



AGENT OF CHANGE:

TALENT AGENCIES IN THE  
TRANSFORMATION OF THE FILM  
INDUSTRY

MARCH 7, 2014

USC SCHOOL OF CINEMATIC ARTS  
ROOM 108

*Agent of Change* is a collaborative event bringing established practitioners who represent some of the biggest names in Hollywood together with expert scholars: they will discuss the recent transformations of talent agencies, their role and key power in the making of artistic careers and products, in the light of the more long-term evolution of the industry.

In the morning, two Q&A sessions will take place, each featuring a prominent figure of the agency business: drawing on their experience of running a core agency, they will share their understanding of the big-scale changes currently happening in the industry, and their effects on the practice of "agenting" as well as how they affect talent and projects.

During the afternoon panel, agents working in different key sectors (digital media, independent film, representation of star-actors and directors) at several of the major agencies will exchange with scholars and with the audience about the ins and outs of their relationships with artists and production professionals.

This workshop is a unique occasion to learn about what happens behind-the-scenes in Hollywood, to better understand how movies come to life and how artists find success.

## Program:

### Morning, 10am-12:30pm: *Creative Agenting*

10am: **Opening & Welcome** by Michael Renov (Vice Dean of the School of Cinematic Arts)

10:30: **Introduction** by Violaine Roussel

**11am-11:45am:** A conversation with **Jeff Berg** (Chairman, Resolution)  
**Moderators:** Michael Curtin (UCSB) and Violaine Roussel (CNRS)

**11:45am-12:30pm:** A conversation with **Nick Stevens** (Talent agent, WME)  
**Moderators:** Tom Kemper (USC) and Jennifer Holt (UCSB)

### Afternoon, 2-6pm: *"Ménage à trois:" Agents, Talents, Producers*

*Coffee service in the lobby near room 108*

**2pm-4pm:** Roundtable with **Bob Bookman** (Agent at Paradigm), **Tory Metzger** (President of Lava Bear Films, and previously an agent at Creative Artists Agency for 18 years), **Keyvan Peymani** (Head of the Digital Strategy Division at ICM Partners), **Rena Ronson** (Head of the UTA Independent Film Group).  
**Moderators:** Michael Renov (USC), Denise Bielby (UCSB)

*4:15-6pm: Reception in the lobby near room 108*

*See participants' biographical sketches below.*

**Website:** <http://cinema.usc.edu/AgentOfChange>

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**Event location:** USC School of Cinematic Art (SCA) / 1st Floor, Room 108 (Ray Stark Family Theater)  
Maps: <http://cinema.usc.edu/about/directionsmaps.cfm>  
<http://web-app.usc.edu/maps/>

This event is co-sponsored by the USC School of Cinematic Arts, the French CNRS-CRESPPA (Sociological and Political Research Center of Paris) and the UCSB Carsey-Wolf Center. It received support from a Marie Curie Action of the Seventh Framework Program of the European Commission, as well as from the French Consulate in Los Angeles.

This event is free and open to the public.

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## AGENT OF CHANGE – SPEAKERS' BIOGRAPHIES

**JEFFREY BERG** is Chairman and Founder of Resolution. He began his career in 1969 as a literary and film agent at Creative Management Associates (CMA). Following CMA's merger with IFA, which created ICM, Berg ran the literary and motion picture department. He was appointed President and Chief Operating Officer in 1980, and became Chairman and Chief Executive Officer in 1985. Berg was part of a management team that took ICM private in a leveraged buyout financed by Chase Manhattan Bank and subsequently City National Bank. In 2005, Rizvi Traverse acquired ICM in a deal that brought in the first private equity investors to the agency business. In 2012, Mr. Berg and Rizvi Traverse sold their interest to the present ICM management group. In January 2013, Mr. Berg announced the formation of Resolution, a talent and literary agency, where he serves as Chairman. Resolution has offices in Los Angeles and New York.

