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Reinventing: Anchor Entertainment goes independent

By Andrew Jeffrey October 27, 2022



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In this series, Realscreen spotlights producers who are reinventing their approaches to their craft — through revamping their business models, exploring new genres of unscripted and non-fiction content, moving into multi-platform territory, or all of the above. Here, we talk to **Ethan Goldman** of Anchor Entertainment about his company's move to go independent this year.

Launched in 2018 as the entertainment arm of global creative agency Anchor Worldwide, Anchor Entertainment — headed by president and veteran producer Ethan Goldman (pictured) — is stepping out on its own this fall as an independent (with aspirations of super-indiedom) to continue its mission of producing director-driven titles.

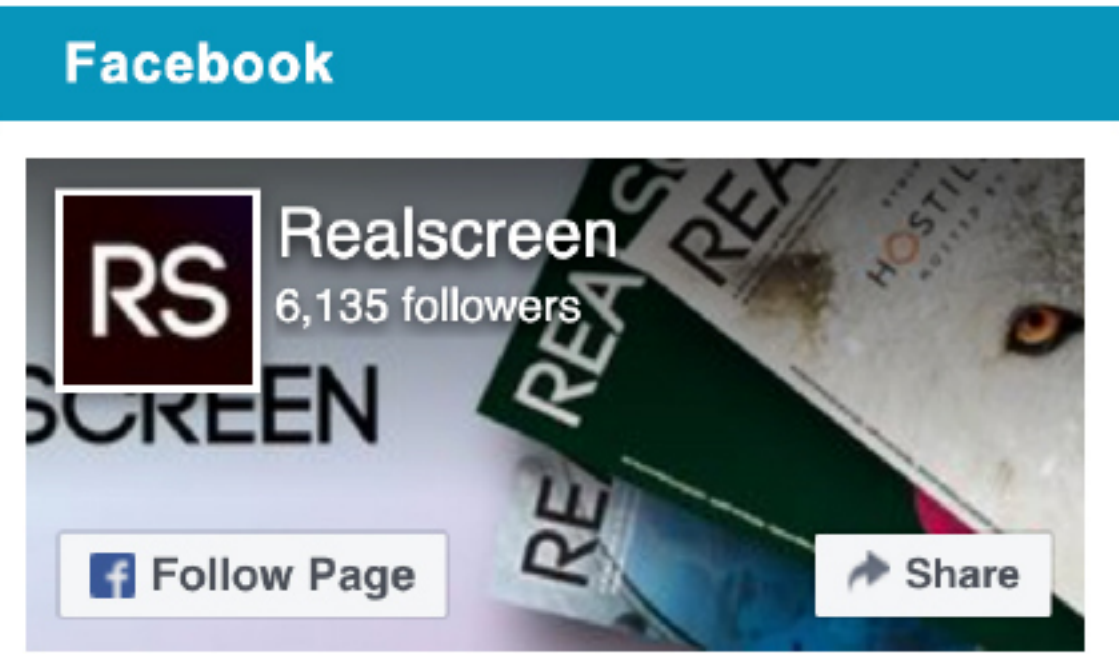
The company's launch was bolstered by a production partnership with BBC Worldwide, which has thus far resulted in titles such as *Rebel Hearts* (Discovery+), *Undercurrent: The Disappearance of Kim Wall* (HBO Max), *The Lost Kitchen* (Magnolia) and *Model America* (MSNBC).

"We're not looking to become a factory that's cranking stuff out. We're not looking to be a company that just sells shows to build revenue. Everything that we do is thoughtful and strategic," Goldman says.

Since the very beginning, Goldman's motivation in running Anchor Entertainment has been to provide a light, collaborative touch that is less restrictive on filmmakers. Early on, the prodco operated with just a handful of employees, bolstered by a team at Anchor that wasn't wholly dedicated to the production arm.

Likewise, Goldman says that going independent was always the long-term vision for the prodco. The hope going forward is that filmmakers, journalists and experts whom the company wants to work with on premium doc projects will be

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to work with on premium doc projects will be able to see that Anchor Entertainment is its own, self-sustaining entity.

“When it became clear that we were solvent and generating revenue, that allowed us to break off. It just made sense for us to re-establish so we could further expand,” Goldman says.

“Had there been more traffic at the intersection of brands and premium content, I think there would have been more synergy for us to work together [with Anchor Worldwide],” he continues. “But we weren’t finding there was a real business in utilizing brand money to tell stories that wouldn’t necessarily be seen as branded content.”

The goal now, Goldman says, is for Anchor to grow its team so that it can produce more titles without reducing the time and effort that are put into its projects. That [expansion](#) has been highlighted recently by the addition of Goldman’s longtime collaborator Keayr Braxton as senior vice president of current productions, development executive Dan Baglio as senior vice president of development, and Sam DeVaney as manager of development. The additions to the development team are especially key, Goldman says, to ensure Anchor can work on even more titles and expand its presence in the premium non-fiction industry.

End of Sentence, an [upcoming true-crime docuseries](#) that Anchor is working on with Academy Award-winning filmmaker Errol Morris, who is executive producing, is one new title that Goldman says is emblematic of the slate he envisions for the company. The series is based on journalist Barbara Bradley Hagerty’s reporting for *The Atlantic* on Benjamine Spencer, a Black man who served 34 years of a life sentence for a murder he maintains he didn’t commit. Zo Wesson (*The Real World*, *Monica: Still Standing*) was tapped to direct the series.

“We had a piece of heralded journalism, an association with one of the longest-running and most respected publications in our country, a director who had a vision for this project, and then the crown jewel of Errol Morris boarding the project to help us take something else that was very important, but maybe needed the extra sheen in order for it to catch the eye of a number of premium networks,” Goldman says.

“It is a tenet of Anchor to either have a filmmaker drive the vision, a journalist drive the research or investigation, whether in front of the camera or behind, or an expert ground the series so that we are getting a vérité perspective of how that expert works.”

TAGS:
Anchor Entertainment, Anchor Worldwide, Dan Baglio, End of Sentence, Errol Morris, Ethan Goldman, Keayr Braxton, Sam DeVaney, Zo Wesson

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