

# THE DANIEL CONNECTION

A Studio Scotland Production  
www.thedanielconnection.com

## Behind the Scenes at Cannes Film Festival

by Adele Cross (Exec Prod, *the Daniel Connection*) Tuesday 4 June 2013



When asked by Studio Scotland to come on board as Executive Producer for their new feature film, 'The Daniel Connection', with attending Cannes Film Festival as my first obligation, it was a reasonably easy decision to make. I relished the opportunity to experience the famous festival from the inside. We are all familiar with the famous images of the stars walking up the red carpet and ascending the iconic steps and associate it with glamour, sunshine and fabulousness. I have attended many trade exhibitions around the world and know the reality is often long days, busy nights and lots of hard work. Unsurprisingly, Cannes Film Festival proved to be no different - except that it is also undeniably glamorous.

The Palais du Festival where it all takes place is located at the water's edge, where some of the world's most magnificent yachts jostle for space and the exhibition stands, including the one we called our 'office' for the duration of the festival, open onto a white sandy beach where the Mediterranean laps whilst business is done. White pointed tents provide exhibition spaces and temporary cinema theatres where red carpet and red draping predominates and the backdrop is the turquoise blue sea and bright sunshine. It is totally enchanting. Add to this, beautiful people in smart- casual, designer clothes and sunglasses by day, and black-tie, evening dresses and jewels by night. Limousines line up to drop off their stars at the red carpet along the The Croisette. Film cameras swing on booms, press cameras flash and crowds of tourists and passers-by stop to watch. Shop windows compete with each other to display their designer goods, restaurants buzz with business meetings into the wee hours and the heightened security of the top hotels where the celebrities stay reinforce their un-missable air of exclusivity. It all adds up to a very heady mixture of show business.



Overlooking Cannes Harbour and Film Festival Pavilions



Make no mistake however, underpinning all this razzmatazz is a very serious business. Producers, directors, sales agents and distributors are all there to sell, buy or promote their films both pre and post production. Even the competitions of the festival into which the films are entered, are all part of the promotion process to aid sales at the box office. The Palm d'Or is the most prestigious competition of the festival and each of the twenty films in it has a red - carpet premier screening with the stars, director and producer attending, along with the nine members of the jury, this year headed up by Steven Spielberg. Tickets for these screenings are by invitation only and are non-transferable however this does not stop hopeful fans from standing outside the Palais with cards asking for them, sometimes in evening dress and on one occasion I saw three young women standing with cards that read '1 ticket = 1 kiss'.

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*Our Office View*



Everywhere there is an infectious joie de vivre. The Festival makes a few tickets available to festival card holders for these screenings on the day but demand is fierce. There are over thirty theatres screening films each day. We queued to see 'The Last Emperor' which had been re-mastered into 3D. The director Bernardo Bertolucci now in a wheelchair was interviewed by one of the festival directors at the beginning. The film worked superbly on the big screen in 3D and at the end the director justifiably received a standing ovation. It did what a really good film can do better than any other medium, it transported the audience to another world for two and half hours.



*Paparazzi positioned atop ladders to get 'the shot'*



This is the magic of film that the artists in the business are trying to conjure up in their work. Fortunes are made and lost in the pursuit of it but for as many who are motivated by this, there are equally as many who see film making as purely just a money making exercise. I spoke with one consultant to the banks who has been in the film business for twenty-five years. He has seen it all and is dispassionate about brokering deals to minimise the risk for the banks he represents. This is his sole motivation, the rest is incidental because he says if the banks lose money, they will stop investing in film making and that will have serious repercussions for the industry. The veteran producers speaking at the Producers Workshops recommended making small budget films as investors are happier to invest in these projects because there is a realistic chance of recouping the cost. This was good news for us with 'The Daniel Connection'! We had come to Cannes to explore getting a 'name' connected to our film, which means a well known actor or executive producer or director whose name will help to sell the movie. To this end I did make some very useful contacts at the workshops and in the restaurants. Over and over again people in the business said this is exactly why people come to Cannes, for the accidental, chance encounters that you just can not make anywhere else. I met an actress in the toilets who has been in thirty-five films and worked with Spielberg, sat two rows behind Elisabeth Taylor's son in the screening of Cleopatra, sat beside the managing director of a large English film studio in a restaurant, had dinner with a French screenwriter, an LA director and his producer.

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While a lot of work does happen during the Film Festival - the sales agents do 80% of their deals during the festival - it also creates work to be carried on long afterwards. The gestation period for the average film runs from anything between three to five years. So I am going back to Scotland not only with useful leads to follow up, an increased knowledge of this industry and a better understanding of the not insignificant challenge that will be involved in getting our film made and brought to market but also a galvanised determination to make it happen. Because without that - no film gets made.



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