Mr. Berg served as Co-Chairman of the California Information Technology Council. He has been a Director of Oracle Corp., since February 1997. He serves on the Board of Trustees and Board of Visitors of The Anderson School of Management at the University of California, Los Angeles. He served as a Member of the California Entertainment Commission and the President of the Executive Board of the College of Letters and Sciences at the University of California, Berkeley. He has also lectured on Management and Finance in the arts at The London School of Economics where he was a member of its Court of Governors. Mr. Berg has been involved in the production financing and sale of over 500 films. In 1991, he was awarded the Cavaliere Ufficiale of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Italy. Mr. Berg holds a BA in English from the University of California, Berkeley and a Master of Liberal Arts from the University of Southern California.

**BOB BOOKMAN** has been a senior motion picture literary and director's agent at Paradigm since March, 2013. Prior to that, he spent 27 years at Creative Artists as an agent and a partner in the agency. Earlier in his career, he was executive vice-president, production at Columbia Pictures; vice-president in charge of production at ABC Motion Pictures; and an agent at ICM.

Mr. Bookman's current community activities include his serving as a member of the Board of Governors of Cedars-Sinai Medical Center; as Chairman Emeritus of The Fraternity of Friends of the Los Angeles Center for the Performing Arts; the Yale Law School Campaign Committee; the Yale Development Board; Eliezer, the Jewish Society at Yale; as well as the Leadership Council of the New York Stem Cell Foundation. He is also President Emeritus of the French-American Chamber of Commerce of Los Angeles and was a longtime member of the Board of Directors of the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Board of Directors of Los Angeles Opera, of the Board of Advisors of Doctors Without Borders/USA (Médecins Sans Frontières); and of the Board of Trustees of Pitzer College.

Mr. Bookman graduated from the University of California's history honors program with "great distinction" in 1968. He received his J.D. degree from Yale Law School in 1972. He has two sons, Gary (28) and Brian (21), and lives in Los Angeles, California with his fiancée Debbie Wambach and his Pekipoo, Smarty Pants.

**TORY METZGER** has been President of Lava Bear Films, a production and film financing company, since 2011. Before joining Lava Bear Films, she was the President of Production at MRC Studios where she worked with such filmmakers as M. Night Shyamalan, David Fincher and Seth MacFarlane. Prior to her years as an executive, Ms. Metzger was an agent at Creative Artists Agency for 18 years. At CAA, she represented such artists as Tom Cruise, Ang Lee, Cameron Crowe, John Wells, Edgar Wright, Nicole Holofcener, and Robert Benton. Ms. Metzger is a member of The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and she serves on The Advisory Board of the UCSB Carsey-Wolf Center. She was named to The Hollywood Reporter's annual "Women In Entertainment Power 100" in 2006 and 2007, and was

previously recognized in Filmmaker Magazine as one the leading agents in the independent film industry.

**KEYVAN PEYMANI** is the Managing Director of the Digital Strategy Division at ICM Partners, a talent and literary agency representing clients in the fields of motion pictures, television, publishing, music, theater branded entertainment and digital media. Mr. Peymani launched ICM Partners' digital strategy division in 2012, with a focus on expanding the agency's efforts across all aspects of the technology and digital sectors, bringing innovative opportunities to the agency and its clients, including the creation of new businesses and investments with long-term benefits. A seasoned digital executive, Mr. Peymani serves as a strategic advisor for digital marketing and interactive entertainment, leveraging the agency's assets to deepen ICM Partners' foothold at the convergence of entertainment and technology.

Prior to joining ICM Partners, Mr. Peymani served in senior executive roles across the media and entertainment industry. At Warner Bros., he served as Vice President, Direct to Consumer Business Planning and Operations, where he led strategy, operations, planning and development for the DTC division within Digital Distribution. In addition, he had oversight of the Media Manufacture on Demand, Mobile Applications and Out My Window business lines and worked on industry-leading forays into the first fully digital movie applications, the first screenings of movies through Facebook and the acquisition of Flixster. Prior to that, he served as the head of content acquisitions for catalog content and led the wholesales efforts at Netflix. Mr. Peymani also led alternative business development for Disney's music group and was the Chief Operating Officer of Nettwerk Music Group.

Mr. Peymani serves on the faculty of USC's Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, covering entertainment and emerging business models. He began his career leading his own new media company and has advised Fortune 100 companies around the world.

