pm



With Sundance wrapping up this weekend, buyers are finally picking up some of films that premiered at the Festival. In the last 24 hours, Joel Schumacher's *Twelve*, Spencer Susser's *Hesher* and Lisa Cholodenko's *The Kids Are All Right* have been purchased by Hannover House, Newmarket Films and Focus Features.

I've seen two of the three films (*Twelve* and *Hesher*) and am not surprised that either sold. While I didn't care for *Twelve*, it's about upper East Side rich kids in New York City and it stars Chace Chawford from *Gossip Girl* - so it's an easy sell. *Hesher* has an awesome performance from Joseph Gordon Levitt who has some great dialogue to work with. And *The Kids Are All Right* has a great cast featuring Annette Bening, Julianne Moore, Mia Wasikowska, Josh Hutcherson and Mark Ruffalo. The film is about two teenaged children conceived by artificial insemination that get the notion to seek out their birth father and introduce him into the family life that their two mothers have built for them.

This weekend will see which films win the big Awards, so look for more films to sell soon. We've been provided press releases for the sales of *Hesher* and *The Kids Are All Right*, so hit the jump if you want to read them:

### NEWMARKET FILMS ACQUIRES SUNDANCE FAVORITE HESHER

PARK CITY, UT (January 28, 2010) - Nigel Sinclair and Chris Ball, Co-Chairmen of EMG, today announced Exclusive Media's Newmarket Films has acquired



U.S. rights to the Sundance favorite, HESHER, starring Joseph



Gordon Levitt and Natalie Portman. The seven figure deal was reached early this morning following an extremely successful screening in Salt Lake City last night, and negotiated by WME Global and CAA on behalf of the film with Chris Ball and John Crye, Head of Acquisitions, on behalf of Newmarket.

Since premiering at the festival last Friday, the film has picked up momentum with the fan boy driven audience who respond to the character of HESHER. Sites such as *Aint it Cool News* have lauded the film as one of the best of the festival.

Spencer Susser, named one of *Variety's* Ten Directors to Watch, makes his directorial debut with the anarchic, funny and surprisingly touching coming-of-age story that illustrates how sometimes healing comes in the most unlikely form. Written by Spencer Susser and David Michod, and starring Joseph Gordon Levitt, Natalie Portman, Devin Brochu, Rainn Wilson and Piper Laurie, the film made its worldwide debut at the 2010 Sundance Film Festival to critical acclaim.

"Hesher is a fine example of American independent film that fits perfectly with Newmarket's tradition of distributing provocative, unique stories about iconic characters made by exciting new directors," said Nigel Sinclair and Chris Ball.

"Hesher was my first feature I produced, and I couldn't have asked for a better experience," said Natalie Portman, producer and co-star. "Spencer had a real vision, and Joseph's performance will truly blow people away. It is an incredibly special film and I am thrilled to have been a part of the filmmaking process."

Hesher is the story of a twenty-something long-haired tattooed metal-head who one day unexpectedly enters the life of a grieving family. Hesher (Joseph Gordon-Levitt) is the most unlikely person to help 13-year-old TJ (Devin Brochu) cope with the death of his mother, but he proves to be the only one who can truly free TJ from his overwhelming sadness. The charismatic and dangerous Hesher drags TJ out of loss and confusion by sheer force of will and gives the young boy and his grieving father (Rainn Wilson) a chance to be a family again.

HESHER is produced by Corner Store Entertainment's Matt Weaver and Scott Prisant, Lucy Cooper, Natalie Portman's Handsomecharlie Films, Spencer Susser, Johnny Lin and Win Sheridan.

The announcement was made today by WME, CAA and Newmarket films.

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#### **FOCUS FEATURES ACQUIRES RIGHTS TO**

**LISA CHOLODENKO'S *THE KIDS ARE ALL RIGHT*;**

**ANNETTE BENING, JULIANNE MOORE, MARK RUFFALO STAR**



PARK CITY, UTAH, January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010 - Following its acclaimed world premiere at the 2010 Sundance Film Festival, Focus Features has acquired domestic and select international rights (the U.K., Germany, and South Africa) to Lisa Cholodenko's *The Kids Are All Right*. Focus Features CEO James Schamus made the announcement today.

