

A woman with long blonde hair, wearing a vibrant green sleeveless dress and a gold chain necklace, is smiling and posing with her hands on her hips. She is standing in front of a white backdrop with the word 'CINEQUEST' repeated in red. The image is framed by a blue and pink gradient border.

‘The Film Festival Doctor’s Guide To Navigating The Festival Circuit’ E-Book

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THE FILM FESTIVAL DOCTOR'S GUIDE
TO NAVIGATING THE FESTIVAL CIRCUIT

WELCOME & THANK YOU FOR PURCHASING MY E-BOOK

Thank you so much for purchasing my latest e-book 😊 This is a succinct e-book which has been designed for you to keep in your pocket so you can pull it out anytime you need to whenever you need help and assistance.

I am so excited to be the strategist to help you navigate this wonderfully weird and complex yet ultimately rewarding world of film festivals. You'll have so much fun and you will also learn a lot about yourself in addition to growing your network of contacts and getting your film celebrated at international film festivals.

Your E-Book begins by offering a breakdown of the most important things that you need to know about the festival circuit. They are the key points that you always need to remember and keep at the forefront of your mind as you engage in this world. It also provides you with a checklist which is a step by step guide to help you prepare to submit your film to festivals and guidance with regards to how to create your festival strategy.

On the final page you have all of my contact details and how you can connect with me further – I'd love to learn more about you and help you get your film on the circuit. As a thank you for purchasing this E-Book I'd like to offer you a 5% discount off of all of my services. Join my community on Instagram as I'd love to keep in touch.

Rebekah x



THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT THE FILM FESTIVAL CIRCUIT



- **The good kinds of Film Festivals provide an abundance of opportunities which include–** 1. Networking; you can meet a lot of new and interesting people to collaborate with. Build relationships with these people so you can develop your career and create new work opportunities. 2. Awards; awards always generate interest in you and your film. The Oscar qualifying festivals have awards which if you win one can make your film eligible to submit to the Oscars. 3. Exposure – festivals can help you get your film seen by audiences around the entire world, they are stepping stones to help you achieve your goals.
- **Film Festivals are very useful PR (Public Relations) and distribution platforms, especially for independent films.** Festivals are the perfect places to ‘launch’ a feature film ahead of its theatrical/DVD/VOD release. Festivals are also the perfect places for short film directors to introduce their vision. Short films are ‘calling cards’ for up and coming feature film directors and festivals are the ‘home’ for short films as a platform to showcase and present their talent. Film festivals are the main arena where short films can receive theatrical screenings and is also possibly the only platform where this can be achieved as theatrical releases for short films are exceptionally rare.
- **Festivals are events where you can discover films and the talent involved.** ‘Discovery’ films tend to be the straight to VOD high quality independent feature film gems which aren’t big enough to receive a wide theatrical release or sometimes even those which don’t have a distribution deal – they’re just awesome films made by very talented filmmakers.
- **Every Film Festival is different and has their own type of personality.** This is with regards to how they communicate with filmmakers. Sometimes a festival admin team give you too much information at once, for example, they send a tremendously long email which has the information that you need to know to deliver your film to them, and also things which come later on during the process such as how to buy tickets, how to get your free pass, advertising opportunities and places to stay and eat. On the flip side, sometimes you receive very little information which for instance doesn’t tell you what deliverables they require or is not specific and you have to chase them. Some festivals expect you to do more than other festivals (i.e. attend the festival and frequently promote the screening on your website and socials).
- **The programming process varies Festival by Festival.** All festivals choose the films that they select for their programme in different ways as a lot of them programme for their local audiences (so they can easily sell tickets and passes) or for themselves and what they like to watch or they have been given guidelines regarding what to programme by their funders to tick their boxes and cover all bases. Yes there are politics such as films being programmed for their sponsors, friends & family etc. ☺ However, these kinds of things are beyond your control and is sometimes just something that they have to do and needs to be accepted.

