

'Grounded' Wins Best Feature Film Award at Pittsburgh Indie Film Festival

Los Angeles – June 20, 2013 – Los Angeles-based documentary filmmaker Sean Patrick Crowell has won the Best Feature Film award at the second annual Pittsburgh Independent Film Festival (PIFF) for his documentary “Grounded,” which chronicles the actions of marijuana smugglers Terry and Jimmy Dougherty and the law enforcement officers who pursued them.

“‘Grounded’ is an unbiased look at marijuana trafficking; it was neither ‘pro drug’ nor ‘pro law’ enforcement,” said Ronald Quigley, festival director for PIFF. “That balance was very compelling.”

According to Quigley, the festival’s judges tapped Crowell’s documentary for the Best Feature Film award because of its photography, sound design and clear, concise story. “Grounded” traces the lives of the Dougherty brothers from their Pittsburgh suburb of Pleasant Hills to Colombia and back. The movie explains, among other things, how the brothers’ father introduced them to flying airplanes in the 1960s, which led to Terry Dougherty’s ability to fly drug shipments between Colombia and rural Alabama and Florida during the 1970s and early 1980s. The Dougherty brothers eventually grew bold enough to pilot a DC-4 to Colombia, returning with nearly 20,000 lbs. of marijuana. Along the flight path to South America, Terry Dougherty crosses paths with the Cuban Air Force.

“I think it’s an unusual, but exciting, thing for a documentary to win an award for Best Feature,” said Crowell. “Perhaps, that’s because we did a painstaking job of telling this story from a number of angles; and the movie informs and engages the people who watch it.”

The “Grounded” production team includes producer Liz Newman, a 20-year Hollywood veteran, whose television credits include “Sex and the City” and “SCRUBS,” and director of photography Andrew Rawson who is currently shooting the ABC comedy “Cougar Town.”

“Grounded” is Crowell’s second documentary. Crowell and Newman also teamed up to produce Crowell’s first documentary “Bike Lane.” Crowell’s two-decade resume includes serving as the key grip on “SCRUBS” and the “Hangover” trilogy.

This year’s PIFF received 217 submissions from around the globe, and its judges accepted 60 films.

More information about “Grounded,” along with a trailer, is at: <http://www.groundedthemovie.com>.

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Media contact:

Bill Perry

MARCH 24 Media, LLC

Mobile: 614-975-5738

bperry@march24media.com