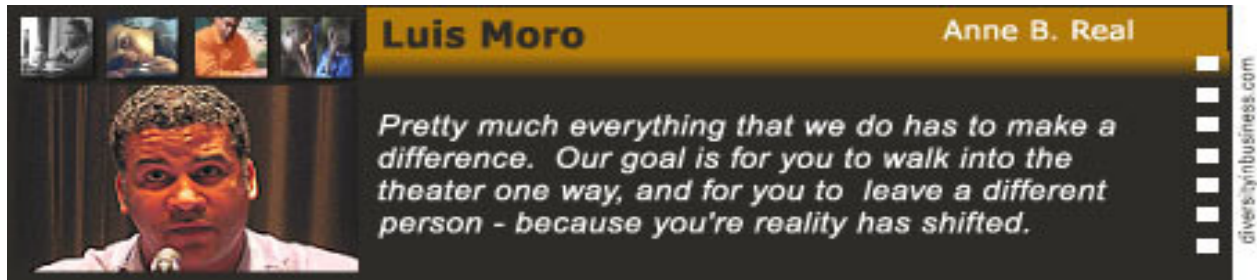


Chicago Film Festival Filmmaker Panel; by Dan Perkins



One of the most highly anticipated events of the Black Harvest International Festival of Film and Video is the annual panel discussion. Each year, a handful of filmmakers whose work appear in the festival discuss various aspects of independent filmmaking, distribution and marketing, or portrayals of Pan-African culture and experiences. This year, five independent filmmakers gathered on the first Saturday of the festival to share their personal experiences as they related to the featured topic: *How to Get Your Movie Made*. The panelists were **Couquie Hughes** ([If I Wuz Yo Gyr!](#)); **Luis Moro** ([Anne B. Real](#)); **Lynne A. Richardson** ([Short on Sugar](#)); **Yvonne Welbon** ([Sisters in Cinema](#)); and **Michael Skolnik** ([Hooked](#)).

The host and moderator of the discussions is **Sergio Sims**, a Chicago-based lecturer on film and a festival advisor. Sims asked the panelist a series of questions designed to reveal both the complexity of the creative process and the resolve and resourcefulness required to successfully complete an independent project. Each panelist had a noteworthy film or video in the festival and Sims was eager for the panelists to discuss the process by which they transformed their ideas into innovative visual works. Below are highlights from that discussion. Portions of the text have been edited to enhance the continuity and clarity of the ideas and statements.

Sims: Luis, how did *Anne B. Real* come to be?

Moro: There are two things in a script: there's obviously the idea and then there's the story.

Anne B. Real is about a female rapper who gets her inspiration through reading *The Diaries of Anne Frank*. My writing partner, **Lisa France**, and I were committed to working on a project that, quite frankly, made a difference. **Antonio Marcia**, had this script called *Anne B. Real*. It was about this female who – as I said – gets inspired by reading the diaries of Anne Frank. The original script had everything from beat downs to the N-word, cursing, gratuitous sex, violence, a teacher killing a student, rape – all kinds of stuff. The argument was that that's what urban movies are like, and that that's what the ghetto is like. I know stuff happens, but the script made it seem like it was an everyday, all the time, across the street kind of thing.

Lisa and I bought the script and got rid of just about everything except for the idea, because the idea was great: a girl – in the hood - gets inspired by reading the diaries of Anne Frank. Then, we began building a story upon that idea.

Pretty much everything that we do has to make a difference. Our goal is for you to walk into the theater one way, and for you to leave a different person – because your reality has shifted. We want you to start taking actions that you might have never taken because you've seen our movie.

With *Anne B. Real*, we came up with a story to empower everyone – especially young adults – to take on life from a whole new perspective. So, to answer your question about the process, I ask myself, how does this film make a difference, how does this scene make a difference?

