

CINEMA LIBRE GOES IT ALONE

Self-distributes titles to home video market

By Cindy Spielvogel 8/10/2004



AUG 10 | Cinema Libre Studio, which focuses on independent documentaries, foreign and art films, is going to begin self-distributing to the home video market.

The company previously distributed titles through others, including Image Entertainment and Vanguard.

Cinema Libre has hired Arik Treston, formerly of York Entertainment and VPD, to spearhead the effort as VP home entertainment. One of the first releases will be *Uncovered: The War on Iraq*, an 85-minute updated version of the controversial film from documentarian Robert Greenwald.

A 50-minute version of the film, *Uncovered: The Whole Truth About the Iraq War*, has been available on DVD since last year on the Internet through Disinformation Co. and to retail through Ryko Distribution, through a deal with the director.

A similar agreement with those companies saw the recent DVD release of Greenwald's *Outfoxed: Rupert Murdoch's War on Journalism* (VB, 7-19).

Cinema Libre just launched the film theatrically Aug. 6 in a reversal of the usual distribution pattern. *Outfoxed* was released on DVD in July.

Cinema Libre also will release the new version of *Uncovered* in theaters this month before bringing it to DVD Oct. 19 at \$19.95 (prebook Sept. 17), "two weeks before the election," said Treston. He expects the film to play in more than 100 theaters.

Political organization MoveOn.org has assisted with publicity efforts, Treston said.

Treston said the company hopes to release three to four titles on DVD every six weeks, all from independent filmmakers, including documentaries and independent films.

"It's a small market, but it's a good market," he said.

The first DVD releases self-distributed by Cinema Libre will be '80s film *The Bengali Night*, starring Hugh Grant, and *Temptation*, a film about the adult industry, starring Annette O'Toole. Both street Sept. 28 (prebook Sept. 8).

Cinema Libre, now 2 years old, is owned by producer Philippe Diaz of France.