

For Immediate Release  
November 11, 2010

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## 2010 OREGON FILM AWARDS ANNOUNCES WINNERS

*Lily Erlinger's "Jesse's Tracks" triumphs with the Grand Jury Prize.*

*"Gabriel's Calling" written by Megan Breen wins top screenplay honors.*

The jury prizes and top award winners of the 2010 Oregon Film Awards were announced Wednesday, September 23rd. Top winners were selected in each of the main competitive categories along with Special Jury Awards, and winners in the four top tiers of recognition: Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze level achievements.

"Outstanding filmmaking makes for great competition," said Lloyd Bell, director of the Oregon Film Awards and the Oregon Film Festival. "It's our hope and mission to see that this well-earned recognition serves to find these amazing projects and talented filmmaker's the audience and film industry attention they so richly deserve."

A truly noteworthy year for the Oregon Film Awards; the competition received a diverse array of submissions representing storytellers in several countries around the world. Judging proved to be extremely difficult as there were so many distinctive, well-made and commendable projects. The Oregon Film Awards recognizes the very best in domestic and international independent cinema and screenwriting.

### **The 2010 Oregon Film Award Winners:**

The **Grand Jury Award** was awarded to **Jessie's Tracks** by Lily Erlinger (USA). A 15-year old deaf girl, Jesse, runs away from home to prove to her parents, and herself, that she is as capable as anyone else. She quickly finds herself out of cash and lonely, until she meets Scott, a 47-year old, never been married, recluse. Both alienated and misunderstood, they build a friendship and Jesse pushes the boundaries of affection and attraction turning the relationship into a mire of moral ambiguities and decisions. The relationship comes to a head when Jesse discovers the reason for Scott's bachelor status, and still cannot fathom his rejection of her advances.

A **Special Jury Award** was awarded to *A Far-Off Cry* by Claudia Adams (Pakistan). A story of parallels, of opposites – two planets forced off course by the filmmakers. The

parallel Pakistan worlds of the untouchables (street children addicted to solvents) and the intellectuals. According to the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime publication *SOLVENT ABUSE AMONG STREET CHILDREN IN PAKISTAN*, there are over 140 million street children in the world, most of which are victims of solvent abuse. Their needs, their feelings, their hopes for survival are nonexistent. The goal of this documentary is to give Karachi's street children a platform, to give them a face, a voice, a way to reach out for help. But more than that, it puts them in the same room as Pakistan's doctors, psychiatrists, and Government officials in an attempts to address this crisis – if not actually together in the same room, at least together on screen through the magic of film making.

A **Special Jury Award** was awarded to *East Meets West: Oriental Medicine and the Future of Healthcare in America* by Lynn Walker (USA). A compelling exploration of the depth, richness, and effectiveness of Oriental Medicine, as well as a call for a new system of integrative medicine that can lead us into the future. Though Western allopathic medicine is critical for diagnosis and emergency situations, it leaves much to be desired in the arena of helping people maintain a state of health. In so many situations in which Western medicine offers only drugs as an answer, Oriental Medicine has effective solutions that actually support the healthy functioning of the whole system. This film offers a vision for a system of integrative medicine that would much more effectively serve the needs of our growing population.

The **Best Narrative Feature** was awarded to *Splatter: Love, Honor and Paintball* by Donnie Schuyler (USA). Jack Reynolds, a lovable loser learns what he really wants out of life is the love of his ex-wife and the respect of his son. He sets out to win them back in this quirky comedy by entering a local paintball tournament. A tournament that has been dominated by a local real estate tycoon Elgin Saunders. A man who just happens to be Deb's, (Jack's ex-wife's) new boss. Hilarity ensues as he in-lists the aid of friends and an ex-vet named, Two Finger Hank, who reluctantly takes on the task of training the pack of hapless losers.

The **Best Documentary Feature** was awarded to *Expedition Inspiration* by Scott Farquharson (USA). We follow the stories of five men and woman – each of whom has had their lives affected by breast cancer – as they climb a 13,000-foot mountain. The climbers include an oncologist who decided to specialize in breast cancer after witnessing the amazing strength of her patients; and a father-daughter team who have lost a family member to breast cancer and climb in her memory. Together, these climbers' head up Mount Borah in Idaho, as part of Expedition Inspiration, a non-profit organization that takes breast cancer survivors up mountains after their treatment. The climbs are a way for the survivors to reclaim their bodies from the deadly disease, and a way for family members to honor the memory of those they have lost to breast cancer. We interweave the story of this Mount Borah climb with the life story of Laura Evans – the woman who founded Expedition Inspiration.

