

## **SOUTH OF PICO receives GRAND JURY PRIZE**

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11th ANNUAL AMERICAN BLACK FILM FESTIVAL AWARDS "SOUTH OF PICO" GRAND JURY PRIZE FOR BEST PICTURE, AND AWARDS "PICO" ACTOR HENRY SIMMONS BEST ACTOR AWARD.

SOUTH OF PICO also awarded Heineken Red Star Award for "Originality, Innovation and Vision."

(Los Angeles, California- October 29th, 2007) – The Eleventh Annual American Black Film Festival (ABFF), sponsored by HBO, Kodak, and Blockbuster among others, has awarded AFI graduate Ernst Gossner's writing and directing feature film debut "South of Pico," the Grand Jury Prize for Best Picture. In addition, festival representatives announced during their award ceremony on Sunday night that "Pico" star Henry Simmons, best known for his work on "Shark" and "NYPD Blue," was the winner of Festival honors for Best Actor.

ABFF sponsor Heineken also presented "South of Pico" director Ernst Gossner with its prestigious Red Star Award, given to "recognize originality, innovation and vision in film and is demonstrative of (Heineken's) continued commitment to supporting and fostering unique film experiences."

With a number of distribution offers in hand after its worldwide Festival debut, "South of Pico" is expected to be released in cinemas in 2008.

Inspired by actual events, "South of Pico" is a dramatic tale about the lives of four people drawn together during one act of violence after they witness a tragic car accident. The script is written by Gossner who also drew from his own experiences while living in Los Angeles during film school at AFI. The script was developed in the Berlin Film Festival Script Clinic. Gossner's past directing credits include the award winning short films "Bar Time" and "Flucht."

"South of Pico" stars Henry Simmons, Gina Torres and Kip Pardue.

Henry Simmons can currently be seen opposite James Woods on the hit TV show "Shark." His film roles include "Lackawanna Blues," "Taxi" and "Something New," as well as the upcoming "The Insurgents."

Gina Torres is best known for starring on Joss Whedon's "Firefly" and "Serenity," for her roles in the "Matrix" sequels, and for her lead role in the Chris Rock starrer, "I Think I Love My Wife."

Kip Pardue, a familiar face to movie audiences for roles in both studio and independent films, stood out in "Remember the Titans" and has received accolades for his performances in films like Sundance Grand Jury Prize nominee, "Loggerheads." He's recently been seen in a recurring role on "ER" and in the remake "The Wizard of Gore."

"South of Pico" is produced by Eric Presley, Richard Marcus and Ernst Gossner. Executive Producers are Ralf Mosig and Jeffrey R. Iorio, Co-Executive Producer is David Lee. The film was shot by Richard Marcus. The music is composed by John Swihart, best known for his work on "Napoleon Dynamite."

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