

2006 Filmmakers' Bios

Robert Amico – *AMISS*

Robert is a veteran working actor and a product of the Actor's Studio in New York. He has appeared in many films including *8MM* and *Menendez: A Killing in Beverly Hills* and has an upcoming supporting role in Henry Jaglom's *Irene in Time*. He directed the short films *Life Imitates Art*, which won a Telly Award for directing, and *A Peace of Jackie*. This film was written, shot and completed in 48 hours for the Lost Weekend 48 Hour Film Competition.

Michael Baez, Stacy Marr – *Getting Lucky*

Michael Baez (director) has worked for the past nine years as a writer, director and producer. He has produced and directed over 30 TV commercials for Cablevision and Time Warner Cable. He is a member of the Independent Feature Project, the National Association of Latino Independent Producers and a graduate of the New York Film Academy. Michael is currently preparing to shoot his next feature film, a supernatural thriller called *Butterfly in the Fire* set in the streets of the Bronx.

Stacy Marr (writer/producer/actress) holds a B.A. in television, radio and film production from Syracuse University and is a member of the Independent Feature Project of Los Angeles and New York. She has previously worked on Woody Allen's *Sweet and Lowdown* and Neil LaButte's *Nurse Betty*. She was the lead actress in the 2004 Audience Favorite at the Route 66 Film Festival, *Sally's Dream House*. Her latest project is a feature film *A Picture Speaks*.

Thomas Barndt – *The Walking Ink*

Thomas grew up in Ohio and currently resides in Las Vegas. He started making short films in 2002 after working for seven years in an unrelated field. He picked up his filmmaking education at various workshops and books. He writes, directs, shoots, and edits all of his films. The average crew size is three people. The actors usually share duties with the crew, and the crew are sometimes asked to act.

Tom Brandau – *Bill & Meriwether's Excellent Adventure*

A graduate of The American Film Institute, Los Angeles, Tom has worked as a freelance writer/ director on many regional and national commercial campaigns and spent five years as writer/producer/ director for Fox 45 Television in Baltimore. His films have won numerous awards and have aired on the Discovery Channel. He is currently teaching film production at Minnesota State University, Moorhead.

Brandon Clayton – *For Glory and Gashes - Audience Favorite Documentary*

Born in Central Illinois, Brandon decided to venture into the world of filmmaking when he was 16. In 2006, he graduated Magna cum Laude from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale with a degree in Cinema and Photography. At SIUC, he produced over 11 films and received the Robert Dennis Film-making Award for outstanding cinematography. This film won the 2006 Best Documentary award at the Little Muddy Film Festival at SIU.

Leslie Dektor – *Do You Want the Elephant Music? and Fat Cake*

Leslie began his career as a still photographer in Johannesburg, South Africa, but his desire to move beyond the frozen image prompted a migration to film. He immigrated to the U.S., directed several documentaries, produced hundreds of TV commercials and garnered 12 Directors' Guild of America nominations, winning Director of the Year twice.

Ex'pression College for Digital Arts – *The Clench*

Unlike Hollywood with its hierarchical structure, students work together and rotate in the positions of director, camera and boom operators, audio mixer, gaffer and production assistant/continuity. This film was co-written, co-produced, co-directed and co-edited by Jason Key, Matt Cornick, Max Rodriguez, Sam Westra, Nick Heeney, and Adrian Gonzalez.

Ex'pression College for Digital Arts – *A Thousand Words*

This digital movie was co-written, co-produced, co-directed and co-edited by the following students: Adam Ardans (Reno) constantly fighting the battle between his two loves, music and filmmaking; Tiffany Lo (South Pasadena) who is pursuing a career in music; Travis Munn (Oakland, CA) who is happiest when playing the bass; Eric Night Pipe (O'Kreek, SD) who keeps the great, purple meat-eating jackalope; and Darrin O'Hara (Santa Rosa, CA) who constantly pursues knowledge in all forms of art. Joselito Sering, a seasoned multimedia producer, programmer and performer, was the instructor for the students making this film.