The **Best Director** was awarded to *Phone Sex Grandma: The Short* by Jack Truman (USA). A 60 something Grandma working a phone sex line in a small Southern ghost town

The **Best First-Time Director** was awarded to *Earthwork* by Chris Ordal (USA). The story of real-life crop artist Stan Herd. In 1994, Stan travelled from Kansas to New York City to create a massive environmental artwork on land owned by Donald Trump. The multi-acre piece was made from soil, rock, plants and vegetation near an underground railway tunnel. Stan recruited a number of homeless individuals living in the tunnel as his crew. Over the months it took to complete the earthwork, Stan dealt with the difficulties of bringing his unique, rural art form to an urban canvas and the many costs exacted upon his life. In an effort to show his unique perspective to a larger audience, Stan unexpectedly encountered the true meaning of his art and it's ultimate, lasting rewards.

The **Best Actor** was awarded to *Stop. Think. Rewind* by Mattan Cohen (USA). A teenage boy wanders around a store. He finds the CD section where he browses, he finds one in particular that catches his eye. The Boy grabs it and puts it in his sweater and walks out. Next, he is seen driving along a road where he is pulled over by a Police Officer. The officer opens the trunk of the car and finds thousands of dollars of stolen electronics inside. As the boy is being arrested everything rewinds. He is now back in the store looking at the CD. This time though he puts it back and walks out. The screen flashes the words; Stop.Think.Rewind. Stealing starts small.

The **Best Actress** was awarded to *Die Besucher* by Ulrike Molsen (Germany). Karla hosts a couple in trouble. The visitors occupy her apartment as it was their own. They involve the young woman in contradictory and dangerous lies and familiarities until Karla is almost unable to breathe anymore. She can't find out, who is telling the truth, but gets forced to help either the one or the other. – A story about the tiny step in the offside-trap.

The **Best Narrative Short** was awarded to *No Asians...it's just not my thing* by Scott Eriksson (USA). Vince is an Asian-American guy casually enjoying dinner alone at his favorite restaurant when a handsome Latin guy named Frankie decides to "hit" on him. Vince is a bit annoyed yet polite to Frankie and at times even makes fun of Frankie's nervous attempts to express interest and get a date out of him. Vince makes it clear he isn't interested in a date or dating, yet somehow Frankie manages to get him over to his apartment and even make Vince fall for his charm and good looks. After their night together, Vince ends up with the feeling of "love at first sight," but begins to think Frankie is unresponsive or at least not having the same intense feelings. This leads Vince into a very lonely state of fantasy, sexual obsession, confusion, pain, and him dealing with his own low self-esteem and negative body image as an Asian gay man.

The **Best Documentary Short** was awarded to *Meet the Pedens* by Lora O'Shaughnessy (USA). In October 2009, two film students from the University of Notre Dame ventured to Topeka, Kansas to tour the residence of the Peden family, an abandoned Atlas-E

missile silo built over half a century ago. When Ed Peden first purchased the silo, it took him and his wife years to restore the facility enough to live in, and have since garnered national attention and recognition for their efforts. In one of the only structures of its kind to house individuals, the Peden's have allowed for the first time in their ownership, students to film a short documentary about their rise from a typical household family, into the famous pair that calls the formerly government run structure their home. Their home is an ongoing project that represents a transformation from 'swords to plowshares.' Gracing the pages of the likes of The New York Times and People Magazine, as well as being filmed by Japanese, German and Russian television stations, the Peden's give a firsthand tour of their home and sit down for an interview that delves into the nature of their purchase, making for a great story for both children and adults alike.

The **Best Produced Feature Screenplay** was awarded to *Rage* by Christopher R. Witherspoon (USA). The story of Dennis Twist, a 30-something man who lives in a nice 'Spielbergian' suburb just outside Portland, Oregon says goodbye to his beautiful and loving wife, Crystal and heads into town. There he unintentionally provokes the wrath of a mysterious motorcyclist, 'The Biker. The confrontation between the two sets in motion a daylong battle of cat and mouse. Beginning in the form of harmless taunts; quickly escalating into something more serious...then something unimaginable. RAGE, simultaneously seeks to redefine what is scary in current American horror-thriller cinema and even delves into existential questions about karma while addressing the very contemporary issue of infidelity and its ultimate destruction of the family unit.

