

# CULTIVATING A FILM FESTIVAL STRATEGY



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## BACKGROUND

Ryan Hope Travis's film is a narrative feature that spans approximately a decade in the life of a Black young adult coming of age in America. His high school experience is cut short by a false rape conviction, and viewers watch as he spends the rest of his adolescence behind bars. The film uses influences from prominent activists and writers about racism in the 21st century to provide a case study for the very prevalent problem of mass incarceration and its disproportionate effects on Black men in America.

## METHODOLOGY

The primary goal of our research was to collect data by gathering information about film festivals, similar films, and market trends. We gathered data about various national and international film festivals and generated a chart of deadlines, application fees, etc. to be used in the spring semester of 2024. Essentially, we built a strategy for how and when the film will be distributed to the film festival circuit. The focus of the study was the film, *Cocoa in the Dark*. We effectively measured how the themes of the movie might make the feature a better fit for certain film festivals over others. The study was conducted through a review of film festivals worldwide, in part with the aid of filmfreeway.com as well as film journals that allowed us to gauge what content is usually favored by which festival to create a database of festivals that were most likely to choose *Cocoa in the Dark*.

We found that the best film festivals were those that waived application fees for films created by filmmakers of color and/or were geared towards presenting films with a focus on themes of Blackness. This was because these festivals were the most likely to resonate with the themes of Professor Travis's films even if they only watched a portion of the film in deciding whether to select it, which is often the form that the selection process takes because of the high volume of submissions that are usually received.

## POSTER



## RESULTS

Professor Ryan Hope Travis has only just begun to send the film out to the chosen festivals, so while the results of the research cannot yet be gauged, evidence from the database we created shows that we have discerned the festivals with the highest likelihood of selecting Professor Travis's film.

	A	B	C	D
	Film Festivals 2024	Opening Date	Early Bird Deadline	Regular Deadline
1	Los Angeles Black Film Festival	4/20/24	\$45 (6/1)	\$60 (7/10)
2	Washington DC Int'l Film Festival	7/17/24	\$20 (9/4)	\$40 (12/18)
3	Sun Valley Film Festival	7/10/24	\$50 (7/28)	\$70 (8/25)
4	LA Int'l Film Festival	9/1/24	\$50 (9/29)	\$60 (10/27)
5	Denton Black Film Festival	5/5/24	\$40 (8/26)	\$50 (10/9)
6	Brooklyn Film Festival	6/14/24	\$65 (10/31)	\$85 (1/5)
7	Atlanta Underground Film Festival	8/18/24	\$25 (10/31)	\$50 (2/29)
8	Provincetown Int'l Film Festival	9/15/24	\$65 (11/1)	\$85 (12/15)
9	Mammoth Lakes Film Festival	7/24/24	\$50 (11/1)	\$60 (12/1)
10	Massachusetts Independent Film Festival	4/15/24	\$30 (7/1)	\$40 (11/1)
11	Santa Barbara Int'l Film Festival	7/1/24	\$95 (8/11)	\$105 (9/22)
12	Phoenix Film Festival	6/26/24	\$55 (7/28)	\$65 (11/8)
13	San Francisco Independent Film Festival	3/1/24	\$55 (5/6)	\$65 (11/11)
14	Maryland Film Festival	10/20/24	\$50 (11/15)	\$60 (12/15)
15	North Hollywood Cinefest	10/17/24	\$20 (11/21)	\$40 (5/9)
16	NYC Indie Film Festival	3/1/24	\$55 (8/31)	\$65 (11/30)
17	Baltimore Int'l Black Film Festival	10/11/24	\$40 (12/15)	\$50 (2/15)
18	BronzeLens Film Festival	10/18/24	\$40 (12/31) \$30-GA	\$50 (3/15)
19	NewFilmmakers Los Angeles	1/2/24		(WINTER DEADLINE) \$50 (12/31)
20	Morehouse College Human Rights	10/20/24	\$30 (12/31)	\$40 (2/28)
21	The Black Film Summit	3/27/24	(RED) \$20 (6/21)	(GREEN) \$30 (1/18)
22	San Diego International Film Festival	OPENING SOON		
23	Charlotte Film Festival	1/2/24	2/28	6/30
24	Heartland Int'l Film Festival	11/6/23	\$50 (2/24)	\$60 (5/19)
25	Indie Memphis Film Festival			
26	Montana Int'l Film Festival			
27	Prince Georges Film Festival			
28	Nashville Film Festival			
29	Philadelphia Film Festival			
30	Tall Grass Film Festival	12/1/24	\$45 (2/15)	\$55 (4/15)
31	Atlanta Film Festival	5/8/24	6/29/23	9/22

## DATABASE

## REFERENCES

Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New Press, 2020. , Anderson, Carol. *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide*. Bloomsbury, 2020., Stevenson, Bryan. *Just Mercy: Adapted for Young Adults: A True Story of the Fight for Justice*. Thorndike Press, A Part of Gale, A Cengage Company, 2020., Baldwin, James. *Fire next Time*. Vintage, 1993.