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The *iWBOT* is based on per-theater averages reported by **Rentrak Theatrical**, the complete indieWIRE BOT weekly chart is **available here at indieWIRE.com**

Despite its politically charged content, **First Run Features**' "**Unborn in the USA: Inside the War on Abortion**," co-directors **Stephen Fell** and **Will Thompson** look at the pro-life movement, earned \$1,036 from a single auditorium at New York's Cinema Village. "Unborn in the USA" split the screen with another First Run Features documentary, "**Beyond Hatred**," about a French family coming to terns with the murder of their gay son. "Beyond Hatred" earned a modest \$534.

THINKFilm's "**The Trials of Darryl Hunt**," co-directors **Ricki Stern** and **Annie Sundberg**'s documentary about a North Carolina man wrongfully imprisoned for murder, earned only \$619 from two locations.

Hope for theatrical success for all types of non-fiction films, controversial or not, received a boost from the impressive \$13,477 launch of **Shadow Distribution**'s concert film "**Gypsy Caravan**" which jammed audiences on two New York screens, the Angelika and the Lincoln Plaza. Boasting camerawork by veteran filmmaker **Albert Maysles** and a cameo appearance by **Johnny Depp**, "Gypsy Caravan" follows various Gypsy bands, including **Fanfare Ciocarlia** and **Taraf De Haidouks**, as they tour Europe, India and the U.S. as part of their popular Gypsy Caravan concert tour.

For **Ken Eisen**, President, Waterville Maine-based Shadow Distribution, "Gypsy Caravan," a top earner among the weekend's new art-house releases, has the look of a classic documentary hit. "Right now, we have a boom or bust mentality; people only remembering what has happened in the last five minutes," says Eisen. "The huge successes of "**Fahrenheit 9/11**" and "**An Inconvenient Truth**" have raised the base for docs. But a film like "**March of the Penguins**," something that grosses \$35 million or more, is an aberration and the number of documentaries capable of reaching that wide of an audience are still limited.

"A successful film in the art market is one that can reach a limited but still wide audience, one that will appeal to the general art house viewer if not the multiplex crowd. Thirteen years ago we released "**Latcho Drom**" and it earned more than \$1 million and played in Berkeley for a year. "Gypsy Caravan is a film like that, a film that appeals to more than just Gypsy music fans."

"Gypsy Caravan" expands to Los Angeles and Washington D.C. on June 29, multiple venues in San Francisco on July 6 and more cities throughout the summer. Janus Films hit the high mark for classic reissues with earnings of \$7,254 for its exclusive run of **Jean-Luc Godard**'s "**Pierrot le fou**" in a restored 35mm print at Brooklyn's BAMcinematek. High audience response for the 1965 classic, starring **Jean-Paul Belmondo** and **Anna Karina**, forced BAMcinematek management to move the screenings to its largest auditorium.

"Pierrot le fou" closes at BAMcinematek on June 26 and Janus rolls out the Godard classic to other cities including Toronto on July 26 and Los Angeles on August 10.

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Of new releases, **Miramax**'s New Zealand comedy "**Eagle vs. Shark**" earned \$20,361 from just three locations with New York's Sunshine Cinema being the top grosser. A romance between a video game fanatic and a shy fast-food restaurant clerk, Miramax is using elaborate online advertising to target young moviegoers. Its aggressive platform release continues Friday with additional venues in Los Angeles and New York and new venues including the Ritz in Philadelphia and Embarcadero in San Francisco.

Roadside Attractions' retro zombie farce "**Fido**" earned \$10,203 from two locations, New York's Angelika and Los Angeles' Nuart Theatre. "Fido" expands to new cities including Boston and Chicago July 6.

"**Czech Dream**," a documentary from **Vit Klusak** and **Filip Remunda** about opening a hyper market in the Czech Republic, although one that does not really exist, earned \$3,888 from its exclusive showings at New York's IFC Center.

New Yorker Films' Mali-set drama "**Bamako**," from acclaimed filmmaker **Abderrahmane Sissako**, earned \$3,937 from its sole run at Washington D.C.'s E Street Cinema. "Bamako" opens Friday in Austin.

The latest film from Finland's **Aki Kaurismaki**, "**Lights in the Dusk**," earned a modest \$2,757 from its debut run at New York's IFC Center. **Strand Releasing** plans a slow roll out to other markets including Los Angeles and Chicago in July.

Boosted by across-the-board, glowing reviews, including a surprising rave in "The New York Post," **Tartan Films**' "**12:08 East of Bucharest**," Romanian filmmaker **Corneliu Porumboiu**'s funny tale of small-town residents remembering their roles in the overthrow of dictator **Nicolae Ceausescu**, earned \$10,108 in its second weekend at New York's Film Forum. "12:08" dropped just 12% from its debut weekend; proof of its incredible, word-of-mouth following. Tartan loses its exclusive slot at the Film Forum Wednesday but plans a slow roll out of "12:08" throughout the summer.

Collecting \$660,278 from an aggressive, second-weekend expansion of 77 locations, the foreign-language winner was **Picturehouse Films**' French-language, **Edith Piaf** drama "**La Vie En Rose**." "La Vie En Rose," featuring **Marion Cotillard** as Piaf, tallied a \$8,575 per-screen average with New York's Paris Theater increasing its previous weekend box office by 15%. 'La Vie En Rose" adds 38 screens Friday, expanding to new markets including Seattle and Atlanta.

Still strong after five weeks is **Fox Searchlight**'s Dublin-set musical romance "**Once**," which gathered \$543,334 from 120 screens. "Once" has a cumulative box office of \$2,503, 419.

Looking ahead, with **Paramount Vantage**'s **Angelina Jolie** drama "**A Mighty Heart**" and **John Dahl**'s hit-man comedy "**You Kill Me**" playing mostly conventional multiplexes, smaller, adult-oriented films like Magnolia Pictures' "**Broken English**," **Zoe Cassavetes**' likable romantic comedy, may find room to grow art-house audiences. From **Kino International**, director **Pascale Ferran**'s "**Lady Chatterley**," a sexy adaptation of **D.H. Lawrence**'s classic novel, premieres in New York. Far less arty is New Zealand director **Jonathan King**'s killer sheep, horror comedy "**Black Sheep**", opening in New York and Los Angeles from **IFC First Take**. When it comes to competing against Angelina Jolie, monster sheep may be counter-programming at its best.

Steve Ramos is a Cincinnati based writer.

indieWIRE:BOT tracks independent/specialty releases compiled from **Rentrak Theatrical**, which collects studio reported data as well as box-office figures from North American theatre locations. To be included in the indieWIRE Box Office Chart, distributors must submit information about their films to Rentrak at **studiogrosses@rentrak.com** by the end of the day each Monday.

(posted on Jun 20, 2007 at 11:25AM | filed under Box Office)

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