

# The Stephen King Rules- Dollar Baby Film Festival

E Emily Bishop Apr 23 · 4 min read



The Stephen King Rules Dollar Baby Film Festival runs from April 23–25. 29 short films will be shown with a Q&A between films with the directors of each short. // Photo courtesy of Barker Street Cinema

The Stephen King Rules- Dollar Baby Film Festival will be streaming 29 short films based on the work of Stephen King.

The three-day film festival starts at 3pm PST on Friday, April 23. The festival is organized by James Douglas and Norm Coyne of Barker Street Cinema, a film production company based in Canada, and will be streamed on the company's [YouTube Channel](#) and [Vimeo Page](#).

“It’s free, for one thing, and you don’t have to go through any weird login rigmarole or anything,” said Douglas. “It’s just going to be happening in real time.”

Usually, Dollar Baby films are not allowed to be shown online in their entirety, but due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, an exception was made.

The Dollar Baby is an arrangement by Stephen King where for one dollar, he licenses the film rights to aspiring filmmakers for some of his short stories that do not have film adaptations.

Douglas and Coyne approached Margaret Morehouse, who oversees the Dollar Baby Program and is also one of King’s personal assistants, about the possibility of an online film festival.

“She got the permission, like within an hour, they were like ‘you can go ahead and do this,’” Douglas said.

The list of titles available for adaptation and the necessary forms to apply for licensing rights can be found on [Stephen King’s website](#).

Although this is not the first film festival to show only Dollar Babies, it is the first to do so online. Douglas said the event is only happening online because of the kindhearted nature of Stephen King, and lawyers who have decided that due to the circumstances of the pandemic, the films can be shown online. But he feels a compelling argument could be made for this to be an annual event.

Shawn Lealos, author of “Dollar Deal: The Stephen King Dollar Baby Filmmakers,” said that many well-known directors and writers in the entertainment industry have a connection to Dollar Baby films, the most well-known being Frank Darabont, director of “The Shawshank Redemption,” “The Green Mile,” and “The Mist.” Darabont’s first experience adapting the work of King for the screen was in 1983 with “The Woman in the Room,” which was a Dollar Baby film.

“A lot of these filmmakers I’ve talked to, they’re still doing it. They’ve made it. And it’s really inspirational,” Lealos said.

Lealos is himself a Dollar Baby filmmaker, having adapted “I Know What You Need” into a short film in 2001.

The films being shown at Stephen King Rules range in runtime from 10 minutes to over an hour. Angry Mule Production’s “A Very Tight Place” falls in the middle, with a runtime of around 20 minutes.

The film is based on King’s story of the same name, and follows a man trapped in a portable toilet by his neighbor following a property dispute.

“It’s gross, but it’s a thriller. I mean, it’s got everything,” said Stephen Tramontana, the film’s director. “It’s a really fun story.”

This is the second short film Tramontana has done. He said “A Very Tight Place” was the only story he had any interest in adapting and was surprised when he found it was available through the Dollar Baby Program.

Tramontana’s film is one of two adaptations of King’s short story that will be shown at the festival.

Tramontana said getting to meet other Dollar Baby filmmakers has been an unexpected joy of the filmmaking process. There is pride in talking about not only the finished product, but the mutual experiences of adapting the works

“I feel like there’s a real fraternity of Dollar Baby filmmakers,” Tramontana said. “It’s a really fun community to be involved in.”

On the longer side of films being shown at the festival is Barker Street Cinema’s “The Doctor’s Case” which has a runtime of around 65 minutes.

The film is based on King’s story of the same name, which is a work based on the Sherlock Holmes stories by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

Douglas said it was important to preserve as much of King’s actual writing as possible when making the move from paper to screen.

“I think so many times when people adapt King’s work, they take the story, the basic plot, and the names of the characters. And then they kind of throw out everything that really makes the Stephen King book worth reading,” Douglas said.

Douglas said the film festival is an opportunity for as many people as possible to see the work of these emerging filmmakers and to experience the stories of Stephen King. The film festival being online brings the stories to a wider audience who might not be as familiar with King’s work.

More information about the Stephen King Rules- Dollar Baby Film Festival can be found on [Barker Street Cinema’s website](#) and the [film festival’s twitter](#).