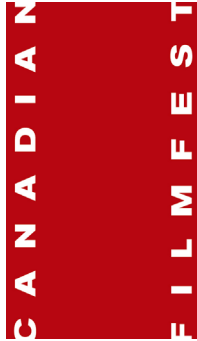


*For immediate release:*



## **CANADIAN FILM FEST ANNOUNCES 2008 FESTIVAL AWARD WINNERS**

*March 31st, 2008, Toronto, Canada* – The 5<sup>th</sup> annual Canadian Film Fest (CFF) recently marked the end of another fabulous year, boasting a record-high number of sell out screenings, high box office sales and fantastic parties. The CFF (which ran from March 25th–29th, 2008 at the Carlton and Varsity Cineplex Odeon cinemas and which was sponsored in part by Bell Canada) remains the only Toronto film festival dedicated solely to the celebration, advancement and promotion of *exclusively* Canadian short and feature film works.

Now, with the dust settled and the ballots tallied, the final results of the fest are in...

The Best Feature, Best Short, Reel Canadian Indie, Best Screenwriting award and special jury prizes were selected by a distinguished panel of judges, including director Johnny Kalangis (2007 CFF entry THE MAD), producer Simone Urdl (AWAY FROM HER, REDACTED) and Andre Bennett, President of Cinema Esperança International Inc. The People's Pick for Best Flick award was chosen based on ballots cast by Festival filmgoers. The Adflix award showcases the best in short films by Canadian ad agencies.

The results are as follows:

**Best Feature**

**THE LAST HIT MAN**

Joe Mantegna stars in this eccentric thriller from writer/director Christopher Warre Smets about an ageing assassin (Joe Mantegna) who discovers he's dying and decides to hide the truth from his daughter. But when a younger hit man is sent to clean up the mess after a botched hit, he impacts their lives in more ways than initially intended.

**Best Short**

**ROCK PAPER SCISSORS**

Writer/director Jamie Cussen's hilarious short comedy about three nine-year-olds who embark on a quest for beer and cigarettes and are lead down the path towards adulthood...and find something far greater.

**Cineplex Entertainment's 'People's Pick For Best Flick' Award**

**MR. BIG**

This gripping documentary examines criminal confessions resulting from an RCMP undercover sting strategy known as "Mr. Big". Filmmaker Tiffany Burns investigates RCMP actions after her brother Sebastian and his friend are convicted of murder. Their confessions are made to an undercover RCMP police officer who builds a relationship with the suspects while presenting himself as an organized crime gang member. Considered entrapment in the U.S. and England, Burns questions the ethics of using the "Mr. Big" sting technique.

**William F. White 'Reel Canadian Indie' Award**

**RIVER**

Producer/Director/Co-Writer Mark Wihak's RIVER follows the exploits of Stan (Adam Budd) and Roz (Maya Batten-Young), two people living in a small city on the Canadian prairies. Stan has just finished university and is working on a novel; Roz has a dead-end job and roams the city with her camera. When Stan and Roz meet, they help to nurture each other's artistic dreams and discover what is possible – in friendship and in themselves.

**Meridian Artists 'Best Screenwriting' Award**

**RIVER**

Screenplay by: Maya Batten-Young, Adam Budd, Mark Wihak

**Buck Productions 'Adflix' Award**

**HAROLD**

Director Justin Harding's branded short film tells the story of a mannequin that wakes up one day and realizes that he wants more than what his life currently offers.

Other awards administered by the CFF included the Special Jury Prizes. They are as follows:

**Best Director**

**Brett Sullivan for THE CHAIR**

**Best Cinematography**

**Gavin Heffernan for GRAND WHEEL**

**Best Female Actor**

**Shauna MacDonald for PRODUCTION OFFICE**

**Best Male Actor**

**Adam Budd for RIVER**

**Honorable Mention**

**Darkness Calls in Gitxsan (short)**

**Festival Highlights**

One of the Festival's mandates is to help advance the Canadian film industry by promoting Canadian filmmaking talent, providing a venue to feature these films for audiences to view and enjoy. This year, 7 world premieres, 5 Canadian premieres, and 19 Toronto premieres (31 films in total) from across the country were screened at the Varsity and Carlton Cineplex Odeon Cinemas, with seven sold out shows. The Festival welcomed over 4,000 attendees at screenings, panel discussions and gala parties this year. The Canadian Film Fest presenting sponsor is Bell Canada. Key Sponsors included Leo Burnett, Buck Productions, Cineplex Entertainment, 70 Main Street, William F. White International, Delta Chelsea Hotel, Meridian Artists,

Jones Brown Insurance Brokers, Premiere Underwriting, IFC, Imarion, Videoscope, The Butcher Shop, Steam Whistle, Grand Marnier, Playback, eye WEEKLY. The Canadian Film Fest is held in association with Film Circuit of the Toronto International Film Festival Group.