

[INTRO MUSIC PLAYING]

DENNIS

When you're marketing movie, you never have enough money. So the challenge is

O'CONNOR:

to figure out what is the big hook of your movie, and how to best use the money you to have to market your film.

When we did the film *Winter's Bone*-- which starred Jennifer Lawrence, but at the time she'd only made one other movie and was not a movie star-- we looked at the film and we thought we had a great film. And the first thing we did was really start to think about the trailer and the movie poster and what they were going to convey. And we made a deliberate decision to not focus on the more rural, Appalachian, Ozark portions of the film, but of making it a mystery-thriller-- making it a story of a girl searching for her father who's gone missing and the town that's in and the danger she's in when she's looking for her father and asking questions she shouldn't be asking.

When you're making your movie, I think you want to think about what the audience is for the film, who's going to go see it. In independent films, we always say you shouldn't market to everybody, you should market to somebody. Every film has some sort of target audience. Whether it's an African American film or a gay film or urban New Yorkers-- figure out who that audience is. I think independent films tend to be more successful when they're for sort of niches than they are like a studio movie that's trying to hit everybody that's living in America.

And I would also do work in advance, if you can, to try to show to financiers and, later on, to distributors that there's a market for your movie. And that can come just from doing a great idea, from spending a little bit of money to create maybe a viral short or something like that. We just recently bought a film at Sundance called *Dear White People*. *Dear White People* originally started out as a 2 and 1/2 minute short film that the director, Justin Simien, created in the form of a concept trailer for his movie, which was for *Dear White People* but had not been filmed yet.

And he took the short and he put it online. And the short film started getting massive amounts of hits online, like millions of hits. And everybody in the distribution community took notice of this short. So when he was able to raise the money for the film, when it got to Sundance, this was a film that was on everybody's radar. And when we saw it, we already knew that there was an audience primed for this movie. Most independent films don't have 2 million people that have already seen a trailer. So combined with a film that he really delivered on, that was a great film-- that combined with the short film, we felt like we had a marketable movie in *Dear White People*. And that's an example-- that he didn't spend a lot of money making that short. There's no movie stars in it. It was just a great idea. And his great idea translated into people caring about it. I'm Dennis O'Connor and I run marketing for Roadside Attractions.

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