

## **MEDIA BRIEF: Thursday 24 May**

### **FURTHER SNEAK TITLES + GUEST SHORTS SELECTOR ANNOUNCED FOR NZIFF 2012**

The New Zealand International Film Festival today announced a further four sneak titles for the 2012 Festival.

#### **West of Memphis**

Peter Jackson's West of Memphis documentary will screen in July as part of the Festival thanks to support from Wingnut Films and Sony Pictures.

In 1994 three Arkansas teenagers were convicted for murdering three eight year old boys – on the strength of an implausible confession and 'expert' testimony that characterised them as Satanists. A film about the case made by Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky, alerted the world (including NZIFF audiences in 1996), proved the founding document of an international movement to free the 'West Memphis Three', and led to the participation from Peter Jackson and Fran Walsh in producing this film. For 18 years the West Memphis judge who oversaw the initial trial denied successive retrial bids. Then suddenly last August, facing formidable legal expertise funded by supporters, the court caved, sort of: the three were released without retrial but had to admit culpability whilst proclaiming their innocence.

**<http://tinyurl.com/86pvfp8>**

#### **Bully**

A potent and provocative look at a problem that's out of control, what with 13 million American kids a year being bullied, and some of them even taking their own lives. Lee Hirsch goes beyond statistics to focus on a handful of bullied students alongside the families of two suicides trying to organize on a national level, to pull the issue out of dark corners and take a stand for the silent. As one parent says to a school official who tries to brush the topic away: 'You politicianed me.' *Bully* isn't politics. It's a heartfelt cry for help." — Peter Travers, *Rolling Stone*

**<http://tinyurl.com/74gfr6b>**

#### **First Position**

"Never putting a foot wrong, the touching, enormously satisfying *First Position* follows six gifted ballet students from disparate social, regional, economic and ethnic backgrounds as they prepare for the Youth America Grand Prix, a prestigious competition at which the world's top dance companies and schools prospect for new talent... The film [facilitated by the competition organisers] combines the built-in drama, tension and suspense of documentaries such as *Spellbound*, with exciting, beautifully lensed variations performed by the virtuosos of the future..." — Alissa Simon, *Variety*

**<http://tinyurl.com/7gu9tut>**

#### **Bernie**

Reunited with his *School of Rock* director Richard Linklater, Jack Black has his best ever role and meets it with inspiration and amazing restraint. Playing a real-life, world-famous-in-Texas character (whom you can see Black meet if you stay for the credits) he provides a wonderfully full portrait of a closeted small-town guy who has sunk his enormous personality into round-the-clock, upbeat, apple-pie niceness.

Blessed with a golden singing voice, attentive to anniversaries, generous with gifts, Bernie Tiede was an assistant undertaker so popular with the old ladies of Carthage, Texas, that when he confessed to murdering one of their number, nobody in town was prepared to listen. And if he did it, they say, victim Marjorie Nugent (a sour, purse-clutching Shirley MacLaine) had it coming.

**<http://tinyurl.com/7fwbm4r>**

### **NZIFF Best of NZ Shorts Competition**

Roger Donaldson is confirmed as the Guest Selector for this year's inaugural Best of New Zealand Short Film competition. Australian-born New Zealand film producer, director and writer, Roger's early film work was instrumental in the creation of the NZ Film Commission in the late '70s and he has achieved international success telling New Zealand stories on the giant screen with films such as *The World's Fastest Indian* and *Smash Palace*. His latest film *November Man*, starring Pierce Brosnan and Dominic Cooper, is currently in pre-production.

Festival programmers have sent Roger a short list of twelve films from which he will select a programme of finalists. He'll be releasing his selection next week.

"It is a pleasure to be the Guest Selector for the inaugural Best of NZ Shorts Competition for the NZIFF. The launch of an annual competition with the Festival is a great opportunity to showcase and celebrate filmmakers and put them in front of an audience. It's terrific to see filmmakers create something distinctive and memorable within the limitations of a short timeframe. I have enjoyed this opportunity to sample some impressive new short films from New Zealand storytellers." — Roger Donaldson

The Festival will begin in Auckland (19 July – August 5) and open simultaneously in Wellington and Dunedin a week later (27 July – August 12), then in Christchurch (9 - 26 August). Further regional dates are being advised on the website as they are confirmed.

The Festival have already announced Bob Marley documentary *Marley*, Frederick Wiseman's Paris nude cabaret documentary *CRAZY HORSE*, and Lynn Sheldon's *Your Sister's Sister* (starring Emily Blunt) for the Festival from July.

Festival programmes will be available online and around town from June 26 in Auckland, and June 29 in Wellington. For Festival updates visit [www.nzff.co.nz](http://www.nzff.co.nz) and register to receive e-newsletters.

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**For further information about the NZ International Film Festival or to arrange an interview with Director Bill Gosden:**

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