**RENA RONSON** heads the Independent Film Group at the United Talent Agency (UTA). As one of the industry's pre-eminent packaging and finance executives in independent film, her focus is on global film finance, distribution and marketing strategies for independent and co-financed features, as well as consulting financiers and corporate clients within the entertainment space. Rena oversees an indie group known for packaging and representing many high-profile and critically praised independently financed films from a diverse range of American and international filmmakers including Wes Anderson, James Ponsoldt, Joel and Ethan Coen, Noah Baumbach, Lynn Shelton, David Michod, Sean Durkin and Asghar Farhadi, to name a few. She is a regular speaker on both film and distribution panels, and serves on the board for the Women In Film organization. In 2006, she received "The Independent Hero Award" by the Creative Coalition and in 2008, was presented with "The Business Leadership Award" (Women In Film). Prior to joining UTA, Ronson was co-head of William Morris Independent where she helped secure financing and distribution for more than 150 films and was involved in over 500 titles, including library packages, feature films and documentaries. During her 11-year career at William Morris, she put together creative financing structures and represented films from a diverse range of directors including Alfonso and Carlos Cuaron, Gus Van Sant, Woody Allen, Jason Reitman, Marc Forster, Dito Montiel and Miguel Arteta, as well as independent features. In 2008, Ronson was instrumental in putting together a partnership with Screen Capital International to form the film financing entity Incentive Filmed Entertainment. Additionally, she helped raise funding for established production entities including the Donner Company and Mark Canton Company. Prior to joining The William Morris Agency, Ronson ran Lakeshore International, a division of Lakeshore Entertainment she helped establish and where she oversaw its 350-picture library.

**NICK STEVENS** is a talent agent at William Morris Endeavor (WME). Prior to that, he has been a managing director of United Talent Agency (UTA), where he started in 1991 and spent 17 years. He ran the UTA Talent Department from 1995-2008. Thereafter, he joined Endeavor that later merged with WMA to form WME.

Mr. Stevens graduated from the Boston University Film School. He first started in the mailroom of the William Morris Agency and was promoted in the WMA music department, before becoming a talent agent at Harris & Golberg (which was to be part of Innovative Artists).

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**DENISE BIELBY** is Professor of Sociology at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) and holds an affiliated appointment in the Department of Film & Media Studies. Her research focuses on cultural sociology and gender, work, and family. The author of numerous scholarly publications, her work has appeared in journals that include *American Sociological Review*, *American Journal of Sociology*, *Gender & Society*, *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, *Contexts*, *American Behavioral Scientist*, *Sociologie du Travail*, *Journal of Family Issues*, *Poetics*, *Journal of Popular Culture*, *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, *Television & New Media*, and *Popular Communication*. She is co-author of *Global TV: Exporting Television and Culture in the World Market* (NYU Press, 2008) and *Soap Fans: Pursuing Pleasure and Making Meaning in Everyday Life* (Temple University Press, 1995) with C. Lee Harrington. She is co-editor of *Aging, Media, and Culture* (Lexington Press, 2014) with C. Lee Harrington and Anthony Bardo, and of *Popular Culture: Production and Consumption* (Blackwell Publishers, 2000) with C. Lee Harrington. A recipient of national awards for her research, she has been funded by the National Science Foundation and the National Institute of Mental Health, and was statistical consultant to the Writers Guild of America, West. She has served on NSF panels and editorial boards of the discipline's leading professional journals, including *American Journal of Sociology*, *Gender & Society*, *Contexts*, *Rose Monographs*, and *American Sociological Review*, where she also was Deputy Editor. In 1995, she received the University of California President's Award for Excellence in Mentorship of Undergraduate Research and was a 2005 recipient of an Outstanding Faculty Award from the Office of Residential Life. She was elected to the discipline's distinguished research honorary, the Sociological Research Association, in 2000.

**MICHAEL CURTIN** is the Duncan and Suzanne Mellichamp Professor of Global Media, and Professor of Film and Media Studies at UCSB. Formerly the director of Global Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Curtin also has held teaching or research appointments at Northwestern University, Indiana University, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the Institute of Ethnology at Academia Sinica, and the Center for the Humanities at Wesleyan University. His books include *Redeeming the Wasteland: Television Documentary and Cold War Politics*, *Playing to the World's Biggest Audience: The Globalization of Chinese Film and TV*, *The American Television Industry* (co-author), and *Reorienting Global Communication: Indian and Chinese Media Beyond Borders* (co-editor). He is currently at work on *Media Capital: The Cultural Geography of Globalization*. With Paul McDonald, he is co-editor of the "International Screen Industries" book series for the British Film Institute and with Paul S. N. Lee, he is co-editor of the *Chinese Journal of Communication*. He is also co-editor of the forthcoming anthology, *Distribution Revolution: Conversations about the Digital Future of Film and Television*, University of California Press.

