



## Late deals flood Sundance fest

By [STEVEN ZEITCHIK](#), [PAMELA MCCLINTOCK](#)



ThinkFilm picked up Ten Commandments spoof 'The Ten' on Friday.

Several deals sealed over the weekend capped an unusually busy Sundance Film Festival, which closed Sunday.

The Greek tragedy-inspired doc "Protagonist" was on the verge of closing a deal with IFC and Netflix's Red Envelope Entertainment label, with IFC thought to be controlling theatrical rights and Red Envelope overseeing homevid.

Deal, pegged in the low- to mid-six figures, is the first acquisition for both companies at the fest. Duo last year teamed to buy Maggie Gyllenhaal starrer "Sherrybaby."

On Friday, ThinkFilm acquired North American theatrical rights to "The Ten," the spoofy take on the Ten Commandments directed by David Wain ("Wet Hot American Summer").

Company will release the movie this summer.

ThinkFilm put the price at \$4.5 million, though execs from competing distributors who had inquired about rights thought the number might be smaller. Think has been eager to flex its muscle since being acquired by Capitol Films.

Pic, produced by City Lights Media, had drawn significant buzz ahead of its midnight preem on fest's first Friday but did not immediately land a deal.

And several previously hot pics did not sell as of the fest's close, including David Gordon Green drama "Snow Angels," Steve Berra's brooding Nebraska tale "The Good Life" and Brett Morgen's docu "Chicago 10."

Also, while distributors such as Think were thought to be circling Jake Paltrow's romantic laffer "The Good Night," it hadn't yet sold as of Sunday evening.

After a hot start for docs that saw Think buying "In the Shadow of the Moon" for \$2 million and Sony Pictures Classics snap up "My Kid Could Paint That" for \$1.8 million, the form cooled off.

That could change, however, since stylish Brazilian docu "Manda Bala" won the grand jury prize for American docu.

Pic, repped by Cinetic, is more likely to land a deal, as is the surprise grand jury winner for American drama, Christopher Zalla's immigrant thriller "Padre Nuestro," which also has not sold to date.

Also expected to land a deal after winning the audience award for world dramatic feature is "Once," a music-themed pic featuring members of, and songs from, Irish rock band the Frames.

Many of the film's foreign rights have been sold to Summit Entertainment.

With more than a dozen movies selling in the seven figures, fest was among the most active in recent years, in terms of both number of buys and dollar amounts.

"The level of commitment that buyers are making exceeds any festival in recent memory in terms of the breadth and scope of their investment," Sundance Film Fest director Geoff Gilmore told *Daily Variety*. "Companies aren't just purchasing one film, they are going onto the next deal."

Fox Searchlight and the Weinstein Co. were among the biggest movers and shakers. Searchlight bought two movies on its own ("Joshua" and "Waitress"), while TWC picked up rights to John Cusack widower drama "Grace Is Gone" and is thought to have co-acquired the campy "Teeth" as well as Plum Pictures' romantic comedy "Dedication."

The two also collaborated on immigrant drama "The Same Moon" for a reported \$5 million.

All told, the two companies spent more than \$20 million at the festival.

Par Vantage was also a big player, as the John Leshner division had the distinction of the biggest buy of the fest when it agreed to pay an estimated \$7.75 million for nearly all worldwide rights to quirky British pic "Son of Rambow."

Company also bought hip-hop-themed "How She Move" from the same sales rep, Celluloid Dreams.

Magnolia also made two buys, spending between \$2 million and \$3 million collectively on horror pic "The Signal" and twisted-love doc "Crazy Love."

Still, a number of distribs did not make any buys during this year's fest, most notably Miramax, Picturehouse and Focus, though the first two companies screened previously acquired pics ("Eagle vs. Shark" and "Rocket Science," respectively), which garnered significant buzz.