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- **FilmFreeway.com is not the only platform to submit your film to Festivals.** Film Freeway is certainly the leading submission platform which you have probably heard of and is great to use. It is very well organized and makes the process of submitting films to festivals very relaxing. There are also other platforms that you might also have to use in addition to Film Freeway (such as Short Film Depo, Fest Home & Fest Agent). In some cases you might need to submit to the festival directly via their website. Not all festivals use Film Freeway.
- **Some Festivals don't have a premiere policy whereas some do.** There are many different types of premiere policies – World, International, European, State, Town, Village, City etc. Always check the festivals rules and regulations to see if they have a premiere policy or not. Some festivals don't require a Premiere, however, they might give preference to those that do have some type of premiere available. For example the awesome Cordillera Festival clearly state that Nevada, World and US Premieres are not required, however premiere status may be one of the factors considered when determining a film's inclusion in their Festival.
- **Do not submit to any On-Line 'Award Competition'.** These are not physical film festivals, they tend to be monthly 'secret' on-line events which will not add any credibility or value to yourself and your film. Essentially you are paying for an award (you won't be competing against anyone else) and they often ask you to pay for a trophy to be shipped to you. They are very misleading. I would advise not to add these types of events to your strategy.
- **All Festivals have different perceptions of what short film and feature film durations are.** Some festivals have a short film duration limit of 10 minutes whereas other festivals have up to 60 minutes. Sometimes a feature film can be anything between 30 - 180 minutes.
- **Not all Festivals pay screening fees for feature films and short films.** Some festivals will pay you a fee to screen your film. The average rate tends to be between \$50.00 USD - \$600.00 USD and between \$50.00 USD - \$100.00 USD for short films. If a programmer requests to see your film and then accepts the film, you can ask for a screening fee.
- **Your film doesn't need to be exactly 15 mins or 90 minutes.** If your film needs to be 21 minutes or 98 minutes to tell its story and every scene in film counts to develop the narrative; then that is the length that it needs to be. A lot of filmmakers tend to make films which are 15 minutes long as they feel it will be an easier sell to festivals and get selected. It's often the case that it needs to be a little shorter or sometimes longer. Be ruthless and allow yourself to tell your story.

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THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT THE FILM FESTIVAL CIRCUIT



- **Sometimes it's okay to submit to a late deadline.** Not all Film Festivals ignore late submissions. It is true and a sad fact that there are some festivals who don't watch all of the films that get submitted. If you have proof that your film has not been watched contact the festival and request a refund. So that you don't get caught out, always check the festival's timeline on their Film Freeway or equivalent page. If the late deadline is June 1st and they announce those who have been selected on June 5th don't submit! If the late deadline is May 31st and the festival runs in November that means it is safe to submit as there is plenty of time for it to get watched. I always prefer to submit early as most of the time this means that the cost of the submission fee will be lower and the screening team have a fresh pair of eyes.
- **Since this is not a linear straightforward process it is very important to be organized and flexible.** Pay close attention to detail regarding e-mails you receive from festivals and their requirements. As discussed sometimes you will receive an overwhelming amount of information all at once which means you can't skim read the e-mail and will need to look at it all very carefully from start to finish. Have someone on your team who can help you submit, stay on top of submission deadlines, read e-mails carefully, put a timeline in place and organize sending the deliverables required to festivals. Always stay one step ahead and keep on top of the administration work that will be required during this process. Keep a record of all of your submissions on an organized spreadsheet. You can buy one of these from my Shop - <https://www.thefilmfestivaldoctor.com/cart/>
- **Cover Letters are not essential.** A cover letter may or may not get read; you have a 50/50 chance. If the festival want to know something they ask you questions before you complete your submission. Sometimes these questions can be quite personal (i.e. your gender, sexual orientation) this is more than likely requests from their funders to see if you fit into a certain programming theme or category. Sometimes they want to know if the film was shot locally or if you are an alumni (returning) filmmaker. If a festival asks you to write a cover letter then definitely write one as they will read it. If they don't there is no urgent need. The key is make sure that you have put together a very comprehensive and detailed project page (more on this on the next page).
- **Let go of control & a desired outcome.** Do not look at Film Freeway (or equivalent) every day as the notification dates are not always accurate. Sometimes festivals tell you in advance of the notification date that they have set. Sometimes they tell you on the date that they promised and sometimes they tell you after the festival has finished. This entire process takes time – slow and steady wins the race with a positive mindset. Be open to the surprises along the way. Never take rejection personally it is part of the process.

