



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Michelle L. Huff

michelle@huffent.com

Kelley A. Jackson

kelley@huffent.com

HUFF Events & PR

212-239-1732

THE 18TH ANNUAL AMERICAN BLACK FILM FESTIVAL REVEALS OFFICIAL FILM SELECTIONS FOR ITS INAUGURAL YEAR IN NEW YORK CITY

The New York Premiere of Screen Gems' *Think Like A Man Too* Opens the 2014 American Black Film Festival, World Premiere of Spike Lee's Newest Title *Da' Sweet Blood of Jesus* Will Wrap the Festival as Closing Night Film

New York, NY (June 6 , 2014) – Film Life today announced that the 2014 American Black Film Festival (ABFF) will screen an impressive roster of films, including 12 world premieres, this year in New York City from June 19-22 at the SVA Theatre. The New York premiere of Screen Gems' ***Think Like A Man Too*** will lead the slate of the official film selections at the 18th annual American Black Film Festival (ABFF) on Thursday, June 19 at 8 p.m. The film, serving as the first of the two festival Gala Screenings, is the eagerly-anticipated sequel to *Think Like A Man*, the star-studded romantic comedy based on Steve Harvey's best-seller: *Act Like a Lady, Think Like A Man*.

On Sunday June 22 at 7 p.m. and 9:45 p.m. the world premiere of Spike Lee's most recent work, ***Da' Sweet Blood of Jesus***, a feature film that centers on humans who are addicted to blood, will serve as the second Gala Screening and takes the most exclusive slot as the closing night film.

The roster of ABFF films include Gala Screenings (opening and closing nights) and Spotlight Screenings, along with official selections for the Narrative Feature and Documentary sections, as well as the HBO® Short Film Competition, finalists for which will be announced June 9.

This year's ABFF Spotlight Screenings include the world premiere of UP's original feature film, ***Comeback Dad***, written by Kimberly Walker (the 2013 UP Faith & Family Screenplay Competition "Honorable Mention" winner), a heartfelt father-daughter reunion piece starring Charles S. Dutton, Tatyana Ali and Loretta Devine, **"Black Dynamite,"** the animated series courtesy of Adult Swim, chronicles the exploits of the central character, Black Dynamite, and his crew and ***Life's Essentials with Ruby Dee***, presented by Macy's and Daughters of Eve Productions are also part of the lineup. ***LEWRD*** features the legacy of the iconic and often poetic relationship between Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee told through the eyes of their grandson. Rounding out the Spotlight Screenings is Moguldom Studios' slick documentary, ***A Genius Leaves the Hood: The Unauthorized Story of Jay Z***, which archives the story of one of Hip Hop's most successful artists and his career achievements as a result of refined business acumen and American Family Insurance's ***Through A Black Lens***, directed by this year's Celebrity Ambassador, Morris Chestnut. ***Through A Black Lens*** is an online video contest that invites entrants to share their vision of the American Dream. The winning project is produced by American Family Insurance, and will premiere at ABFF.

-more-

The scope of this year's ABFF selection of narrative features is exhibited in titles such as, *Blackbird* where a young man faces the struggle of coming of age in the often restrictive walls of a Southern Baptist church and *Rise Up*, which chronicles a young Nigerian woman's courageous quest to lead a local movement against a corrupt oil company and *Una Vida* is the story of how redemption finds a scientist through his connection with a comely singer in jazz-soaked New Orleans.

"With local as well as globalist perspectives, this year's films are a tribute to the breadth of talented filmmakers that contribute to the success of the Festival. I am proud to present such outstanding work, unrivaled topics of interest and remarkable artists. The multifaceted themes of the roster of films are reflective of the diversity ABFF's new backdrop, New York City," said Jeff Friday, ABFF founder and CEO of Film Life, Inc.

Please see below for the official selection for the Spotlight, Narrative Feature and Documentary sections, finalists for which will be announced June 9. The films "in competition" will compete for the following awards:

Grand Jury Prizes for Best Director, presented by Cadillac; Best Narrative Feature, presented by BET Networks; Best Screenplay, presented by Time Warner; Best Actor, presented by UPTOWN Magazine; Best Actress, presented by GentleTreatment; the ABFF Audience Award, presented by Nielsen and the Best Documentary Award, presented by CNN Films.

