



**Telefilm Canada press conference
Theatrical Feature-Length Documentary Pilot Program**

Banff World Television Festival

Introductory remarks delivered by

Wayne Clarkson, Executive Director, Telefilm Canada

Banff, June 14, 2005 at 10:00 AM

Good morning one and all – ladies and gentlemen – and documentary filmmakers,

We are all aware of the extraordinary success feature-length documentaries have enjoyed over the past few years... *Spellbound*; *Capturing the Friedmans*; *The Fog of War*; *Super Size Me*; *The Control Room*; *The Corporation*; *Ce qu'il reste de nous*; *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Journey of Roméo Dallaire*; and *The Take*.

These wonderful films – Canadian and international – have attracted considerable critical acclaim and garnered remarkable box-office results – with *Fahrenheit 9/11* taking top spot at over \$204 million worldwide and \$18.2 million in Canada alone.

One might ask – why documentaries? Why now?

In a world where eating bugs is considered “reality” TV, the documentary remains not only an art form, but also an agent of social change that can truly delve into the human experience in all its diversity.

There is a desire by discerning audiences around the world for ideas, issues and subjects that are relevant and insightful, and presented in a thoughtful and entertaining way that is more than a five-second shock talk of “he said/you said.”

I was approached the first week on the job by documentary filmmakers and their associations in English and French Canada asking – no asserting – that Telefilm establish a long-form documentary program.

This “encouragement” became more focused at the Hot Docs summit in Toronto in April.

The challenge was to find the money without taking it from the Canada Feature Film Fund – without taking it from Peter to pay Paul.

I am therefore pleased to announce that Telefilm Canada, with the participation of the CBC, will establish a feature-length documentary pilot program for documentaries destined for theatrical release.

This co-venture also marks a first-time collaboration for our two organizations.

A one-year pilot project for 2005-2006, the Theatrical Feature-Length Documentary Pilot Program is the result of consultations with the industry.

Telefilm's \$1.5-million contribution – divided two-thirds English and one-third French – will have three components: development, production completion financing.

In addition, the CBC will contribute \$500,000 towards English-language production projects.

As I stated, since my arrival at Telefilm, I have been privy to many impassioned debates about the desire for dedicated financing for theatrical feature-length documentaries.

With the success of works like *The Corporation* and *Shake Hands with the Devil*, which by the way took home Sundance's first two world documentary audience awards, it's clear that Canadian documentaries are taking the spotlight.

We want to bring long-term stability to this genre and are confident, that with the renewal of the Canada Feature Film Fund and new dollars dedicated to feature documentaries, the industry can continue to achieve commercial and critical success.

Telefilm is looking forward to the Documentary Advisory Group's business plan, and moving forward on its recommendations that could include targeting a greater level of resources in support of documentaries for theatrical release.

Finally, let me say how delighted we are to have the CBC join us in this venture. My thanks to Richard Stursberg and Slawko Klymkiw on their commitment to giving documentary filmmakers the necessary resources to make their stories.

If you would like to know more about this program, my colleagues Karen Franklin, Director of English Operations, and Nancy Roch, Director of the Television Business Unit and French Markets Policy Advisor, are available to answer your questions.

Thank you.