Daniel Garcia – *Drawings of War: Testimony of the Children of Uganda*

Best Documentary

Born in Trujillo, Peru, Daniel obtained his B.A. in linguistics and literature at the Pontific Catholic University of Peru. He spent several years teaching high school literature and language, working as a creative writer in a local advertising company, and serving as a theatre director and writer for plays performed in local churches and university campuses before earning his M.F.A. from Ohio University in communications and film. His thesis film, a documentary about the lives of minority inmates in the Peruvian prison Lurigancho, received the Student Enhancement Award at Ohio University. He teaches introductory and advanced video production as well as screenwriting at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, MI. He currently is working on a video installation inspired by the life and writings of Trappist monk Thomas Merton.

Tyrone HuFF – *Call Me Sugar Plum* – Audience Favorite Drama

A native of the bay area, this San Jose, CA filmmaker is currently studying toward an MFA at Dodge College Conservatory of Motion Pictures, Chapman University. While earning his BA in Cinematic Studies at Fresno State University, Tyrone won awards for Best Overall Short Film, Best Drama, and Most Outstanding Dramatic Programming. He is currently working on pre-production of another short film and plans to begin his first feature after completing the short.

Daniel G. Hughes – *Matutinus*

A native of Leicester, England, Daniel had a keen interest in film and television and “how it’s done” from an early age. Being dyslexic, he struggled in school, but gained the qualifications to enroll in Hinckley College where he studied media, music and performing arts. He decided to take a year off to work at a tortilla factory in Northhamptonshire. Despite good wages, he grew weary of the job and returned to study media production. His credits include writing, producing and directing several film and video projects and a TV program The Vicar of ASDA.

Paul Jamali and Tim Unger – *Film Camp*

Paul is a 17-year-old filmmaker from Springfield, Illinois. A senior at Rochester High School, he plans to produce a school video yearbook, never before done at RHS. He wants to one day work for a studio or maybe MTV. Paul works as a digital imaging specialist at an electronics/media store and at a local movie theater. Paul and Tim of

Mundelein, IL met at "Adventures in Filmmaking" hosted by Western Illinois University. Thus Film Camp was born during the five days of—you guessed it—film camp.

Kelsey M. Johnson – *Akaroa*

A native of Danbury, Connecticut, Kelsey developed an interest in films as an undergraduate at Florida Atlantic University. After college, he traveled and lived in New Zealand before entering graduate school at Chapman University in Orange, CA. *Akaroa* is based on an experience in the small town in New Zealand. Kelsey has worked as producer, writer, editor and director on several short films as a graduate student.

Bill Kersey – *87 Topaz*

Bill is a Tucson filmmaker whose short films have been screened widely at dozens of festivals nationally and internationally. His credits as director, producer and editor include the award-winning *Solace* and *87 Topaz*, the experimental *Permian Flow*, and as co-director and co-producer, the comedic favorite *Garpenfargle*. In 2005 he received his BFA degree in Media Arts from the University of Arizona.

Vito Lapiccola, Greg Berry – *Under My Skin* – Best Thriller

Vito Lapiccola was born and raised in Springfield and studied film, video, and theater at Columbia College in Chicago. He served for three years as the house manager for the Organic Theater (founded by William H. Macy, Joe Mantegna, and Dennis Franz) before relocating to Los Angeles to pursue a filmmaking career. Currently employed at Paramount Pictures, *Under My Skin* marks his professional directing debut.

Executive Producers Gregory E. Berry and Doug Berry collaborated with Beef Tips on Rice Productions' award-winning producers Steve Gelder and Joe Braza to bring the film to life. Screenwriter Tom Sklar-Blake and composer Michael Collins also hail from the central Illinois area. Many of the film's investors are also Springfield natives making this film a unique collaboration between Hollywood and the Midwest.

