



Electronic Press Kit

AS OF 5 June 2012

AGENDA THE MOVIE

Filmmaker Jonathan de la Luz and distributor [VCI Entertainment](#) announce the release of the noir thriller *Agenda* available on DVD June 19th and in a unique new “chapter” format online that was launched on Memorial Day, May 28th.

The *Agenda* DVD will have two versions of the movie: one in color and the other in black and white as a tribute to the great film noir movies of the past. Robert Blair, President of VCI Entertainment, calls the movie’s black and white version “Noir-Scope,” while de la Luz, the film’s director, calls it “inspired marketing.”

As an added bonus to the viewer, de la Luz is announcing the launch of a free online version of *Agenda* presented in 17 episodes.

Agenda, starring [Robert Rusler](#), [Eliana Alexander](#), [John Bennett Perry](#), and [James Black](#) made its international debut at the Cannes Film Festival. The movie has also won four awards including the Grand Prize at the New York Independent Film Festival and a prestigious Remi Award from the Houston International Film Festival.

De la Luz and native East Texan Danny Martin crafted the film’s storyline using that genre’s time-honored formula with a contemporary twist. Five intertwined characters weave a treacherous road of deception and murder spurred on by personal agendas.

The decision to include a black and white version of *Agenda* on the DVD was a win for the movie’s director, who envisioned that format from the start believing that black and white movies such as the blockbuster *Sin City* were making a comeback of sorts.

In a textbook example of the perils of independent filmmaking, several years of challenges in the period following production and in the initial distribution attempt ensued after the film wrapped in 2007. These latest developments, a vindication for the film’s creator, come at a time when the film’s theme is more appropriate than ever.

Set in North Carolina, the film was shot in and around East Texas in locations such as Longview, Tyler, Nacogdoches and Lake of the Pines, as well as Shreveport, Louisiana. It pays homage to

classic [film noir](#) developed during and after World War II, which took advantage of the post-war ambience - not unlike a period the world finds itself in again.

“Given the wide scope of the economic and banking crisis which has spilled onto the world stage in the last few years,” says de la Luz, “not much has changed emotionally regarding anxiety, pessimism, and suspicion. *Agenda* as historical metaphor has become reality.”

About the triumph of the black and white version making it into this newest release de la Luz doesn't mince words. “The black and white viewing experience is totally different from that of full color,” de la Luz says. “It helps the viewer as participant focus on the complexity of the evolving characters.”

As evidenced by this year's Oscar for best film, he may be on to something. *The Artist*, presented not only in black and white but also as a silent film, has grossed an excess of \$130 million.

VCI Entertainment is one of the nation's oldest independent home video companies and has a library of over 4,000 titles. The VCI library includes feature films, documentaries, short subjects, special interest and TV series. VCI is a leading supplier of archival quality Hollywood Classics, as well as 'bleeding' edge independent feature films and other eclectic entertainment from around the world. The company is distributing *Agenda* under its boutique label, Indie Go!

Agenda is available to pre-order at [Amazon.com](#) and at [WalMart.com](#). It will also be available retail at all Hastings stores beginning on June 19th.

For more Information:

contact@agendathemovie.com

www.agendathemovie.com

www.facebook.com/agendathemovie

<https://twitter.com/agendathemovie>

[Agenda trailer](#)

[Agenda chapters](#)

[What Is Film Noir? \(video\)](#)

[What Is Film Noir? \(Wikipedia\)](#)

[How to Be a Femme Fatal \(wikiHow\)](#)

AGENDA - THE STORY

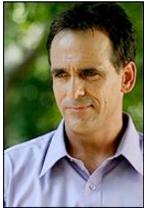
John Linney (John Bennett Perry) has it all – power, all the happiness money can buy, and a secret. His wife, Magdalena (Eliana Alexander), has it all too – beauty, social status, and the use of her husband’s money.

Alec Foster (Robert Rusler) has nothing, but all that changes when he meets the rich and powerful John Linney, who offers him a clean, new life, far from everything he is desperate to leave behind. Now even Alec has it all. Or, at least until he is introduced to the seductive Magda Linney, and they both realize they could have even more.

Alec and Magda begin a dangerous game of temptation, and the stakes get higher and hotter with each encounter. But, when a visitor from the past, Four Shure, (James Black) pays a courtesy call to Alec, desperation forces the game to become real, and Alec and Magda set upon a treacherous road of deception and murder, spurred by lust, greed and revenge. As lie after lie is uncovered, it seems that everyone has their own personal agenda.

Whose lies will reveal the truth? Watch carefully, because everyone knows that the best trick is the one you don’t see coming.

