IN DEVELOPMENT FEATURE FILM ADVENTURE COMEDY

The Mitzvah

One spare Torah. Four countries. One very reluctant hero.

BOARDING PASS PASSENGER HOLDS OWN SEAT

PASSENGER

SEFER TORAH

One scroll. Surplus. Handle with extreme care.

NYC ▸ LAX ▸ TYO ▸ SHA ▸ KAIFENG

ESCORT	SEAT	FINAL LEG
CAL	Next to Cal	Overland

The Mitzvah

FROM

New York

TO

Kaifeng, China



LOGLINE

A middle-aged man, recently unemployed and quietly estranged from his family and faith, is tasked with bringing a Torah to a small, rediscovered Jewish community in China. **An errand he never wanted** becomes the journey that brings him home to who he used to be.

THE STORY

A delivery job with a passport

For centuries, especially across Eastern Europe, many Jewish communities were too poor or too persecuted to own a Torah scroll, and shared a single one between them. Today, some American synagogues have so many surplus scrolls they use them as decoration.

So when a small, historic Jewish community is confirmed in Kaifeng, China, Cal's rabbi sees an opportunity: send one of the spares. The problem is who he sends it with. Cal is a recently laid-off, checked-out husband and father who hasn't set foot in a synagogue in years.

Cajoled out the door by his teenage kids and his no-nonsense, high-powered attorney wife, Cal sets off with the scroll strapped into the seat beside him. Literally: airlines won't hold a seat empty, so the Torah has to fly as a passenger. A simple delivery spirals into a transcontinental misadventure, from New York to Los Angeles to Tokyo to Shanghai, where his hired guide turns out to be a translator who has already gambled away their travel money to an enormous, unreadable Scotsman.

THE OBSTACLE

A Torah can't fly alone. It needs a seat, a fare, and a Jew beside it.

THE GUIDE

A drunk translator who just lost their travel funds at cards.

THE WILDCARD

A towering Scotsman, now owed a debt he intends to collect.

THE JOURNEY

One Torah. One reluctant courier. No idea what he's in for.

1 NYC

New York

Home, and the push out the door.

2 LAX

Los Angeles

First flight, first fight for a seat.

3 TYO

Tokyo

Layover chaos begins.

4 SHA

Shanghai

The guide, the cards, the Scotsman.

5 By road

Kaifeng

The community he came to find.

A personal, physical and metaphysical journey, with a travelogue through western and central China along the way.

WHO'S ON THIS TRIP

Passenger manifest

NAME	ROLE	NOTE

Cal	ESCORT	Recently unemployed, quietly estranged from family and faith. Reluctant, grounded, and about to be tested.
The Rabbi	SENDER	Sets the whole misadventure in motion with one very well-intentioned request.
The Wife	HOME BASE	A high-powered attorney who cajoles him into going, and holds the family together while he's gone.
The Kids	HOME BASE	His teenagers, who push him out the door. Equal parts encouragement and exasperation.
The Translator	GUIDE	The hired guide in Shanghai. Charming, unreliable, and already out of money.
The Scotsman	CREDITOR	An enormous stranger who just won big at cards, and isn't done with this trip yet.

TONE & COMPARABLE TITLES

A reluctant-journey buddy film

A fish-out-of-water adventure comedy in the tradition of the reluctant-journey buddy film, grounded by real cultural history and a specific, underexplored world.

The Bucket List

2007 · Warner Bros.

Budget	$45M

Worldwide	$175M

Due Date

2010 · Warner Bros.

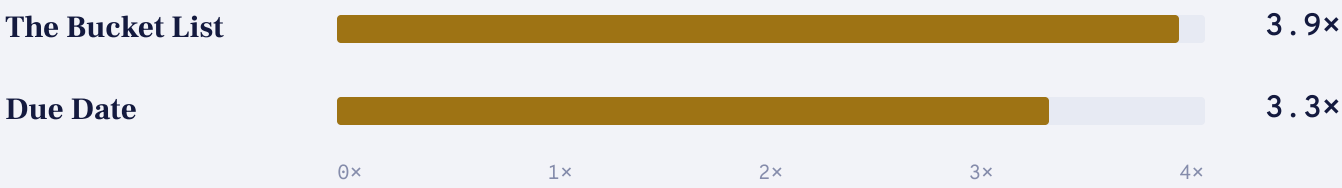
Budget	$65M
Worldwide	$212M

An American Pickle

2020 · HBO Max

Release	Direct to streaming
Route	Sold to HBO Max

RETURN ON BUDGET: WORLDWIDE GROSS ÷ PRODUCTION BUDGET



WHY IT MATTERS FOR BUYERS

This genre has a repeatable commercial template at low-to-mid budgets, with theatrical and direct-to-streaming paths both proven by recent comps. A lower-risk profile for a specific, high-concept story.

WHY THIS, WHY NOW

Warm, specific, and nobody else has it

A cultural moment for specific Jewish stories

Audiences and platforms are actively seeking authentic Jewish narratives beyond the Holocaust, with genuine warmth and humour.

A genuinely underexplored hook

Very few films touch the Kaifeng Jewish community or the practice of shared Torah scrolls. Strong differentiation and press potential.

A built-in international footprint

Stops in Tokyo, Shanghai and China give the story natural reach into Asian markets and festival circuits beyond a typical U.S. indie comedy.

A proven commercial template

Reluctant-journey comedies reliably outperform their budgets, in both theatrical and direct-to-streaming models.

THE HISTORY BEHIND THE STORY

The comedy is invented. The world is real.

That authenticity is a selling point in its own right, for press, for cultural partners, and for festival programmers.

SCARCITY & SHARING

Well into the 20th century, many Jewish communities, particularly across Eastern Europe, were too poor or too persecuted to own their own Torah scroll, and shared a single one between congregations.

SURPLUS TODAY

Decades of donations and consolidations left some American synagogues with far more scrolls than they can use. Some now serve purely decorative purposes.

KAIFENG, CHINA

A small Jewish community with roots going back centuries has persisted in Kaifeng, largely forgotten by the wider Jewish world until relatively recently. A real, ongoing story of rediscovery.

AUDIENCE & DISTRIBUTION PATH

Who it's for, and how it gets to them

TARGET AUDIENCE

- Adults 25 to 54 drawn to warm, character-driven comedy
- Jewish and broader faith-curious audiences looking for specific, modern stories
- Festival audiences on the Jewish film festival circuit
- Crossover appeal to Asian-American audiences through the Tokyo, Shanghai and Kaifeng settings

SUGGESTED DISTRIBUTION PATH

- Festival launch on the Jewish film festival circuit to build press and word of mouth
- Limited theatrical or day-and-date release, sized to budget
- PVOD and SVOD as the primary recoupment path, consistent with recent comps at this budget level
- Cultural and community partnerships with synagogues and Jewish organizations for grassroots promotion

PRODUCTION SNAPSHOT

Ready to package

FORMAT **Feature film**	GENRE **Adventure comedy**
STAGE	BUDGET TARGET

Script complete, in development	**$2M to $8M**

We're bringing *The Mitzvah* to market to connect with distributors and sales agents ahead of packaging, and want to hear from partners who respond to specific, character-driven comedy with real cultural texture and international scope.

The Mitzvah

Let's talk about bringing this one home.

PRODUCTION COMPANY

Sweetstone Films

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