David McElroy – *We're the Government—and You're Not* – Audience Favorite Comedy

Born in Birmingham, Alabama, David moved all over the South as a child. He studied journalism and political science at the University of Alabama and became a newspaper journalist before getting into politics. He is currently a political consultant based in Birmingham. "*We're the Government — and You're Not*" is his first film. A sucker for homeless animals, he lives alone with more cats and dogs than he's willing to publicly admit to.

Leah Meyerhoff – *Team Queen and Twitch*

Leah is a graduate film student at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts and is currently featured on the Independent Film Channel's popular series *Film School*. Her films have screened at over 50 film festivals, garnering a half-dozen First Place awards. She was recently nominated for a Student Academy Award. Her films have screened at Cannes, Slamdance, and the Chicago International Film Festivals and she is currently working on her first feature.

Stephen Keep Mills – *A Cigar at the Beach* – Best of Fest

A graduate of the Yale School of Drama in 1969, Stephen began his professional life as an actor with The Guthrie Theatre Co. and performed with many leading regional theatre companies in the US and Canada, appeared in three Broadway productions, and worked on new plays at the Public Theatre in NYC in the time of Joe Papp. Much of his TV and film work can be found on IMDb by searching for Stephen Keep. Mills began writing,

directing, and producing his own plays in 1985, and in 2003, turned one of them, Hotel Lobby, into a digital feature. He is making his debut as a film director with A Cigar at the Beach which has, since January, been officially selected into 54 festivals in the US, Canada, UK, Italy, Greece, Denmark, and South Africa. Cigar has garnered 15 awards in the “Best Of” categories for Narrative Short and Cinematography. Mills lives in Topanga, California. He is married with children.

Ben Pierce – *Thick*

Ben was born in San Francisco and moved to Southern California at age 19 to pursue a career as a pilot. After completing his required hours, he decided to try his luck in show business. This is his first festival short.

Steven Puglia – *Illinois Route 66 and Broken*

Steven received his degree in film from Montana State University, Bozeman. He has worked on productions of “VH1-Behind the Hits,” Legally Blonde II, and Ocean's 12. Steven resides in Springfield, Illinois, where he is director of media productions at Great Plains Advertising. He presents two original productions: a documentary study of the sights and characters of Route 66 in Illinois and a drama about a young man who finds himself caught in a murder in a small town.

Julia Radochia – *Jimmy's House of Hugs*

An Arlington, MA native, Julia moved to Los Angeles in 1998 to pursue an acting career. She had a story idea for a feature film and enrolled at Los Angeles City College to learn enough about filmmaking to write a decent screenplay. Discovering that she loved making movies, she decided to continue school and won a scholarship from Women in Film in 2002. She has financed her films by working as a QA analyst/ tester, taking her lunch to work, obsessive bargain hunting and sacrificing haircuts and a social life. Her film Sally's Dream House won Audience Favorite in 2004. This is her third year at the Route 66 Film Festival.

Tania Raymonde – *Cell Division*

A professional actress since age 11, Tania created a production company at 16 and entered pre-production on Cell Division, her first short, at 17. Working on an extremely limited budget, she cast actors through Breakdown Services and hired most of her crew under the guise of being a more experienced 25-year-old film student. She edited the short film on her home computer, her first experience editing a project, and wrapped March 2006, right round her 18th birthday. Acting credits include recurring roles on LOST and Malcolm in the Middle, guest leads on Medium, The Guardian, and NCIS and upcoming film Chasing 3000 opposite Ray Liotta, Seymour Cassel and Emmet Walsh.

Jeremy Rush – *John Doe and the Anti* – Best Debut Film

Jeremy found his way into filmmaking via the northern California music industry, first studio engineering and then establishing and operating his own recording studio. After receiving a BA in both Communications and English Literature, Jeremy moved to Japan to pursue a degree in the traditional martial art of Aikido. Upon his return with a black belt degree, he became an Aikido instructor at the local university. Eventually persuaded by his passion for visual arts and storytelling, he left to pursue film-making in Los Angeles. His first film has screened at several festivals and his thesis film will be released next year.