CAST BIOS



**Robert
Rusler**



**Eliana
Alexander**



**John Bennett
Perry**



**Pamela Joy
Walworth**



James Black



**Writer-Producer-Director
Jonathan de la Luz**

Jonathan de la Luz on his “Imagination Cloud”

Interviewed by Barbara Fellman

Moving to Austin, Texas in 2009, Jonathan de la Luz created a new solely owned entity, [luzworks](#), an entertainment production company that develops intellectual properties for film, television, Internet and toy markets. Now luzworks looks expand even further. Into digital distribution.

Taking a break from a busy work schedule, de la Luz sat down with me to discuss a new digital distribution company being launched called luzworksMEDIA. --As poets (and the weatherman) would have it, clouds, rain and lightening were making their presence know just outside the window at Austin Java cafe, in Austin, TX when the interview started...

Every time you look on the Internet there’s a new content delivery platform. Are you a glutton for punishment? --De la Luz turns his attention from the raindrops outside to the question. “Yes and No. With our entry into the distribution loop, luzworksMEDIA is a radical departure from other online distribution efforts. It’s different from Hulu or NetFlix, which are basically content parking spaces. We are repurposing content - such as a movie - carefully slicing it into chapters that can be shared via social networks. Like Hulu and NetFlix, but very differently. This can be in tandem with a theatrical, DVD or even VOD release, but it’s not necessarily chiseled in stone. The point is that it will heighten market exposure of the whole original content to a much greater audience degree. Independent filmmakers still looking for distribution can see this as a totally unique option.”

So, luzworksMEDIA will offer independent filmmakers a unique opportunity to market their movies to a social media audience that otherwise may not have been aware of the movie in the first place? “Yes. The first feature we’re debuting is my own movie, Agenda. This is a bold experiment for me. I’m essentially like the mad scientist who is experimenting on himself with a bright glowing syringe in my hand!” laughs de la Luz. “My emphasis is just not on content. It’s about targeting social media audiences also. luzworksMEDIA is redefining movies for audiences that only have chance to watch something online for a few minutes at a time. Think of it like reading one chapter at a time in a book. And, like a book, it has an end. Online episodes... webisodes are continuous. There’s no particular end in sight. I believe people can make that distinction.”

The story’s the thing? “Always has been. Always will. I believe that if a filmmaker has done their job, the beginning, middle and end story structure is there. An audience can invest in seeing all or part the chapter series and/or buy or rent the whole enchilada on DVD or VOD.”

Do all movies have a built-in formula? “Well, most stories do. It’s academic what the content medium of choice is: books, magazine and news articles. TV, movies, etcetera. But a good story has a rhythm to it. A series of beats, if you will. You can isolate those beats from within the timeline of the story. That is, from when it starts to when it ends. Often, when you look closely enough, you will notice there are beats within beats. This helps us slice up a movie for chapter presentation.”

Jonathan de la Luz on his Imagination Cloud

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What happens when there are exceptions to the rule? “We can slide the episode length around so that it’s still manageable, plus or minus one or two minutes. The threshold we shoot for is five minutes. A 90-minute feature film works out to 18 segments. Again, the strength of the story is key to holding the audiences attention. I believe that audiences will be forgiving if a couple of episodes are slow here and there. After all, their commitment is to the entire story, not just a portion of it.”

How do you create a standard of quality for a movie you repurpose? Isn’t that pretty subjective? “In many areas of life, there are all forms of judges, umpires and referees. Calls get made. Sometime we agree, sometimes not...but a decision does get made.”

For example? “Well, number one, we will evaluate a movie based on story worthiness. In other words, we’re not looking for an idea in search of a story. A solid story has to be there on the screen, whether it’s in a movie theater or on an iPad. Second, if there was a sufficient budget, the overall production value will be greatly improved in comparison to most webisodes that are done on micro budgets. Let’s face it, quality suffers when attempting to make a quality movie with little or no money. And yes, there are exceptions. The market is changing as I speak, but they are few and far between. One of the main goals of luzworksMEDIA is that a viewer can watch 17 to 20-plus episodes of a good movie riding out the arc of a story with an actual ending.”