In addition, select winners will receive travel prizes from American Airlines.

SPOTLIGHT SCREENINGS

A Genius Leaves the Hood: The Unauthorized Story of Jay Z (Festival Premiere)

Courtesy of Moguldom Studios

Produced by Jamarlin Martin and Marve Frazier, directed by Barion Grant

On the surface, *A Genius Leaves the Hood: The Unauthorized Story of Jay Z* chronicles how hip-hop's most successful rapper of the past two decades reached the top; but at its core, the film attempts to divulge the savvy and cunning business acumen of a mogul who decided being at the top of the charts wasn't enough.

Screening: Saturday, June 21 - 9:35 pm

ABFF Independent, Season 3 Sneak Peek (World Premiere)

Courtesy of ASPIRE TV

Produced by Sean Johnson

Panelists: Paul Butler, General Manager, ASPIRE TV; Tina Thompson, Director, Programming, ASPIRE TV; Sean Johnson, Producer, ABFF Independent

ASPIRE TV offers you a sneak peek of its original series ABFF Independent Season 3 hosted by Omari Hardwick, and focuses on how your film project can be a part of this flagship series.

Screening: Sunday, June 22 – 2:10pm

"Black Dynamite" (Season 2 Premiere)

Courtesy of Adult Swim

Executive produced and directed by Carl Jones (N-BOMB SQUAD), executive produced by Jon Steingart (Ars Nova) and Cartoon Network Studios, Inc.

Produced by Byron Minns, Scott Sanders, Jillian Apfelbaum and Michael Jai White

Voice talents: Michael Jai White, Tommy Davidson, Kym Whitley and Byron Minns

Black Dynamite, the 30-minute animated series, is back for a second season on Adult Swim. Based on 2009's critically acclaimed feature film, the Black Dynamite animated series further chronicles the exploits of the central character, Black Dynamite, and his crew.

Screening: Friday, June 20 – 6:30pm

-more-

Come Back Dad (World Premiere)

Courtesy of UP

Directed by Russ Parr, written by Kimberly Walker

Cast: Charles S. Dutton, Loretta Devine, Tatyana Ali and Brad James

Nima Babineaux appears to have it all until her absentee father, Othell, decides it is time to make amends and tries to reenter her life. This "2013 Honorable Mention" from UP's Faith & Family Screenplay Competition was written by ABFF alum Kimberly Walker.

Screening: Saturday, June 21 – 4:30 pm

Life's Essentials with Ruby Dee (Festival Premiere)

Presented by Daughters of Eve Productions, sponsored by Macy's

Produced by NJ Frank, directed by Muta'Ali Muhammad

Featuring: Ruby Dee, Ossie Davis, Harry Belafonte, Phylicia Rashad, Angela Basset, Alan Alda, Danny Glover, Cicely Tyson, Spike Lee, S. Epatha Merkerson, Malik Yoba, Dr. Cornel West, Giancarlo Esposito, Hill Harper, Sonia Sanchez, Marc Morial, Vernon Jordan, Samuel L. Jackson and Michelle Alexander

In this open-letter-style documentary, Ruby Dee and Ossie Davis' rich lives guide their grandson's personal quest to master lasting love, conscious art, and undying activism.

Screening: Sunday, June 22 – 1:50pm

Through A Black Lens

Courtesy of American Family Insurance

Directed by Morris Chestnut

Through A Black Lens is an online video contest that invites entrants to share their vision of the American Dream. The winning project is produced by American Family Insurance, and will premiere at ABFF.

Screening: Saturday, June 21 – 6:35 pm

NARRATIVE SELECTIONS

Blackbird (New York Premiere), produced by Keith Brown, Carol Ann Shine, Patrik-Ian Polk and Isaiah Washington, directed by by Patrik-Ian Polk and written by Rikki Beadle Blair and Patrik-Ian Polk, based on the novel "Blackbird" by Larry Duplechan

Cast: Mo'Nique, Isaiah Washington, Julian Walker, Terrell Tilford, Torrey Laamar, Nikki Jane, Gary L. Gray, Kevin Allesee, D. Woods and Lindsay Seim

A young singer struggles with his sexuality and the treatment of others while coming of age in a small Southern Baptist community.