**Devi Snively – *Raven Gets a Life* – Best Comedy
*Teenage Bikini Vampire***

Devi (pronounced DAY-vee) has worked professionally as a ballerina, Spanish translator, video game writer, newspaper columnist, hair model, book editor, college instructor and

documentary filmmaker. She's been decidedly unprofessional in several other careers. In her spare time she's written 13 feature-length screenplays and directed 9 short films and a feature-length documentary. Her work has placed in such competitions as Slamdance, Austin Heart of Film, Houston Worldfest, Scriptapalooza and Writer's Digest to name a few. Her cinematic influences include John Waters, George Romero and Shirley Temple.

Tom Snyder, Tom Galassi & Adam Galassi – *Troubadours* – Best Feature

These three filmmakers all attended Porta High School, in Petersburg, IL, but became friends in Chicago. Tom Galassi performs as a Blue Man with the Blue Man Group. His brother Adam works on the stage crew for Blue Man. Tom Snyder is a film graduate of Columbia University in Chicago. The film was shot in Chicago and Menard and Sangamon counties along the Sangamon River. The film has been shown at the Show-Me Missouri International Film Festival and the Big Muddy Film Festival.

Travis Stoll – *Elegy of Falling Snow* – Best Student Film

Travis is a 21-year-old student of the Film/ Video Department of Columbia College, Chicago. He graduated from Whitney Young High School where I took a Video Production class that really solidified his interest in becoming a filmmaker. His final project of the Production II class was filmed with a Bolex camera on color and black and white Kodak stock during three separate weekends in March and April 2006 and an additional weekend to record sound. It was then transferred to digital and edited at school using Avid Express. The cast including Julia Fung, Michael LaGiglio, and Travis himself also served as crew alongside Brent Goodale and Travis's father, Russ.

Kc Wayland – *365 Boots on Ground*

After developing an interest in acting and film at Orange High School, Kc enrolled in Chapman University's Film Program on an academic scholarship in 2001. In 2002, he enlisted in the US army to assist with college finances and was trained at the Defense Information School in Fort Meade, MD. He returned to Chapman in 2003 to continue his degree, but was deployed to Iraq soon after. He spent over a year in Iraq returning to Chapman in 2005. The documentary about his journey overseas won Best Documentary at Chapman in 2005. Kc continues to develop short films and screenplays.

Saturday Schedule

1:00 Audience Choice Documentaries

For Glory and Gashes - Winner

Brandon Clayton, Taylorville, IL

Rob Miller chases his dream of professional wrestling in Springfield, IL. 20 min.

87 Topaz

Bill Kersey, Oro Valley, AZ

Kersey remembers his grandfather's life through his love of cars. 8 min.

Do You Want the Elephant Music?

Leslie Dektor, Studio City, CA

Circus performers describe the joys and challenges of living with their jobs. 17 min.

Illinois Route 66

Steven Puglia, Springfield, IL

Sights and history explain why a road has captured the interest of so many. 28 min.

Fat Cake

Leslie Dektor, Studio City, CA

A South African musician braves apartheid for his art. 25 min.

3:30 Audience Choice Comedies

Jimmy's House of Hugs

Julia Radochia, Los Angeles, CA

Jimmy and his talented staff help women with their hugging needs. 6 min.

Bill & Meriwether's Excellent Adventure

Tom Brandau, Moorhead, MN

What if Lewis and Clark never left St. Louis in the fall of 1804? 19 min.

Getting Lucky

Michael Baez/Stacy Marr, Los Angeles, CA

Can a woman searching for true love get lucky with internet dating? 19 min.

