

2004 ROUTE 66 FILM FESTIVAL BIOS OF FILMMAKERS

Matt and Greg Brookens, RONI VS. LINCOLN – First Annual Lincoln Presidential Library Award

Matt and Greg Brookens had to think of a movie idea, and quick. Matt belonged to a filmmaker circle known as Group 312 films. Their mission: make a short film every month. This month's assignment: shoot a film noir. Greg's character Roni Carboni lent itself well to a noir movie.

Matt thought that Abraham Lincoln should be a key player since they were filming over the 4th of July weekend in Springfield. Thus RONI VS. LINCOLN was born. They shot with no script, no crew, and only a vague sense of where the story was going. Long-time friend Bill Cox filled out the cast as Freddy No Pants. Luckily the caretakers of the Lincoln home keep the windows unlocked, so shooting was a breeze. Steve Kiefer's stupendous Abbot and Costello-esque score wraps the whole move up in a pretty aural package. If you're a fan of the Dogma 95 style of filmmaking or just a fan of dead presidents, don't miss RONI VS. LINCOLN.

Matt and Greg, graduates of Sacred Heart-Griffin High School in Springfield and Columbia College in Chicago where they studied filmmaking, now live and work in Chicago. Two of their films, OF BASS AND MEN and SKUNK APE, won Best Comedy Film in 2002 and 2003.

John Cadigan, Ira Wohl and Katie Cadigan, PEOPLE SAY I'M CRAZY – Best Documentary

Director/Principal Photographer: John Cadigan is a visual artist trained at Carnegie-Mellon University's College of Fine Arts. From 1990-1991 he studied painting and printmaking in Rome, Italy with the Temple University/Tyler School of Art Program. In 1991 he suffered a psychotic break, and became fully disabled with what was eventually diagnosed as a form of schizophrenia, the most severe of all mental illnesses.

In 1994 Cadigan began taking a new generation of antipsychotic medications which have slowly enabled him to rebuild his life. In 1996 his first major group show, *Truth from Darkness: Works by Artists with Mental Illness* toured museums and galleries in Washington DC, Toronto, ON; Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, PA; Lebanon, NH; Houston, TX; Boulder, CO; Laramie, WY; and Albuquerque, NM. More recently Cadigan's woodcuts were featured at Stanford University's Art Spaces in Palo Alto, CA and some of his prints are currently part of the INSIDE/OUTSIDE online exhibition curated by the Episcopal Church & Visual Arts (ECVA) organization. http://www.ecva.org/exhibition/inside-outside/cadigan_1.htm.

In the fall 2003 Cadigan received *First Prize for Artistic Achievement* from the annual Eli Lilly Reintegration Awards. *People Say I'm Crazy* is John Cadigan's directorial debut.

Ira Wohl, producer, is an Oscar-winner for BEST BOY, a feature documentary about his then 50-year old mentally retarded cousin and maker of the 20-years later sequel, BEST MAN. Wohl has over 25 years experience producing, directing and editing films internationally.

In 1995 Wohl produced/directed/edited a three-hour series entitled *Diagnosis According to the DSM-IV*. Through interviews with clients suffering from a variety of illnesses, this video set takes into account the latest diagnostic manual's criteria for ten major disorders--among them depression, schizophrenia, panic, obsessive compulsive, and anorexia. Still actively distributed today, these videos are on the shelves of thousands of post-graduate libraries, as well as those of private practitioners.

Wohl holds a master's degree in Social Work from USC and is a licensed clinical social worker with a private practice at UCLA's Neuropsychiatric Hospital and Institute. For the past 12 years, Wohl has specialized in working with adults and children who have serious mental disorders.

Katie Cadigan, producer, is an award-winning documentary filmmaker who runs imageReal Pictures, a non-fiction film/video production company based in Northern California. Cadigan is currently in production on her film WACKO, a television documentary on cultural attitudes about mental illness.

Cadigan's first 30-minute documentary, OUT OF MY MIND (Filmmaker's Library), chronicled the onset of her brother's schizophrenia and won numerous awards including the International Documentary Association's David Wolper Award and a Cine Golden Eagle. From 1994 to 1997 she associate produced a number of cable

and public television documentaries in Los Angeles, including AMC's hour-long show, *Hollywood Commandos*, profiling the United States Air Corps' World War II film unit.