YOUR STEP BY STEP CHECKLIST - EVALUATION



1. THE FIRST THING TO DO BEFORE YOU COMPLETE ANY FESTIVAL SUBMISSIONS IS TO BE TOUGH ON YOURSELF AND ASK – DO I HAVE A FESTIVAL VIABLE PRODUCT? WILL MY FILM OR UNPRODUCED SCREENPLAY OR MUSIC VIDEO OR VR OR IMMERSIVE INTEREST FILM FESTIVAL PROGRAMMERS?
2. THIS IS OFTEN A QUESTION WHICH IS BEST ANSWERED BY OTHER PEOPLE, YOUR COLLEAGUES, PEERS AND THOSE NOT ATTACHED TO YOUR FILM PROJECT. FRIENDS AND FAMILY MEMBERS OFTEN TELL YOU WHAT YOU WANT TO HEAR SO IT IS ALWAYS BETTER TO ASK PEOPLE WHO WILL BE HONEST ABOUT YOUR FILM (MYSELF ESPECIALLY!).
3. FESTIVAL PROGRAMMERS ARE NOT LOOKING FOR FILMS WHICH ARE FULL OF CLICHES AND FEATURE NOTHING NEW. WHAT THEY ARE LOOKING FOR ARE FILMS WHICH ARE BOLD, AMBITIOUS, DARING, TAKE A RISK, PRESENT NEW WAYS OF LOOKING AT STORIES AND THE WORD, ARE UNPREDICTABLE, THEY ALL SHOW AN EMERGING TALENT AND A DIRECTOR WHO IS NOT AFRAID TO SHOW THEIR VISION AND IS IN CONTROL OF THEIR MESSAGE AND WHAT THEY WANT.
4. BELOW IS A QUOTE FROM THE BIFA QUALIFYING BEESTON FILM FESTIVAL. *‘THE BEESTON FILM FESTIVAL EMPLOYS A RIGOROUS AND OPENMINDED SELECTION PROCESS. WE REQUEST SUBMISSIONS ACROSS A WIDE RANGE OF GENRES, ENSURING A DIVERSE PROGRAMME, HOWEVER THE JOY OF THE FESTIVAL IS SURPRISE! WE OF COURSE OBJECTIVELY ASSESS EACH SUBMISSION AGAINST CRITERIA SUCH AS CINEMATOGRAPHY, SCRIPT AND PERFORMANCE, BUT IT IS FILMS SUCH AS THE CUNNING MAN (A FILM WHICH THE FILM FESTIVAL DOCTOR REPRESENTED), THAT COMBINE HIGH PERFORMING TECHNICAL ELEMENTS WITH ORIGINALITY THAT STAND OUT. FESTIVAL SELECTIONS AND AWARD NOMINATIONS ARE DETERMINED BY OUR LOCAL PROGRAMMING TEAM, WHILST AWARD DECISIONS ARE DRIVEN BY OUR INTERNATIONAL INDUSTRY PANEL.’*
5. IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE PRODUCTION QUALITY IS VERY HIGH TOO. THE SOUND MUST BE STRONG ALONG WITH THE ACTING, EDITING, SCRIPT, DIALOGUE AND PRODUCTION DESIGN. YOUR FILM DOESN'T NEED TO BE MADE FOR MILLIONS, IT CAN BE MADE FOR A LOT LESS – BUDGET IS IRRELEVANT. IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT YOU RECRUIT A STRONG TEAM WHO ARE PROFESSIONALS AND GOOD AT WHAT THEY DO.