Screening: Friday, June 20 – 5:50 pm

CRU (World Premiere) – In Competition

Produced by Danny Green, Courtney Triggs, Matthew Hatchette

Directed by Alton Glass, written by Alton Glass & Oliver W. Ottley III

Cast: Keith Robinson, Richard T. Jones, Melissa De Sousa, Antwon Tanner, Sammi Rotibi, Harry J. Lennix and Alison Eastwood

Nearly twenty years after a tragedy, the reunion of four high school friends opens old wounds, exposes long-hidden secrets and paves the road to forgiveness and redemption.

Screening: Saturday, June 21 – 1:50 pm

-more-

Devil in the Detail (North American Premiere) – In Competition

Produced by Shirley Frimpong Manso and Ken Attoh, written and directed by Shirley Frimpong Manso

Cast: Ama Ampofo, Adjete Anang, Eckow Smith Asante and Nse Ikpe Etim

A suspicious affair ruins an almost perfect marriage as husband and wife go on a wild goose chase into the world of sex, lies and betrayal, risking everything in one of the craziest love triangles ever.

Screening: Friday, June 20 – 12:00 pm

First Impression (New York Premiere)

Produced by Regis Le'Bron, Tabari Sturdivant and Lamman Rucker

Directed by Arthur Muhammad, written by Regis Le'Bron

Cast: Lamman Rucker, Lisa Arrindell Anderson and Elise Neal

First Impression is a romantic comedy that takes you on an enchanting journey into the complex world of Internet dating.

Screening: Friday, June 20 – 3:45 pm

Hard Time Bus (New York Premiere) – In Competition

Produced by Nicola Gregory and Dean Charles, directed by Dean Charles, written by Owen Mowatt

Cast: Neil Reidman, Naomi Ryan and Roger Griffiths

After a rude awakening, carefree and deceitful Mark Bishop makes hasty plans to marry his long-term girlfriend Denise, but soon learns with complacency comes risk.

Screening: Saturday, June 21 – 3:40 pm

Hear No Evil (World Premiere)

Produced by UpToParr Productions

Directed by Russ Parr

A freak accident jolts 15 year-old Shelby Carson from her peaceful world of silence and seclusion to the center of a world of chaos, confusion and imminent danger. As she struggles to cope with her new found circumstances, Shelby battles with what she learns about the people around her; complete strangers and her dearest loved ones. What seems to be a blessing from God on the surface could very well be a curse.

Screening: Saturday, June 21 – 8:55 pm

Myra's Angel (World Premiere) – In Competition

Produced by Richard "Rip" Hamilton, Skye Dennis, Antonio Lambertis, Shane Daniels and Hakim Hudson, written by Skye Dennis and co-directed by Skye Dennis and Hakim Hudson

Cast: Tobi Gadison, Christopher Mann, Brian Anthony Wilson, John Canada Terrell, Omilio Sparks, Franklin Ojeda Smith, Antonio Lambertis and Skye Dennis

A film about a man's journey for redemption, as he tries to clear his name of a robbery he didn't commit.

Screening: Saturday, June 21 – 7:00 pm

-more-

Rise Up (North American Premiere)

Produced by Jeta Amata, Ori Ayonmike, Wil-son Ebiye and Dede Mabiaku, written and directed by Jeta Amata

Cast: Mbong Amata, Mickey Rourke, Kim Basinger, Hakeem Kae Kzim, Akon, Wyclef, Anne Heche and Enyinna Nwigwe

Rise Up is a full-length fictionalized account of true events and tells the story of an educated Nigerian girl's return to her rural community to become the leader of a local movement fighting against the polluting oil company.

Screening: Sunday, June 22 – 4:10 pm

Sweetboy (North American Premiere)

Co-Produced by Pamela Vanderpuije and Anthony Vander, directed by Anthony Vander, written by Joe Havey

Cast: Joseph Bential, Jason Carter and Henry Douthwaite

A married man's philandering ways catch up with him when his three girlfriends hold him to ransom.

Screening: Saturday, June 21 – 1:20 pm

Una Vida (New York Premiere) – In Competition

Produced and directed by Richie Adams, Brent Caballero, Nicolas Bazan and Nancy Green-Keyes, written by Richie Adams and Nicolas Bazan

Cast: Joaquim de Almeida, Bill Cobbs, Ruth Negga, Aunjanue Ellis, Sharon Lawrence and Andre Royo

A disillusioned scientist finds redemption in the peace he brings to a beautiful jazz singer suffering from a debilitating disease in New Orleans.

