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#Sundance: Cholodenko Talks The Kids Are All Right

On Wednesday, as the [LAT](#) [breathlessly reported](#) that the Focus Features deal to acquire **The Kids Are All Right** for \$3.5 million was virtually closed, writer-director Lisa Cholodenko was insisting that deal points were still outstanding.



Focus finally confirmed the deal Thursday, the biggest of this fest, with a number closer to \$5 million for domestic and some foreign rights. Other smaller Sundance buys include Davis Guggenheim’s education expose **Waiting for Superman** (Paramount Vantage) and three films with male appeal, midnight thriller **Buried** (Lionsgate), starring Ryan Reynolds, **Hesher** (Newmarket), starring Joseph Gordon-Levitt and Joel Schumacher’s **Twelve** (Hannover House).

But even a \$5 million deal for the hit of the fest—which stars Annette Bening, Julianne Moore and Mark Ruffalo—is a more modest number than the top deals of fests past, which could climb as high as \$10 million. Fox Searchlight, Summit and Weinstein Co. were also bidding for the family dramedy, but Focus (which released **Brokeback Mountain**) passionately wanted the film and finally has more confidence in its commercial appeal, while Searchlight harbored doubts about its crossover potential. ([Here’s indieWIRE’s review](#). My three-part flip-cam Cholodenko interview is below.)

Wow. I can’t imagine that this movie won’t have wide appeal. I have been eager to see it ever since I heard the story premise: a well-heeled lesbian couple (Bening and Moore) is raising two teenagers, one from each mom, with the same sperm donor. When the older sibling turns 18, the younger one wants to know who their father is. So she finds out. It’s Mark Ruffalo, a genial bachelor restaurateur. When he enters the picture, confusion and mayhem ensue.

The story is tight, well-written, and well-observed; the tone is comedic but touching; the performances are strong. While I admired Cholodenko’s Sundance entries **High Art** and **Laurel Canyon**, this movie is far more engaging and accessible. It’s her best film to date, and will surely play well in sophisticated cities and suburbs around the country and easily gross the mid-teens figures it needs to push Focus into profitability.

In this three-part flip-cam interview, Cholodenko talks about how long it took to make the film, which she co-wrote with Stuart Blumberg, why it’s time to see this story on-screen, how she submitted the film to Sundance at the last minute, and why she embraced the “straight” old-fashioned virtues of grainy 35 mm.

Part One:

Oscar Predicts Chart



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