Winners of the 6th Annual Final Draft Big Break! Screenwriting Contest Announced at Event Honoring Sydney Pollack

Final Draft, Inc., today announced the winners of the 6th Annual Final Draft "Big Break!" International Screenplay Contest at an event that also honored Hollywood legend Sydney Pollack with its inaugural Final Draft Hall of Fame Award. Big Break! is an annual, global screenwriting competition designed to support emerging creative talent. Big Break! rewards screenwriters with over $15,000 in cash and prizes and exposure to the entertainment industry through meetings with industry professionals, studio executives and agents.

Calabasas, CA (PRWEB) October 12, 2005 -- Final Draft, Inc., (www.finaldraft.com) publisher of Final Draft®, the world’s #1-selling scriptwriting software, today announced the winners of the 6th Annual Final Draft "Big Break!" International Screenplay Contest at an event that also honored Hollywood legend Sydney Pollack with its inaugural Final Draft Hall of Fame Award. Big Break! is an annual, global screenwriting competition designed to support emerging creative talent. Big Break! rewards screenwriters with over $15,000 in cash and prizes and exposure to the entertainment industry through meetings with industry professionals, studio executives and agents. This year’s winners were selected out of 3,500 entries worldwide (a 25% increase over last year).

The first place winner is Julia Van Develder of Rhinebeck, New York. Her winning screenplay, The Escape Artist, tells the story of an aspiring artist who finds himself trapped in a boring corporate job and a loveless marriage. He fakes a mental breakdown and is committed to a psychiatric hospital in hopes of pursuing his dream in the guise of “art therapy.” But his boss and his wife discover the con and are out for revenge.

Second place goes to Craig Tiede of Meadville, PA. His screenplay, Zoo Day, is about a meteorologist who abandons his own cancer treatment to track a hurricane. His life collides with those of a wounded soldier and a single mother raising her teenage sons. Together they battle the elements and forge bonds in an attempt to survive.

Jon Gilbert of London, England, won third place. His screenplay, The Sculptress and The Thief, is a thriller about an armed robber on the run from police who takes refuge in a warehouse owned by an eccentric, elderly sculptress. Tensions grow as her devious plans undermine the robber's haven, ending in a horrific climax.

Big Break! Becomes the First Paperless Major Screenwriting Contest
Through the combined efforts of Big Break’s! premier sponsor Microsoft and Without A Box, the contest’s official Screenwriting Submission System, a majority of this year’s 3,500 entries in the contest were submitted, read and judged without being printed on paper. Entries were received online at Without A Box and then transferred to Microsoft’s Sharepoint Server which delivered them to Microsoft Powered Tablet PC’s for reading and judging. “By utilizing Microsoft’s technology we saved hundreds of man-hours of copying and printing, not to mention many trees,” said Marc Madnick, CEO of Final Draft, Inc.

About the Big Break! Contest
Now in its sixth year, Final Draft's Big Break! Contest has become one of the most popular in Hollywood due to previous winners' success and its generous payout. Winning screenplays have been optioned and produced; finalists have garnered attention from recognizable production entities and literary agents.
This year judges include actress Eva Mendes, writer/director Joel Schumacher, writer/director Todd Phillips, Miramax’s Michael Zoumas, producer Michel Shane, agent Maha Dakhil and Fox Searchlight’s Zola Mashariki.

Past winners and finalists have gone on to produce their films and secure representation. Rylend Grant, last year’s winner said, “The Big Break! contest gave me a seal of approval, a big shiny medal hanging off of that calling card and because of that I just signed a six-figure deal to write for an A-list actress and an Oscar® winning director. I am now writing a remake of a Chabrol film called L'enfer for Luc Besson and Penelope Cruz.”

“For more than a decade Final Draft, Inc. has been providing software and tools for screenwriters. We’re honored to bring recognition to promising screenwriters across the globe,” says Madnick.

Microsoft was this year’s premier sponsor. Without a Box, Gotham Writers’ Workshop, The Writers’ Store, Fade In Magazine, scr(i)pt Magazine and RES Magazine were the other domestic sponsors. The Screenwriters Store in London was this year’s International Sponsor.

For further details on the Big Break! contest and the top 20 finalists and judges, go to http://www.bigbreakcontest.com.

About the Final Draft Hall of Fame Award
Final Draft gave its inaugural Final Draft Hall of Fame Award to Hollywood legend Sydney Pollack. The Hall of Fame award was created to recognize entertainment industry luminaries that foster the art of screenwriting and nurture and inspire the creative process.

Sydney Pollack’s award-winning body of work is prolific, including The Interpreter, Out of Africa, The Firm, Tootsie, The Way We Were, and 3 Days of the Condor. Sydney Pollack’s nineteen films have received 46 Academy Award® nominations including two for Best Picture. His film Out of Africa won seven Oscars® including Best Picture and Best Director for him.

About Final Draft, Inc.
Final Draft, Inc. was founded in 1991 to develop a scriptwriting program that allows the writer to concentrate on the creative process and not on Hollywood's stringent formatting rules. Since then, Final Draft has become the Hollywood professional's choice and the world's #1-selling scriptwriting program.

The company's headquarters is in Calabasas, California. More information about the company and its products is available at www.finaldraft.com.

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