Screening: Sunday, June 22 – 11:30 pm

Unsound

Produced by Darius J. Britt, Troy Hollar, Damon Mosier and Christina Marafino, written and directed by Darius J. Britt

Cast: Toreene Wolf, Darius Britt, R.D. Mower and Kevin Black

An ambitious, young filmmaker must battle his mother's mental illness and his worst fears to save her from herself and reclaim his life.

Screening: Sunday, June 22 – 4:05 pm

DOCUMENTARY SELECTIONS

The following three films compete for the Best Documentary Award, presented by CNN

25 to Life (World Premiere) – In Competition

Executive produced by Ron Simons, produced by Ron Simons, Leah Natasha Thomas, Khaliah Neal and Yvonne Shirley, directed by Mike Brown

William Brawner was infected with HIV before he was two years old and kept it a secret for over twenty-five years. Now he struggles to confront his promiscuous past and embarks on a new phase of life with his pregnant wife, who is HIV-negative. *25 to Life* is a startlingly new and critical look at HIV and AIDS in America through the intimate perspective of the Brawner family and the African American middle class community that has been affected by one man's HIV diagnosis.

Screening: Sunday, June 22 – 11:30 am

-more-

Nelson Mandela: The Myth and Me (North American Premiere) – In Competition

Produced by Carolyn Carew, Christian Beetz and Kerstin Meyer-Beetz, written and directed by Khalo Matabane

Nelson Mandela is viewed as one of the greatest political icons of the 20th century. His message of freedom, forgiveness and reconciliation has inspired people across the globe. He was elected as the first democratic president of South Africa. How do people interpret Nelson Mandela's message of freedom, forgiveness and reconciliation in today's world?

Screening: Saturday, June 21 – 11:30 am

Transcending Surgeon (World Premiere) – In Competition

Produced by Kirsten Hampton, written and directed by Sam Hampton

Transcending Surgeon is a documentary film about renowned trauma surgeon Dr. Edward Cornwell III and the challenges and impact of his career. This film explores Dr. Cornwell's family upbringing, mentors, education and other guiding forces that led to his successful career. It does so in the context of African American pioneers in medicine, and that many of his patients represent the realities of another side of urban African American life, communities beset by poverty, inadequate education and violence.

Screening: Saturday, June 21 – 11:30 am

The ABFF is a four-day event dedicated to showcasing quality films by and about people of African descent. Committed to the belief that Black content creators and artists deserve the same opportunities as their mainstream counterparts, Jeff Friday conceived the festival in 1997 as a vehicle to promote diversity in the film and television industry. Today it is widely recognized as an important pipeline bringing new Black talent to prominence both in front of and behind the camera, and is regarded as one of the leading film festivals in the world.

The American Black Film Festival is presented by Film Life, Inc., a multifaceted entertainment company headquartered in New York City. Sponsors to date include: HBO(r) (Founding and Premier), Cadillac (Premier), Black Enterprise (Premier Media), American Airlines, Colgate Optic White, Time Warner Foundation (Signature Sponsors), UP, BET Networks, Comcast/NBCUniversal, Stella Artois (Official Sponsors), and Adult Swim, American Family Insurance, Aspire, CNN Films, GentleTreatment, Grab Media, Moguldom Entertainment, Nielsen (Supporting Sponsors). Other Media Partners include EBONY, Astute Magazine, Filmmaker Magazine, Upscale Magazine, WBLS and Uptown Magazine.

Industry and Promotional Partners include 21st Century Fox, Barefoot Wine& Bubbly, Entertainment Power Players (EPP), IFP, Macy's, Metropolitan College of NY, Motown The Musical, Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), MoMA, National Association of Latino Independent Producers (NALIP), New York Women in Film and Television (NYWIFT), NYC & Company, NYU Tisch School of the Arts, Producers Guild of America (PGA), SAGIndie, Walt Disney, Walter Kaitz Foundation, Writer's Guild of America East (WGAE), and Woman In Film Los Angeles.

Festival passes and tickets are on sale now and for more information, please visit www.abff.com.

Follow us on our Social Media Platforms:

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/abff>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/American-Black-Film-Festival/47321635722>

Instagram: www.Instagram.com/AmericanBlackFilmFestival

###