Cadigan has lectured at leading universities across the nation and served for several semesters as a Visiting Instructor at Stanford University, leading 16mm film and video production courses for graduate and undergraduate students in the Department of Communication. She holds a B.A from Brown University and an M.A. from Stanford's Documentary Film and Video Program.

Zack Fox, GORMAN – People's Choice Entry

Zack Fox decided he wanted to work in the movies after seeing *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* when he was eight years old. After making several films in high school, he attended Chapman University in Orange, California. At Chapman, Zack interned with DreamWorks, Warner Bros., and Twentieth Century Fox Television, having short-term jobs on the television shows "Chicago Hope" and "Big Apple."

As a tour guide at Chapman, Zack met some of his heroes. He showed Robert Zemeckis, Frank Marshall, Mary Steenburgen and even Steven Spielberg around the campus. For his senior project, Zack co-wrote and directed GORMAN, a small intimate tale. Since graduation, Zack has worked as a production assistant for the second unit crew of Mel Gibson's controversial *The Passion of the Christ* and on reshoots of *Catwoman*.

He has written a feature script called DOWN MEXICO WAY with his two writing partners and is toying with the idea of shooting a music video. GORMAN was previously shown at the 2004 Newport Beach Film Festival.

Hannah Fruchtman and Jenna Friedenber, HITCH – People's Choice Entry

Hannah Fruchtman was born and raised in Baltimore, MD. Hannah's path into the film world started at a very young age when she frequented the independent movie theater chain owned by her grandfather as often as possible. After studying photography and film at Sarah Lawrence College, she decided to take on the challenge of making her first independent project. Hannah currently resides in New York City where she is planning future artistic endeavors.

Jenna Friedenber has lived and worked in New York for the past five years, primarily as a theater actress. HITCH is Jenna's cinematic writing/directing debut, though she grew up surrounded by film. Her father is a screenwriter/director, and Jenna has taken every opportunity to assist him, worming her way as close as possible to the center of activity. Jenna also plays one of the major roles in HITCH, which was previously shown at the 2004 Maryland Film Festival.

Matt Grant, PEEL – Featured Drama

Matt became interested in film when he received a video camera for his 12th birthday. Ever since, he has been making short videos and films for class projects and just to kill time. His first major production THE DERANGED KILLER MUTANT MONSTER DEATH SANDWICH earned him a Boy Scout merit badge, first place at his high school's SITE Technology Conference and a \$50 cash prize.

After that experience, Matt was eager to make another film. One day he asked a friend to give him a sentence and he would write a movie around it. He said, "A man walks into a room and slips on a banana peel." That is where PEEL got its start, and over the next three years, it evolved into the 90-minute feature that exists today. A recent graduate of Springfield High School, Matt is continuing his studies at Webster University, St. Louis.

Takae Hoshina, ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL ON THE ROAD TO NOWHERE – Featured Drama

Takae Hoshina was born in a suburb of Tokyo, Japan. After graduating with a degree in Mass Communications from Seijo University in Tokyo, she took a year off and backpacked around Asia with her small Hi-8 camera to capture the lives and energy of the people there. In pursuit of her dream to make movies that mean something to people, she attended New York Film Academy and graduated from Chapman University with a MFA degree in film and TV production. During the school year, she

exercised her skills in all capacities of filmmaking in numerous short projects. She is currently working as a production manager for various Japanese TV network shows.

Takae said, “In this film I wanted to bring the audience a sense of personal understanding that life is not that easy for anyone all the time and it seems even harder for young adults who encounter the walls in their lives for the first time. Everyone wanders around to grasp a piece of the reason for their lives and the value in it. Occasionally, the people we may least expect turn out to be the ones who remind us how amazing life is and how strong human beings can be.”

