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Local Films Earn Top Awards at the 2009 Big Easy International Film Festival

New Orleans, LA – November 17, 2009 – Last Sunday, several local artists and filmmakers were honored during the closing night awards ceremony of the third annual Big Easy International Film Festival. The festival, which strives to promote independent cinema, the Louisiana filmmaking industry, and the city's post-Katrina revival, took place November 13-15, at the Theatres at Canal Place (333 Canal Street) in downtown New Orleans. It was the last event to occur at the longtime theater, prior to extensive renovations.

Unlike previous years, the 2009 festival, which attracted a record number of submissions as well as record attendance, presented several feature-length films in addition to a wide array of short comedies, dramas, thrillers, and documentaries. The eclectic line-up, which included 48 films from around the world, showcased 42 short films and 6 features, highlighting new voices as well as the talents of veterans like Brooke Adams, Tony Shalhoub, and Jim Beaver. Nearly half of the filmmakers represented at this year's event, including several Louisiana residents, were in attendance, offering lively Q&A sessions following the screenings.

Presented by the co-directors of the Beverly Hills Shorts Festival and sponsored by Sony Creative Software, Louisiana Economic Development, the New Orleans Office of Film & Video, Writers Boot Camp, Acme Oyster House, and *Scene*, the Big Easy International Film Festival offered a terrific opportunity for cinephiles to support independent filmmakers and experience stories to which they might not otherwise have had access.

On Sunday night, several diverse films were honored, including local productions such as *Trapped in Katrina*, a taut thriller that unfolds in the aftermath of that infamous hurricane. Written and directed by Patrick Marrero, *Trapped in Katrina* earned the jury awards for best thriller feature and best overall feature. Other local winners included *Sins of the Father*, the audience award-winner for best short film; Mickey Gaidos, who won for his cinematography in *Dreams*, a short film about professional BMX riding; and acclaimed pianist John Autin of the Hotel Monteleone's Carousel Bar, who won for his score of *The Magistical*, an animated feature created by a North Carolina-based animation studio.

For more information about the 2009 Big Easy International Film Festival, please visit the festival website (www.bigeasyfilmfestivals.com) or contact Laura Martone, Festival Co-Director, via phone number (626-476-7976) or email (laura@bigeasyfilmfestivals.com).

2009 Big Easy International Film Festival Award Winners

Jury Award for Best Feature Film – *Trapped in Katrina* (Directed by Patrick Marrero)

Jury Award for Best Short Film – *Two to Help One Sleep* (Directed by Marcello Zamarripa)

Audience Award for Best Feature Film – *King of Oak Street* (Directed by George Hamilton and Andrew Scott)

Audience Award for Best Short Film – *Sins of the Father* (Directed by Alexander B. Hill)

Jury Award for Best Director – Steven Kampmann for *BuzzKill*

Jury Award for Best Screenplay – Joe Leonard for *How I Got Lost*

Jury Award for Best Cinematography – Mickey Gaidos for *Dreams*

Jury Award for Best Editing – Greg Whitlow for *Mute*

Jury Award for Best Music/Score – John Autin for *The Magistical*

Jury Award for Best Actor – Alexander Hilary for *Two to Help One Sleep*

Jury Award for Best Actress – Tate Evans for *Life Lines*

Jury Award for Best Documentary Feature – *King of Oak Street* (Directed by George Hamilton and Andrew Scott)

Jury Award for Best Documentary Short – *Dinosaurs & Rocketships* (Directed by Liz Fulton and Bruce Stanbery)

Jury Award for Best Drama Feature – *How I Got Lost* (Directed by Joe Leonard)

Jury Award for Best Drama Short – *Life Lines* (Directed by James Evans)

Jury Award for Best Comedy Feature – *BuzzKill* (Directed by Steven Kampmann)

Jury Award for Best Comedy Short – *Sweetie* (Directed by Corydon Wagner)

Jury Award for Best Animated Feature – *The Magistical* (Directed by John Cernak and Rebecca Jones)

Jury Award for Best Animated Short – *Enter the Sandbox* (Directed by Kevin R. Adams)

Jury Award for Best Thriller Feature – *Trapped in Katrina* (Directed by Patrick Marrero)

Jury Award for Best Thriller Short – *Two to Help One Sleep* (Directed by Marcello Zamarripa)