Don’t you feel that these movies turned-web-episodes will dilute DVD or VOD sales? “Absolutely not,” he says emphatically, “Free has always worked well online. Let me give you another example. Our “freemium” model will help promote and ‘sell’ Agenda, in the marketplace. How? Because of the law of digital economics: atoms weighed against bites. Look. Here’s a kind of rule of thumb. 95% of the people who download a free ‘lite’ version of some software are getting a pretty good deal, right? BUT! There are 5% who will are willing to pay for the premium version for say, \$20.00. In a way, that 5% is subsidizing the other 95% and a content maker can still make a pretty good profit. This would never have been possible 50 years ago because you needed to store those atoms—the physical item—somewhere and pass on the cost of storage accordingly. However, the near zero cost of online storage—those bites—make it possible to transform the economical digital landscape from scarcity into abundance. The music industry learned this the hard way. And the film industry is having a hard time letting go of old financial models. luzworksMEDIA is a pioneer in this regard. luzworksMEDIA is embracing the inevitable.”

What about piracy? De la Luz smiles. “Agenda should be so lucky! Here’s the irony. You know, in places like Brazil this piracy-thing actually helps promote a music group because it helps increase their fan base. The music group benefits from added revenue via concert tickets and ancillary sales—tee-shirts, caps, even more CD’s sold at the concert venue. By shifting the economics a little, movies can ride the same wave but let’s not call it piracy. Let’s call it, Open Source.

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De la Luz sits back and reflects now, “I had long advocated for over 15 years that the major studios, for example, should release a low-res version a movie online the same day of its theatrical release. This immediately helps short-circuit the traditional piracy issue. The percentage of people who will watch it online is negligible in comparison to a worldwide loss of box-office revenue through piracy.”

De la Luz pauses, looks over his shoulder then leans forward and speaks almost in a whispered voice. “Years ago, I remember,” he continues, “getting a pirated copy of a new Bruce Springsteen album a few months before it was officially released on CD. I thought that was really cool. I turned around and shared it with several others. Months later, guess what? I went out and bought the Springsteen CD. The quality was just better. So, just for giggles, I checked with those friends that I had ripped the album for. All but one had bought the Springsteen CD. That left a lasting impression on me regarding the illusion of scarcity.”

Should that make a filmmaker nervous? What if an audience rejects their movie even if it's free? “Just to be clear, there are different types of ‘free’, but really your question gets to the core of it,” says de la Luz with a mischievous grin. “Yes! Filmmakers should be extremely nervous! Yes! Because now, as if movies aren’t expensive enough whether you’ve spent \$50.00 or \$150M, you really have to examine the worth of your story. Yes! It had better be better than good if you expect an audience to invest even five minutes to watch a portion of the whole. Yes! The digital-story-telling cream does rise to the top.”

Will luzworksMEDIA episodes be monetized with the filmmaker in mind? “Ah, that’s the secret sauce part of our financial model,” says de la Luz with a wink and a big smile.

Want to talk about that? The luzworksMEDIA secret sauce? “That’s another conversation. Besides, we’re still tweaking it.”

What is the future of movies? “The next evolutionary step in the film industry is clear, if only to me. Within the next ten years, all movies will be free at theaters, on TV—as in no commercials, and online...available on all platform devices and then some.”

There is a long pause before I ask the next question.

Free movies? How will that be possible? The rain has stopped. de la luz stands up and walks to look outside at some beautiful slow moving fluffy clouds floating by. He stares out at his imagination cloud...and just chuckles to himself.

I have a feeling he knows something the rest of us don’t.

Barbara Fellman is a free lance writer based in Austin, TX.

AGENDA PHOTOS



Robert Rusler as Alec Foster (left) and **James Black** as Four Shure



Eliana Alexander as Magdalena Linney



John Bennett Perry as John Linney



A behind the scenes look. Four Shure makes certain that everything is “under” control.



A behind the scenes look. Director Jonathan de la Luz blocks a scene with actors Robert Rusler and Pamela Joy Walworth

QUOTES ABOUT FILM NOIR

"This what Film Noir is to me. It's a righteously generically American film movement that went from 1945 to 1958 and expositied one great theme. And that theme is you're fucked. -You have just met a woman. You're inches away from the greatest sex of your life. But within six weeks of meeting the woman, you will be framed for a crime you did not commit. And you will end up in the gas chamber. And as they strap you in and you're about to breath the cyanide fumes, you'll be grateful for the few weeks you had with her. And grateful for your own death." --*James Ellroy, novelist, L.A. Confidential*

“With a genre like film noir, everyone has these assumptions and expectations. And once all of those things are in place, that's when you can really start to twist it about and mess around with it.” --*Lana Wachowski, The Matrix*

“I can tell you I know it when I see it but I don’t know how to define it. Almost every element you name as the definition of a Noir film would apply to *Casablanca* but you would not call *Casablanca* a Noir film. --*Sydney Pollack, Director, Out Of Africa and The Way They Were*