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PRESS RELEASE

NYU's Kanbar Institute Announces the Winners of 2007 Richard Vague Film Production Fund Award

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Three Recent Graduates to Share \$175,000 to Make First Feature Film

The Kanbar Institute of Film & Television at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts has announced the winners of the 2007 Richard Vague Film Production Fund awards for alumni filmmaking. In the past, the annual awards were for 1st place (\$100,000) and 2nd place (\$75,000) and went to two recent graduates to make their first feature-length films. In a departure from previous years, this year's panel decided to award three prizes totaling \$175,000 due to the excellence of the submissions.

The 2007 Richard Vague 1st place winners (\$75,000) are: Eric Lin '06, Graduate Film Division, for *Why We Pull the Trigger*, a narrative film that follows three friends who enter the strange world of the underground black market for body parts as a way out of their dead-end jobs and mounting debt; and Jaffe Zinn '03, Undergraduate Film Division, for *Saturday*, a narrative film about the small town of Buhl, Idaho as it slowly awakens during the course of one day to the tragic death of one of its young citizens. The 2007 Richard Vague 2nd place winner (\$25,000) is: Gabriella Spierer '05, Graduate Film Division, for *Raising Inmate 3851*, a documentary film that takes a fierce look at the practice of prosecuting children as adults, a practice which gained popularity in the early 1990's and is now in place in almost every state.

"It was ten years ago that Richard Vague came to us with a creative idea to help emerging filmmakers," said Mary Schmidt Campbell, dean of the Tisch School of the Arts and associate provost for the arts at NYU. "And in that time he has transformed our community. To say his pioneering fund is an important early step in building the careers of many of our filmmakers would truly be an understatement. Richard's vision and his faith in the future of young artists is an exemplar to us all."

In addition, 18 finalists will each receive \$1,000. The 2007 Richard Vague Film Production Fund finalists from the Graduate Film Division are: Aurora Aguero, *Punk Rock Bingo* (Narrative); Vashti Anderson, *Mandatory Fun* (Narrative); Cruz Angeles, *Don't Let Me Drown* (Narrative); Rafael Del Toro, *Mullet* (Narrative); Brian Rigney Hubbard, *The Last Ombudsman* (Documentary); Eric Lin, *Why We Pull the Trigger* (Narrative); Janet McIntyre, *Faded* (Documentary); Eva Saks, *All American* (Documentary); Gabriella Spierer, *Raising Inmate 3851* (Documentary); and Sen-I Yu, *Chintas* (Narrative).

The 2007 Richard Vague finalists from the Undergraduate Film Division are: Jonathan Blitstein, *Let Them Chirp Awhile* (Narrative); Jonathan (Yoni) Brook, *Underground Healer* (Documentary); Andrew Bui, *Betaville* (Narrative); Jonathan Labes, *Waste* (Documentary); Elaine Liu, *A Long Way Home* (Narrative); Yon Motskin, *Ethel* (Narrative); Duncan Skiles, *Wheely* (Narrative); and Jaffe Zinn, *Saturday* (Narrative).

The Richard Vague Film Production Fund, established in 1999, is the first and largest financial assistance award for feature filmmaking by alumni at a film school. This year's winners and finalists were selected from 82 entries submitted by graduate and undergraduate alumni of the Kanbar Institute of Film & Television.

To be eligible, the 2007 applicants must have graduated between 2000 and 2006 and have demonstrated exceptional talent and ability in film production. In addition, each must have a feature screenplay and demonstrate his or her ability to complete the project. Required supporting materials included a feature screenplay or documentary outline, comprehensive budget, production schedule, and preliminary cast and crew lists.

The Kanbar Institute of Film and Television at the Tisch School of the Arts provides an intensive and professional education in filmmaking. The program shared first place in recent U.S. News and World Report rankings of the nation's film programs; since 1992, fifteen Student Academy Award gold medals have been presented to NYU student filmmakers by the Motion Picture Academy of Arts and Sciences. At the 1998 Sundance Film Festival, Kanbar Institute students and alumni walked away with an unprecedented seven awards in virtually every top-prize category. And at the 2002 Sundance Film Festival Kanbar Institute graduates and faculty won nine out of the 19 awards. Approximately 150 graduate and 1,050 undergraduate film students pursue degrees in film and television production, photography, cinema studies, dramatic writing, and interactive telecommunications. Distinguished alumni of the Kanbar Institute include Joel Coen, Chris Columbus, Billy Crystal, Martha Coolidge, Ernest Dickerson, Amy Heckerling, Jim Jarmusch, Ang Lee, Spike Lee, Brett Ratner, Nancy Savoca, Martin Scorsese, Susan Seidelman, and Oliver Stone, among many others.

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