Shannon Matheis, HELP WANTED, People’s Choice Entry

Shannon N. Matheis said, “I have had an interest in horror films since I was a child, and my aunt had me watch *Trilogy of Terror* with her. (The tribal dolls still scare me.) As a teenager, horror films were a weekend tradition. Anyone who watches *Children of the Corn* and then drives home alone knows what I am talking about. We always talked about what kind of scary movies we would make.”

Nine years ago she started working for Family Video and her love of movies grew. This is her first attempt at one herself, and it will not be her last. She and her cast and crew made up mostly of her co-workers had a great time making HELP WANTED and hope you enjoy it.

Mike Miley, THE BUG MAN – Featured Drama

Mike Miley was born and raised in Lafayette, LA, and graduated from Loyola University, New Orleans with a BA in English Writing. While attending Loyola, he wrote and directed two short films, GHOST WRITERS and SURFACE CALM. Both have played at film festivals around the country and the world, and SURFACE CALM has gone on to be distributed to networks such as HBO Latin America and Starz!/Encore.

Mike attended the American Film Institute's Directing Program and graduated in 2003. His thesis film, THE BUG MAN, has screened in over 30 film festivals worldwide, winning top honors at festivals in Alabama, California and Florida. Mike was recently selected as one of ESQUIRE Magazine's 20 Filmmakers to watch and can be seen in the September 2004 issue of ESQUIRE. He lives in West Hollywood with his wife Amelia.

Jason Mirch, ALLY – People’s Choice Entry

Jason Mirch was first introduced to film studies in the fall of 1996 when he took an Introduction to Film class at St. Bernard High School. This critical analysis of film sparked an interest that would shape the rest of his life. He applied to Chapman University School of Film and Television looking to write and direct for the screen. At Chapman, he worked on numerous films and as a production assistant on the television show “Entertainment Tonight.”

ALLY, filmed in 2004, is Jason’s directorial debut. The film received four Chapman University Student Filmmaker Award nominations and won Best Director 2004. After graduation in 2004, Jason is living in the Los Angeles area working as an independent filmmaker.

Marcus Nash, THE CHEF WITHIN – People’s Choice Entry

Marcus Nash started working in the film industry as an actor. His most notable role was playing the Young Picard on “Star Trek: Next Generation.” After directing a children’s play in Southern Oregon, he was asked to co-write and direct an educational video for the Oregon Health Department. In 2001 he transitioned from acting to full-time writing and directing. He now directs local commercials in and around Los Angeles and hopes to shoot his first feature film in the near future.

Darren Ng, THE SCAPEGOAT – Best Silent Film

Darren Ng focuses his filmmaking on action and comedy. He wrote, directed, and choreographed the 1999 short THE ULTIMATE FIGHTER, which consisted of an elaborate fight sequence and won the audience’s choice and judge’s choice awards from various film festivals in the Bay Area. His latest film THE SCAPEGOAT is a tribute to the silent comedian Buster Keaton and was recently chosen by Roger

Ebert to screen at his Overlooked Film Festival. Darren Ng is attending optometry school at the University of California, Berkeley and is currently writing and developing films.

According to Darren, “My reason for making a contemporary silent film is to pay homage to the great silent comedian Buster Keaton, who was a film star in the 1920’s and one of the greatest comedic artists of our time. When I first came upon Keaton’s films, I was truly amazed with his on-screen comedic and physical talents. Buster Keaton was undoubtedly the king of slapstick comedy. I hope I was able to achieve Keaton’s goal, which was simply making the audience laugh through physical comedy.”

The film’s total budget was \$300. To save on production costs, Darren Ng had his whole family take part in the casting and production. The most expensive prop in the film was the custom-made porkpie hat which cost more than the suit and the golf cart rental fee combined. The majority of scenes were shot on the University of California, Berkeley campus. Many historical buildings and landmarks were incorporated in the chase scenes, including Sather Gate and the famous Campanile clock tower.