**JENNIFER HOLT** is Associate Professor of Film and Media Studies at UC Santa Barbara, and Director of the Media Industries Project at the Carsey-Wolf Center. She specializes in the study of media industries and regulatory policy, and is currently working on a book about cloud policy and digital media infrastructure. She is the co-editor of *Media Industries: History, Theory, and Method* (Blackwell, 2009) and *Connected Viewing* (Routledge, 2013); and author of *Empires of Entertainment* (Rutgers UP, 2011). Her articles can be found in various journals and anthologies including *Cinema Journal*, *Jump Cut*, and *Moving Data*. She is a founding member of the editorial collective for the *Media Industries* journal.

**TOM KEMPER** is Associate Professor of Cinema Practice at USC. He is the author of *Hidden Talent: The Emergence of Hollywood Agents*, which received a 2011 Outstanding Academic Title award from the

American Library Association. A second book will chart agents from the 1950s through the 1970s. His current research interests include the relationships between Supreme Court cases on the major civil rights issues and film censorship decisions in the 1950s and 1960s; international art cinema; and contemporary animation. He is currently finishing a manuscript on *Toy Story*, commissioned for the British Film Institute's Film Classics series.

**MICHAEL RENOV** is Professor of Critical Studies and Vice Dean for Academic Affairs at USC. He is the author of *Hollywood's Wartime Woman: Representation and Ideology* and *The Subject of Documentary*, editor of *Theorizing Documentary*, and co-editor of *Resolutions: Contemporary Video Practices*, *Collecting Visible Evidence*, *The SAGE Handbook of Film Studies* and *Cinema's Alchemist: The Films of Peter Forgacs*. In 1993, Renov co-founded *Visible Evidence*, a series of international and highly interdisciplinary documentary studies conferences that have, to date, been held on four continents. He is one of three general editors for the *Visible Evidence* book series at the University of Minnesota Press, which has published 25 volumes on various aspects of nonfiction media since 1997. In 2005, he co-programmed the 51st annual Robert Flaherty Seminar, a week-long gathering of documentary filmmakers, curators and educators, creating 20 screening programs and filmmaker dialogues on the theme "Cinema and History." In addition to curating documentary programs around the world, he has served as a jury member at documentary festivals including Sundance, Silverdocs, the Buenos Aires International Independent Film Festival, Brazil's It's All True and the International Environmental Festival of Film and Video, also in Brazil. He has taught graduate seminars at the University of Stockholm and Tel Aviv University and has led documentary workshops in Jordan for the Royal Film Commission and in Cyprus. Renov's teaching and research interests include documentary theory, autobiography in film and video, video art and activism and representations of the Holocaust.

**VIOLAINE ROUSSEL** is Professor of Sociology at the University of Paris VIII and Adjunct Professor of Political Science at USC. She is also currently a Marie Curie European Fellow at the CRESPPA-CNRS (Centre de recherches sociologiques et politiques de Paris), as well as affiliated with the UCSB Carsey-Wolf Center. A former Fulbright Scholar, she started exploring the film and entertainment industries ten years ago with an extended work on arts and politics, focusing on the mobilization of American artists against the Iraq War. This research, based on over 100 interviews and on *in-situ* observations, has been published in the form of three books: *Voicing Dissent* (Routledge, 2010); *Arts and Politics. A French-American Perspective* (translated from French in the International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society, 2010); *Art vs War. Les artistes américains contre la guerre en Irak* (Presses de Sciences Po, 2011). Since 2011, she explores the role of talent agents in the film creation process and prepares several publications on "Hollywood behind-the-scenes" (including a book for the University of Chicago Press and an edited book, with Denise Bielby, for Lexington Books). She investigates how the relationships between talent representatives and film producers affect the making of movies and artistic careers.