The **Best Produced Short Screenplay** was awarded to *Big Brother* by Mattan Cohen (USA). The story of a younger sibling (Cole) who is bullied by a group of arrogant teens. After his older brother drops him off at school one day, the bullies tussle Cole to the point where he trips and falls onto the concrete floor. Cole, hesitant to tell the older brother what happened, is caught with a cut on his cheek. Still he refuses to explain what happened. The older brother, highly suspicious now, hides the car and watches Cole on his way to school the next day, where he catches the bullies pushing him around again. He instantly realizes what happened. Without hesitation, he jumps out the car, storms up to them fists clenched, and literally beats the living snot out of all four boys.

The **Best Foreign Feature** was awarded to *The Frost* by Amanda de Luis (Spain). After the accidental death of their only son, Rita and Alfred feel such remorse that they engage in a fierce fight of mutual destruction. Guilt confronts them with a painful recognition: obsessed by their selfish little needs, they forgot to love their son. As truth is revealed, all their inner demons are unleashed. They haunt and prick them on a road to hope or to damnation, whilst they desperately try to make amends for all those things they left undone in the past.

The **Best Foreign Short** was awarded to *Diamond* by Gerald Gutschmidt (USA). A socially inspired Psychodrama; 11 year old Diamond tries to connect with his father, who is in

jail. His grandmother arrives to take care of him, but she thinks the father is nothing but poison for the child. Diamond grows more and more desperate to see his Dad.

The **Best Animated Short** was awarded to *Vitruvius' Toybox* by Dennis Iannuzzi (USA). Experimental in nature; It explores the relationship between motion graphic techniques, electronic music and the use of traditional graphic design ideas as a way of visually organizing an animated film.

The **Best Experimental Film** was awarded to *In Pursuit of a Dream* by Bob Noll (USA). During the summer of 2008, twenty-four students left their homes in cities and towns across the United States, exchanged their shorts and sandals for long dresses and pioneer pants, and set off on a two-week journey on the Oregon and California Trails. Traveling by wagon in Wyoming and Oregon. They were, like 19<sup>th</sup> century emigrants, "In Pursuit of a Dream."

The **Best Short Film** was awarded to *The Mailbox* by Joshua Wong (Hong Kong). A young girl's weary and exhausting day is suddenly shaken by a strange, yet familiar sound. Her curiosity propels her deeper and deeper, and she quickly finds her pursuit has taken her much further than she'd realized. However, her curiosity may lead her where she's not prepared to go.

The **Best Student Film** was awarded to *Breadwinner* by Cornelius Murphy (USA). Douglas is a hard working independent man who has made a great life for himself. This contrasts sharply with the life that his father led. Douglas' father, Leonard was an often out of work writer who could not provide financial stability for Douglas as a child. Douglas is reflecting back on how he treated his father growing up and the disdain he felt for him not being a good provider. At first feeling justified about the way he acted in the past Douglas in the end questions whether he really knew his father at all, and if the man he often looked down upon wasn't really all that he seemed to be.

The **Best Music Video** was awarded to *Dagnese "Come Over After"* by Gabriel Haze (USA). A premier for alternative pop/rock group Dagnese; 'Come Over After' is a highly enjoyable rock ballad that comes from their 'Hard To Find' EP produced by J.R. Richards of Dishwalla. This narrative video expresses the talent and vulnerability of brothers Chris and Craig Dagnese from live performance to emotive acting skills.

The **Best Family Film** was awarded to *Elf Sparkle Meets Christmas the Horse* by Ed Faulkner (USA). A magical adventure for Santa and Elf Sparkle as they are caught in a rainstorm. They have to put the sleigh down in the Cuyahoga Valley National Park near Horseshoe Pond. There they meet a horse named Christmas that helps pull the sleigh out of the mud. Christmas has the help of a jar of magic elf dust.

The **Best of Oregon Award** was awarded to *Raw Faith* by Peter Wiedensmith (USA). A surprisingly open and poignant portrait of a beloved but lonely minister as she considers

leaving the ministry, yearns for love, and comes face-to-face with her deepest doubts and fears. This revealing documentary follows two years in the private life of a minister. Marilyn Sewell is successful and beloved in the pulpit, but behind the scenes she is lonely and yearning for change. As she considers leaving the ministry, she realizes she will be leaving her only social network. Yet when she falls in love for the first time, she realizes she does not trust intimacy. A study in contrasts, Marilyn must rely on raw faith as she questions her future, her difficult past, her God, and most importantly... her ability to love.