YOUR STEP BY STEP CHECKLIST - PREPARATION



1. **PREPARE – SET YOUR GOALS** - WHAT DO YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE FROM THE FESTIVAL CIRCUIT WITH YOUR FILM? THINK CAREFULLY ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT TO GET FROM THE FESTIVAL CIRCUIT. DO YOU WANT TO MEET NEW CONNECTIONS, WIN AWARDS, GET THE FILM SEEN? BE REALLY SPECIFIC. YOU MADE THIS FILM FOR A REASON - HOW CAN THE FILM HELP YOU TO ACHIEVE WHAT YOU WANT. FOR EXAMPLE, IF YOU WANT TO MEET NEW CONNECTIONS BE SPECIFIC WITH REGARDS TO WHAT TYPES OF CONNECTIONS – SALES AGENTS, PRODUCERS, COMPOSERS? ETC.
2. **PREPARE – PLAN YOUR BUDGETS** - YOU WILL NEED MONEY FOR - 1. HIRING A FILM FESTIVAL STRATEGIST (OFCOURSE!) THE FILM FESTIVAL DOCTOR'S FEES BEGIN AT \$298.00 USD + ☺. YOU WILL NEED MONEY TO PAY FOR SUBMISSION FEES. YOU CAN SUBMIT TO A LOT OF FESTIVALS SPENDING BETWEEN \$750.00-\$1K USD. 2. DELIVERABLES (SEE BELOW) 3. TRAVELING TO FESTIVAL - IT IS IMPORTANT TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT NOT JUST THE COST OF TRAVELLING TO FESTIVALS AND THE COST OF ACCOMMODATION BUT ALSO THE COST OF LIVING THERE; HOW MUCH WILL YOU NEED TO PUT ASIDE FOR FOOD, DRINK & GETTING AROUND (CAN YOU WALK EVERYWHERE OR DO YOU NEED TO USE UBER OR HIRE A CAR?).
3. **PREPARE – CREATE YOUR DELIVERABLES** – YOU WILL NEED A PROFESSIONALLY MADE POSTER, TRAILER (BETWEEN 30 SECS AND 1 MINUTE LONG, MAXIMUM 2 MINUTES LONG FOR A FEATURE FILM), DCP – THIS STANDS FOR A DIGITAL CINEMA PACKAGE TO SCREEN YOUR FILM AT A FESTIVAL IN A THEATRE. A PRESS KIT (A PUBLICIST CAN DO THIS FOR YOU) & AN SRT FILE (FOR SUBTITLING PURPOSES). THESE MATERIALS APPLY TO BOTH SHORT FILMS AND FEATURE FILMS. WE WORK WITH A TEAM OF AFFILIATED COMPANIES WHO CAN HELP WITH ALL OF THESE TOO.
4. **PREPARE – CREATE YOUR FILM FREEWAY PAGE** - (AND ANY OTHER SUBMISSION PLATFORMS IF YOU NEED TO USE THEM, SUCH AS SHORT FILM DEPOT, FEST AGENT & FESTHOME) SEE PAGE 9 FOR AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT A COMPREHENSIVE FILM FREEWAY PAGE LOOKS LIKE AND THE KEY INFORMATION THAT IT NEEDS TO CONTAIN. YOU WILL NEED TO WRITE A SUCCINCT AND ENGAGING SYNOPSIS THAT WILL GET PEOPLE EXCITED TO WATCH THE FILM, A DIRECTOR'S BIO, A DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT AND A PROFESSIONAL HEADSHOT. KEEP THE INFORMATION SHORT & SHARP.

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YOUR STEP BY STEP CHECKLIST – HOW TO CREATE YOUR FESTIVAL STRATEGY



1. **RESEARCH AND CREATE YOUR FESTIVAL STRATEGY.** BY THIS POINT YOU WILL NOW KNOW IF YOU HAVE A FILM THAT WILL INTEREST FESTIVALS, YOU HAVE SET YOUR GOALS AND FIGURED OUT YOUR BUDGETS. BELOW ARE THE KEY THINGS THAT YOU NEED TO DO TO CREATE YOUR FESTIVAL STRATEGY AND PUT YOUR LIST TOGETHER OF WHAT FESTIVALS TO SUBMIT TO.
2. **ASK THE FILM FESTIVAL DOCTOR TEAM TO CREATE YOUR FESTIVAL STRATEGY.** THIS IS WHAT WE SPECIALIZE IN. WE CAN HELP YOU FIND THE RIGHT KINDS OF FESTIVALS TO SUBMIT YOUR FILM TO. WE CREATE TARGETED STRATEGIES THAT ARE TAILOR MADE SPECIFICALLY FOR YOUR FILM.
3. **REVIEW AND RESEARCH THE FILM FESTIVAL ALLIANCE ORGANIZATION WEBSITE.** ALL OF THE FESTIVALS THAT ARE PART OF THIS ORGANIZATION ARE LEGITIMATE AND HAVE BEEN VETTED BY THE ORGANIZERS. NONE OF THESE ARE SCAMS THEY ARE GREAT FESTIVALS WHO TRULY SUPPORT INDEPENDENT FILMS [HTTPS://FILMFESTIVALALLIANCE.ORG/HOME](https://filmfestivalalliance.org/home)
4. **FILM FREEWAY: LOOK AT THE FESTIVAL'S PAGE TO IDENTIFY IF IT'S GENUINE AND REVIEW THE PICTURE GALLERY.** WHAT DO THE PICTURES TELL YOU? DO THEY SCREEN FILMS, DO THEY HAVE A STEP AND REPEAT? DO THEY HAVE AN AUDIENCE? ARE THERE PEOPLE ATTENDING THE FESTIVAL? REVIEWS ARE NOT ALWAYS HELPFUL, IT'S THE PICTURES THAT CAN REALLY HELP YOU IDENTIFY IF THIS IS A GENUINE FESTIVAL AND IS A PHYSICAL EVENT.
5. **RESEARCH AND EXPERIENCE LOCAL FESTIVALS THAT ARE CLOSE TO WHERE YOU LIVE AND CONNECT WITH THE FESTIVAL PROGRAMMERS.** START FORMING A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM SO THAT YOU ARE ON THEIR RADAR. SINCE YOU ARE LOCAL TO THEM YOU ALREADY HAVE A GOOD CONNECTION TO THE FESTIVAL.
6. **WORD OF MOUTH.** WHAT FESTIVALS DO YOUR COLLEAGUES RECOMMEND AND HAVE HAD GOOD EXPERIENCES WITH?, WHAT WAS SPECIAL ABOUT THEM? WILL THESE FESTIVALS BE A GOOD FIT FOR YOUR FILM AND HELP YOU TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS?
7. **DOWNLOAD FROM THE INTERNET THE OSCAR, BIFA & BAFTA QUALIFYING FILM FESTIVAL DIRECTORIES.** THESE LISTS WILL ALSO HELP YOU IDENTIFY WHICH FESTIVALS ARE THE HARDEST ONES TO BE SELECTED FOR, RECEIVE A LARGE NUMBER OF SUBMISSIONS AND ARE THE MOST COMPETITIVE.
8. **AND THAT'S IT – YOU ARE READY TO START SUBMITTING! NOW THE FUN BEGINS!**