In the movie, two teenaged children conceived by artificial insemination get the notion to seek out their birth father and introduce him into the family life that their two mothers have built for them. Once the donor is found, the household will never be the same, 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.

*The Kids Are All Right* stars three-time Academy Award nominee Annette Bening and four-time Academy Award nominee Julianne Moore as the parents; Mia Wasikowska (of this winter's *Alice in Wonderland*) and Josh Hutcherson (*Journey to the Center of the Earth*) as their children; and Mark Ruffalo (this winter's *Shutter Island*) as the donor. The film was produced by Gilbert Films' Gary Gilbert and Jordan Horowitz, Antidote Films' Jeffrey Levy-Hinte, Mandalay Vision's Celine Rattray, Daniela Taplin Lundberg, and UGC PH's Philippe Hellmann.

Ms. Cholodenko's previous features as director include *Laurel Canyon* and *High Art*, both of which she also wrote and both of which were also produced by Mr. Levy-Hinte. The latter world-premiered at the 1998 Sundance Film Festival, earning her the Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award. Ms. Cholodenko received her MFA from Columbia University, where Mr. Schamus was one of her professors in the mid-1990s. Mr. Blumberg wrote the original screenplay for *Keeping the Faith*, which Edward Norton directed and starred in, among other feature scripts.

Mr. Schamus said, "Lisa has made an extraordinary gem of a film that combines comedic surprise with poignant emotional truth. 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."

Ms. Cholodenko commented, "*The Kids Are All Right* is all about family, and joining with Focus feels like a perfect marriage. I'm proud that the movie has now found such a special home."

In a joint statement, the producers of *The Kids Are All Right* added, "We are so proud of the picture in every way and are thrilled that Focus - a company that has a long history of making groundbreaking films - is bringing this important, big-hearted, and hysterically funny movie to audiences."

Bart Walker and John Sloss of Cinetic Media negotiated the deal on behalf of the filmmakers with regard to the North American rights, and collaborated with Inferno Entertainment on the international aspects of the deal.

This is the first film acquisition announcement from Mandalay Vision since its debut earlier this month, when *The Kids Are All Right* producer Celine Rattray was tapped as president. Mandalay Vision is the independent film label of Mandalay Entertainment Group. Vision's film slate includes *Salvation Boulevard*, a film adaptation of the novel of the same name by Larry Beinhart (*Wag the Dog*) which Mandalay Pictures

optioned in 2009, and which George Ratliff (*Joshua*) will direct from a script that he wrote with Douglas Stone; and *The Whistleblower*, directed by Larissa Kondracki and starring Rachel Weisz, Vanessa Redgrave, and David Strathairn.

Focus Features and Focus Features International (FFI) ([www.filminfocus.com](http://www.filminfocus.com)) together comprise a singular global company, dedicated to producing, acquiring, financing, selling, and distributing original and daring films from emerging and established filmmakers - films that challenge mainstream moviegoers to embrace and enjoy voices and visions from around the world. The company's flexible and nuanced approach to distribution allows it to support a wide range of films, from those geared to a single local market to worldwide hits. The company operates as Focus Features domestically, and as Focus Features International overseas.

Domestically, the Focus Features slate includes, in addition to *The Kids Are All Right*, Academy Award-winning writer/directors Joel and Ethan Coen's *A Serious Man*, starring Michael Stuhlbarg; *Greenberg*, from writer/director Noah Baumbach and starring Ben Stiller; the unique nonfiction feature *Babies*, directed by Thomas Balmès; Anton Corbijn's suspense thriller *The American*, starring George Clooney; Academy Award winner Kevin Macdonald's Roman epic adventure *The Eagle of the Ninth*, starring Channing Tatum, Jamie Bell, Donald Sutherland, and Mark Strong; writer/directors Anna Boden and Ryan Fleck's *It's Kind of a Funny Story*; and Academy Award-winning writer/director Sofia Coppola's *Somewhere*.

Focus Features and Focus Features International are part of NBC Universal, one of the world's leading media and entertainment companies in the development, production, and marketing of entertainment, news, and information to a global audience. Formed in May 2004 through the combining of NBC and Vivendi Universal Entertainment, NBC Universal owns and operates a valuable portfolio of news and entertainment networks, a premier motion picture company, significant television production operations, a leading television stations group, and world-renowned theme parks. NBC Universal is 80% owned by General Electric and 20% owned by Vivendi.

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