Danny L. Oakley, FLYAWAY – Best Animated Film

FLYAWAY is the second short film produced by Out of Our Minds Animation Studios established in January 2000 in Winston-Salem, North Carolina as a 3D animation and special effects studio. Its six founding members were award-winning artists of all trades (designers, illustrators, painters, photographers, sculptors) fascinated by the revolution taking place in the animation industry. The studio has produced several regional and a few nationally recognized fully computer-generated commercials and provided digital effects for the award-winning THE ROUGH SOUTH OF LARRY BROWN, an independent feature. Its first animated short DEAR, SWEET EMMA has been screened and accepted by over 65 film festivals and won 23 awards/special nominations.

Danny Oakley is the lead animator at the studio and has directed several commercial spots and corporate projects. FLYAWAY is the first short film he has directed. John M. Cernak, who wrote the script, was an award-winning graphic artist before becoming a digital animator. FLYAWAY was produced by Lori Cernak.

Julia Radochia, SALLY’S DREAM HOUSE – People’s Choice Winner

Julia Radochia, a Boston area native, had been pursuing an acting career and working as a software analyst for several years. Then, three years ago, she decided to enroll in film school at Los Angeles City College because she had a script she wanted to write—just write. The plan altered a bit because she found she loved actually making films. So she took on school in full force and received a scholarship from Women in Film in 2002.

SALLY’S DREAM HOUSE was the first script she wrote. The idea just came from walking around Los Angeles with her boyfriend and discovering that LA does have some interesting old houses, some kept up much better than others. The idea grew from gazing at the houses and being able only to wonder what they had to offer past the exterior walls.

Julia has also written, directed and edited two shorter films, LIKE HIS FATHER and JIMMY’S HOUSE OF HUGS, and is currently editing her last project at LA City College, EDDIE’S WINNING DATE.

Julia said, “I am very honored to have SALLY’S DREAM HOUSE premiere at the Route 66 Film Festival and happy to visit Springfield for the first time!”

David Redmon, MARDI GRAS: MADE IN CHINA – Featured Documentary

David Redmon taught himself filmmaking by producing, directing, editing, and marketing MARDI GRAS: MADE IN CHINA. He has never taken a class in film techniques. Currently, he is producing a documentary called BORDER DREAMS, which documents the hardships of Ceci and Camillo (a married couple) living in Reynosa, Mexico as they work in Maquiladoras to save money, build a house, and reunite with their two-year old daughter who they left behind in Puebla, Mexico.

His third documentary addresses Palestinian nonviolent resistance to the Israeli occupation in the West Bank. David says, “I finance all my films, as it is difficult to receive grants or funding without a film background and a completed previous film. . . . I squat and live on couches with friends and, as you will see by my weight, eat peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. I’ll give you a free copy of MARDI GRAS: MADE IN CHINA in return for a meal.

“It’s difficult to identify a single moment or event that led me to make this film. I simply wanted to create a space for people to tell a meandering story of globalization by using one object to which everyone in the film is indirectly connected. Little did I realize the political, military, or economic implications of a simple trinket, nor did I realize the difficulties of weaving together a story through a ‘global commodity chain’ analysis.”

Chris Seals, BLACKNECK – Best Comedy

Chris Seals studied filmmaking at the University of Alabama, Birmingham. He has made numerous films including AFTER THE DANCE, PARTS OF LIFE and RECIPROCAL. He appeared on “Good Morning America” with his film THE MIXER MURDERS. Chris was named the 2002 Marion Knott Scholar and was mentored by John Badham, director of *Blue Thunder* and *Saturday Night Fever*.

Chris was inspired to make BLACKNECK, a satire on rednecks, the KKK and Afro-American culture, because as he says, “We live in a very sensitive and politically correct society and often forget that we need to take a break and laugh at ourselves.” BLACKNECK was a finalist for Best Student Film at Methodfest.

Pete Sleeper, KITTY – Featured Animated Film

Pete Sleeper directed this music video featuring the band, Kinky Slinky. The video mixes live performances of the band with computer animation of Kitty driving her Camaro. The animated backgrounds include scenes of Route 66 in Oklahoma: the Bethany Bridge, the overpass near Seaba Station in Warrick and a part of the old alignment in Guthrie. KITTY was an Official Selection at the 2004 deadCENTER Film Festival in Okalahoma City.



**3RD Annual Route 66 Film Festival
September 18-19, 2004**

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