The **Best Television Production** was awarded to *Hard to Be Me* by Erik Cieslewicz (USA). Though thoroughly modern, with plot-lines borrowed from real life, 'Hard To Be Me' is reminiscent of the best comedy dramas of the past 3 decades. Blending multimedia technology with old-fashioned classics in creative ways (from the depths of midnight role-playing-games to the heights of rapping Shakespeare), the characters of 'Hard To Be Me' reveal their stories about friendships, family, and life in the modern world, in an engaging and entertaining way. Unlike many of today's TV programs that view the world, and particularly young people, in a cynical light, 'Hard To Be Me' captures today's youth and families in a comical and positive manner that has not been seen on TV in recent years.

### **Screenplay Competition**

The **Grand Prize Feature Screenplay** was awarded to *Gabriel's Calling* written by Megan Breen (USA). A Pullman Porter denies his artistic talent and defers his dreams as he remains with the railroad mentoring younger porters. The hostile relationship with his conductor leads to years of conflicts; the deepening relationship with a white female passenger sustains him through the years leading to ultimate fulfillment.

The **1<sup>st</sup> Place Feature Screenplay** was awarded to *The Voyeur* written by John Bengel (Hong Kong). An ethicist/college dean with an obsession for voyeurism sees something that creates the ultimate ethical dilemma.

The **2<sup>nd</sup> Place Feature Screenplay** was awarded to *Lesser Kings* written by Farshad Allahdadi (USA). Former US Marine, JD Ershadi, desperately tries to maintain a normal civilian life, but is haunted by his experiences in Iraq. Now a police officer, JD patrols the streets of Portland Oregon, plagued by violent memories of combat and visions of an angel of death coming for him. When the unexpected appearance of an old family friend (Siamak 'The Ghost' Nazem) coincides with the attempted assassination of a visiting Iranian politician, JD's world finally spins out of control. He is thrust onto the front-lines of the Global War on Terror and is forced to reconcile how the course of his life is mirroring that of the shadowy 'Ghost'.

The **3<sup>rd</sup> Place Feature Screenplay** was awarded to *Burn* written by Derek Willis (USA). A lawyer, whose life revolves around drugs and music, has positioned himself as the converging factor of four rival crime syndicates. When forced to repay a major debt to one, it pulls him far deeper into a shadow world of the city's past, promise for the future, and introduces him to the true puppet masters, causing everything around him to burn

The **Grand Prize Short Screenplay** was awarded to *Somewhere Down The Road A Ways* written by Steve Schoen (USA). Lisa and Jimmy Ray are young in love and on the run from Lisa's father "borrowing" cars as they go. All is well until they borrow one Jimmy Ray decides he is going to keep.

The **2<sup>nd</sup> Place Short Screenplay** was awarded to *Carla* written by Christoph Schinko (USA). This is a diverse love story about the introvert Josef, who falls in love with his next-door neighbor Carla. They never even met in person, but he can hear her through his bedroom wall, and starts to imagine a relationship. It explores how different minds cope with loneliness and the irony of having somebody very close to you, but yet indefinitely far away.

The **3<sup>rd</sup> Place Short Screenplay** was awarded to *Not Safe No More* written by Kimberly Coleman (USA). A little girl is killed in Chicago and her grandmother finds the gangstas who did it. It's a bad day in gangsta-land.

The **4<sup>th</sup> Place Short Screenplay** was awarded to *Men on a Bus* written by Kimberly Coleman (USA). Fat girls need love too, even in Afghanistan.

The **5<sup>th</sup> Place Short Screenplay** was awarded to *The Last Cowboy* written by Kevin K. Berry (USA). December 1984, a young man returning to Portland from San Francisco takes his mother to her parent's gravesite in a small farming town to tell her he's dying.

### **Screenplay Official Finalists**

"The Other Woman" by Elizabeth Dwyer Sandlin

"Caretaker" by Steve Schoen & James S. Loos

"Chasing Thunderbirds" by Kyle Fleishman

"Ganymede Pan" by David Johnson

"There Always Is" by Drew Repp

"Crenshaw" by Brian Webster

"Escape Routes" by Lucia Smith

"Russell and Friends Against Fringy and the Space Pirates" by Marce Swing

"You, Only Better" by Suzanne LaGrande

"Stealing Balloons" by Kathryn Waters

### **About The Oregon Film Awards:**

The Oregon Film Awards honors and celebrates the brightest talent in the global filmmaking community while at the same time expanding viewers and their appetite for independent films in the state of Oregon.

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