We're the Government—and You're Not - Winner

David McElroy, Trussville, AL

Satire imagines a government training film to teach good citizenship. 11 min.

Cell Division

Tania Ramonde, Los Angeles, CA

Lonely girl finds some surprises in her search for one to complete her. 22 min.

Teenage Bikini Vampire

Devi Snively, Mishawaka, IN

Can a vampire girl find true love with a surfer dude? 7:00 min.

The Clench

Expression College for Digital Arts, CA

Dinner with boss is complicated by gastric distress and airhead girlfriend. 10 min.

7:30 Thriller and Feature Winners

Team Queen

Leah Meyerhoff, Brooklyn, NY

Music video features the queer-post-punk band Triple Crème and stars the best of New York burlesque. 4 min.

Under My Skin – Best Thriller

Vito Lapiccola and Greg Berry

Los Angeles, CA

A young actress finds how far she will go to win a coveted role. 26 min.

Troubadours - Best Feature

Tom Snyder, Adam Galassi, Tom Galassi

Chicago (formerly of Petersburg)

Haunted by nightmares and anxiety in the “Big City,” Art Stone returns to downstate to find the self he lost and discover who he will become. 107 min.

Sunday Schedule

12:00 Noon Audience Choice Dramas

Call Me Sugar Plum - Winner

Tyrone Huff, Anaheim, CA

A computer nerd's dream date turns out to be not so sweet. 11 min.

The Walking Ink

Thomas Barndt, Las Vegas, NV

A mechanic gains superhuman powers of persuasion after eating a hot pepper. 8 min.

Akaroa

Kelsey M. Johnson, Orange, CA

Student learns about life and love during summer in New Zealand. 7 min.

aMISS

Robert Amico, Van Nuys, CA

Young man suffers when his love leaves him. 7 min.

Thick

Ben Pierce, Los Angeles

Separated from their company, two soldiers must work together to stay alive. 10 min.

Broken

Steven Puglia, Springfield, IL

Man finds trouble when his car breaks down and mechanic is found dead. 13 min.

A Thousand Words

Expression College for Digital Arts, CA

A photograph leads to love and loss for young students. 12 min.

2:00 Special Features

Matutinus

Dan Hughes, Leicestershire, UK

Experimental film features morning rituals in England. 3 min.

Film Camp

Paul Jamali & Tim Unger, Springfield, IL

Mysterious deaths and a creepy janitor frighten a young girl at film camp. 12 min.

Twitch

Leah Meyerhoff, Brooklyn, NY

Award-winning drama explores girl's relationship with handicapped mother. 10 min

365 Boots on the Ground

Kc Wayland, Orange, CA

Filmmaker documents his year of deployment in Iraq. 58 min.

4:00 Award Winners

John Doe and the Anti - Best Debut Film

Jeremy Rush, Los Angeles, CA

Is it their choices or fate that strands two friends in Nowhere, Arizona? 19 min.

Drawings of War: The Testimony of the Children of Uganda – Best Documentary

Daniel Garcia, Grand Rapids, MI

Abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army at 15, Grace Akallo after escaping the rebels serves as a volunteer at a recovery center where she helps other abducted children reconstruct their experiences through drawings. 33 min.

***Elegy of Falling Snow* – Best Student Film**

Travis R. Stoll, Chicago

A warrior gives up his life of bloodshed to be with the woman he loves, but returns to the blade when he finds her dead. 11 min.

***Raven Gets a Life* – Best Comedy**

Devi Snively, Mishawaka, IN

Diagnosed with depression, a young vampire girl seeks solace in prescription drugs, Bela Lugosi and the Grim Reaper. 10 min.

***A Cigar at the Beach* – Best of Fest**

Stephen Keep Mills, Topanga, CA

An approaching storm mirrors the storm inside a man fantasizing as he enjoys a cigar away from his family and responsibilities.

15 min.

Announcement of Audience Favorite Winners and Awards Presentation immediately following the films.