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WHAT YOUR FILM FREEWAY PROJECT PAGE SHOULD LOOK LIKE – ZOOM IN FOR A CLOSER LOOK



HELLO SUNSHINE

Overview Credits Specifications



Roz Pichardo is more than a domestic violence and gun violence survivor, she's a warrior. Despite of - or because of - being thrown off a bridge by an abusive ex-boyfriend, the unsolved murder of her brother, and the suicide of her identical twin sister, she's able to channel her trauma into service by helping the often-forgotten people of North Philadelphia.

From giving comfort to families of murder victims to saving the lives of over 500 men and women in active opioid addiction, Roz knows that her healing and her survival depends upon healing others.

Director Biography - Joe Quint



Joe Quint is a documentary filmmaker and photographer from Brooklyn, NY. Widely exhibited, Joe's work consists largely of telling well-intentioned and respectful stories about people on journeys - people who either are experiencing great challenges or who have overcome such challenges. His most recent film project, "Hello Sunshine", profiles a woman who has survived decades of gun violence and domestic violence trauma and has channeled these traumas into service - saving the lives of those in active opioid addiction and supporting the families of murder victims.

In addition, Joe has an on-going project about the impact of gun violence on a diverse group of Americans: Young, old, rich, poor, in big cities and in rural communities - "It Takes Us" shows how gun violence cuts through the heart of the country. "It Takes Us" has been published globally and presented at colleges, universities, medical centers, and more.

Joe graduated from Temple University in Philadelphia, PA. While largely a self-taught artist, Joe credits his liberal arts education for sparking a desire to better understand the human condition.

Director Statement

After years of working on a documentary film and photography project about the impact of gun violence on survivors and family members of victims, I was in search of a story about a warrior - someone who has not only made the most of a tragic situation but who has come out stronger on the other side. Roz Pichardo is such a warrior.

After my first few interviews with Roz, I knew that her story needed to be told. I needed to learn how - either in spite of her trauma or because of her trauma - she's able to overcome the decades of gun violence and domestic violence experiences that would render most people unable to function. I can say with the highest degree of confidence that viewers of "Hello Sunshine" have never met a woman like Roz.

We filmed for over 18 months throughout the Philadelphia neighborhood of Kensington - a community with one of the highest opioid epidemics in the country. For both safety and the kind of trust that I needed to earn, I worked with as small a crew as was possible. This residents of Kensington have long been exploited by the media and any sort of large footprint would make us very unwelcome.

We've reversed overdoses together (she has saved the lives of over 500 people), we've camped out in the winter to raise awareness of unsolved murder cases, and we made a deep, lasting connection based on respect, honesty, and genuine good intention.

"Hello Sunshine" is just the beginning of an amazing story that will reveal itself in the years to come.



Still Photos



Project Links

- Website
Instagram

News & Reviews

- "HELLO SUNSHINE" JOE QUINT DOCUMENTARY
THE STORY OF KENSINGTON ACTIVIST ROZ PICHARDO
Groundbreaking Change Worker Doc
DOCUMENTARY REVEALS THE TOLL OF ACTIVISM

Add Article

Files & Attachments

Add File

LET'S CONNECT

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