

# Interviews: Winners at the 2009 Chicago International Film Festival

Submitted by PatrickMcD [1] on October 19, 2009 - 10:16pm

- Brad Bischoff [2]
- Chicago Award [3]
- Chicago International Film Festival [4]
- Gold Hugo [5]
- HollywoodChicago.com Content [6]
- Interview [7]
- James Choi [8]
- Judith Krant [9]
- Made in China [10]
- <u>Made III Cilila</u> [10]
- <u>Mississippi Damned</u> [11]<u>Morgan Stiff</u> [12]
- Patrick McDonald [13]
- Tina Mabry [14]
- Wet [15]

CHICAGO – "Mississippi Damned," the feature film winner of the Gold Hugo, the top prize at the Chicago International Film Festival, was a labor of passion for producer Morgan R. Stiff and director/writer Tina Mabry.

HollywoodChicago was at the awards ceremony at the Ambassador East Hotel, in the famous Pump Room, and after the presentation of the Gold Hugo for Best Picture spoke to Morgan Stiff and Tina Mabry about their newly crowned film.



HollywoodChicago: Morgan, what does winning this award mean to you?

**Morgan Stiff:** It means a lot. We sacrificed a lot to make this film, it was a film that was crucial to the director, who is my partner in life. It means a lot to have this recognition for something we worked so hard for.

Tina wrote it and poured her heart out into the script. I was dedicated to make the film, not only because she is my partner and I love her, but it is a great story and she really got to the heart of a lot of universal themes.

**HC:** Tina, what kind of passion did you have for your story to work so hard to get it to the screen?

**Tina Mabry:** It is based on my family and life story. I always wanted to explore that concept and put it on film. So I really didn't have the luxury to fail. My family saw me writing the script and wanting to make the film, so we had to go through with it. Not doing it wasn't an option.

HC: What did learn about yourself, filmmaking and the capacity to get to the end of a project by doing 'Mississippi Damned'?



TM: On a personal level there was a lot of issues, because it was based on my life. With its aspects of molestation, abuse and addiction, this was something I wasn't able to talk about before and I had a shame associated with it, until I finally put it in the movie and started showing it. This story wasn't just about me, it unfortunately the experience of many people. So the result is I didn't feel so alone, and I know I felt shame about what I went through, but in the end it makes me feel stronger as a person.

**HC:** Are you putting this film out there to help other people who went through this situation?

**TM:** Naturally every time you make a film there can be a social component to it. For us, since it is touching on so many poignant issues, we're putting it out there. Something we're discovering at the screenings, people stand up and confess secrets in front of hundreds of people. It's gratifying as filmmakers to feel like we created a safe environment in which people can say those things, proclaim their secrets and be stronger afterward.



### Writer/Director Brad Bischoff of the Short Film 'Wet', Winner of the Chicago Award

In the short film category, 'Wet,' a truly guerilla film, won the Chicago Award at the presentation. Writer, director and featured performer Brad Bischoff talked about the experience.



**HC:** What is special about winning the Chicago Award?

Brad Bischoff: It's the best feeling in the world, because short films are one of my favorite things to do and Chicago is the city I want to be in for the rest of my life for film.

**HC:** What is your background and how did you get to this point?

BB: I went to Columbia College Chicago for film school, and I would be nothing without my first instructor, Miguel Silveira. It was in his class that I made 'Eyelids,' my first short film, that wound up taking me to Cannes.

**HC:** What type of films do you want to make from here on?

BB: At this point in my life, I'm scared to grow up, so the films I am doing are based on staying young. I'm looking forward to shooting my first feature, about a boy who is born in aisle one at a toy store, growing up through the aisles as the store is going out of business. It has been a theme that I have been exploring since I started doing films, afraid to grow up.

**HC:** Any interesting stories from the set of 'Wet'?

BB: When we were shooting Wet, we had no permits and it was shot during rush hour in the Chicago Loop during winter. It's about a guy who is wet and the director of photography and myself both had stages of hypothermia. While we were filming, since we had no permits, we had people distracting the security guards while we got the shots. It was one of the most insane experiences of my life.

James Choi, Representing 'Made in China,' Winner, New Directors Competition		



## Interviews: Winners at the 2009 Chicago International Film Festival

Published on HollywoodChicago.com (http://www.hollywoodchicago.com)



James Choi is the producer of Made in China.

**HC:** Tell me about the film, and tell me about the journey to make it.

**James Choi:** It is the epitome of the true independent film spirit. It was shot on location in Shanghai. It was seriously about the will to do it. It was made by the people, granted Judith [Krant, the director] is a amazingly talented person, but it is seriously made by the people by the people. It speaks to the audience.

I give credit to the festival programmers who gave us the opportunity to show this light comedy, goofy film among the traditional dark brooding independents.

Read about the rest of the winners here. [16] The Chicago International Film Festival runs until October 22th. Click here for details. [17]



18

By <u>PATRICK McDONALD</u> [19] Senior Staff Writer HollywoodChicago.com <u>pat@hollywoodchicago.com</u> [18]

© 2009 Patrick McDonald, HollywoodChicago.com

#### Source URL (retrieved on *Mar 28 2024 - 3:07pm*):

http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/9057/interviews-the-winners-at-the-chicago-international-film-festival

### Links:

- [1] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/hankq
- [2] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/brad-bischoff
- [3] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/chicago-award
- [4] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/labels/chicago\_international\_film\_festival.html
- [5] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/gold-hugo
- [6] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content
- [7] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/labels/interview.html
- [8] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/james-choi
- [9] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/judith-krant
- [10] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/made-in-china
- [11] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/mississippi-damned
- [12] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/morgan-stiff
- [13] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/patrick-mcdonald
- [14] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/tina-mabry
- [15] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/wet
- [16] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/9044/mississippi-damned-vincere-big-winners-at-45th-chicago-international-film-festival
- [17] http://www.chicagofilmfestival.com/
- [18] mailto:pat@hollywoodchicago.com
- [19] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#PAT