

FILM INDEPENDENT

FIND

Film Makers. Film Leaders. Film Lovers.

SEPTEMBER 2008

Volume 17, Number 9

MIRACLE AT ST. ANNA

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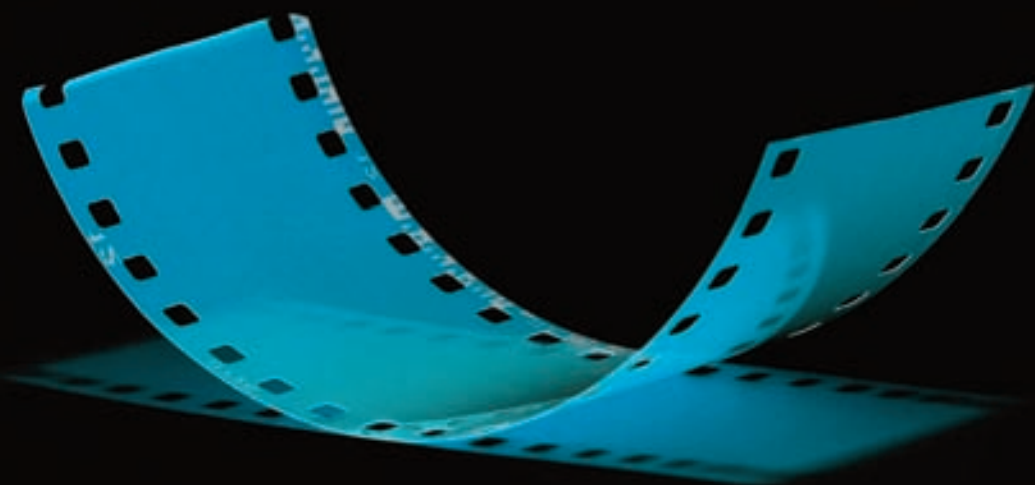


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\$20 of each member's annual dues is allocated for an annual subscription to Film Independent's newsletter. Editorial and advertising deadline is two months preceding the issue. Advertising art is due six weeks preceding the issue.

Advertising

For display advertising rates and specs, contact Irma Barrios at 310.432.1250 or IBarrios@FilmIndependent.org.

**Preview Screening:
Battle in Seattle**

See page 5 for details



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Directed by Spike Lee

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Fellows Update Interview: *The Kids Are Alright*
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EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Alan Ball speaks at Film Independent's screening of *Towelhead* at The Landmark on July 23.
- 2 Peter Macdissi and Summer Bishil attend Film Independent's screening of *Towelhead* at The Landmark on July 23.
- 3 *Pineapple Express* director David Gordon Green speaks at a Film Independent pre-view screening of his film at The Landmark on August 4.
- 4 Film Independent members enjoy the view at Cinema Lounge at the W Los Angeles on July 15.
- 5 Jason Salzman, Helder Sun, and Laurent Morlet attend Film Independent's Cinema Lounge at the W Los Angeles on July 15.



FILM INDEPENDENT'S

SPIRIT AWARDS

2009 CALL FOR ENTRIES

Early Deadline: Monday, September 15, 2008

Final Deadline: Tuesday, October 7, 2008

For a complete list of eligibility requirements, guidelines, submission fees, frequently asked questions, and entry forms, please visit SpiritAwards.com.

Nominations announced: Tuesday, December 2, 2008

Awards ceremony: Saturday, February 21, 2009

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INTERVIEW: STUART TOWNSEND (*BATTLE IN SEATTLE*)

BY: LORENZA MUNOZ

Stuart Townsend could not convince anyone in Hollywood to finance his ensemble film, *Battle in Seattle*, the fictional account of the now famous 1999 World Trade Organization protests. Determined to get it made, he found financiers in Canada willing to back it after a cast, including Woody Harrelson and girlfriend, Charlize Theron, fell into place. The Irish-born Townsend wanted to delve into the issues surrounding the controversial policies of the WTO while also telling the human stories of people affected by the protests. Known mainly for supporting roles in his decade or so of acting, Townsend, 35, was angered by what he saw as biased media coverage of the event which, he says, portrayed the protesters as violent and aimless youths bent on destroying Seattle. He hopes the film will inspire people to get informed and take action.

What was the catalyst behind making this film?

I moved to this country on September 8, 2001. We actually left New York a day before the 9/11 attacks. I arrived in L.A. on Sept. 10 and this movie is partly a response to 9/11. While I was completely horrified by the events of that day, I wasn't as affected as an American would be because I am not from this country. I was simply shocked at the lack of dissent in the next couple of years after the attacks. This is a dissent film but I thought I would get this movie made in 2004. I thought it would be a major political movie. But it was not until now that we got it done.

Why did you decide on this topic as the subject of your first movie?

I was studying globalization. I was meeting a lot of friends who were environmentally aware and telling me what was going on. Up until that point I was pretty apolitical and not very involved. When I started reading and studying and hearing these things I was shocked. I started to learn how the world worked with the IMF,

the WTO and the World Bank. They were, in part, why there are so many problems of inequality in the world. As I was studying I came upon a book that had an essay called "Battle in Seattle." It really brought those five days to life. I thought 'Wow. This is an amazing event. I remember the event but not the way [the author] described it from the boots-on-the-ground perspective. It felt very visual and the issues that people were out there for are still pretty timely. They will never go away. I also thought the event was misrepresented by the mainstream media and that it would be fun to re-examine it as a feature film. Why not try to bring it to a bigger audience and do it more emotional rather than just factual.

In what way did the mainstream media mis-represent what occurred?

The police used disbursement techniques, like tear gas on peaceful protesters who were not doing anything but sitting on the ground. It was not until four or five hours later that the anarchists came and started smashing up the downtown. But in the media it

was conveyed that the anarchists smashed out the downtown and that was why the police came down hard on the protesters. The media focuses on spectacle. Kids smashing windows sells more news than teaching people about the facts of what was going on.

Where were you during the event?

I was in Ireland. I saw a bit of it on TV but I didn't get much information from the coverage. I wasn't really that interested in it at the time. The coverage didn't give me a full view of what the event was about and what the WTO represented. I was pretty shocked when I started researching.

You had hoped to get the film done and released by 2004. But you mentioned that other films that came along before *Battle in Seattle* helped you in financing your film. Which films?

[Stephen Gaghan's] *Syriana*. [Paul Haggis'] *Crash* was a huge help because they were ensembles. Hollywood is pretty conservative. I researched for a year and a half. This is a historical event and there is a certain amount of

responsibility in telling this story accurately. I am trying to make a political film but also an entertaining film. I want to tell an accurate story but also deviate to entertain. Absorbing all of the information allowed me to come up with the ensemble structure.

Did you have financing in place when you wrote the screenplay?

No. Everyone was interested but no one wanted to do it. So I rewrote the script. And I cut together a short documentary and created a visual for the script. That allowed the people to visualize it and with the new script, I met some Canadians who liked it. Hollywood wouldn't go near it. That started the process of trying to make a big film on a small budget.

How small?

It started at about \$6.5 million and it grew to about \$7 million.

Continue reading our interview with Stuart Townsend at FilmIndependent.org (click on "News")



INTERVIEW: SPIKE LEE AND NOVELIST AND SCREENWRITER JAMES MCBRIDE (*MIRACLE AT ST. ANNA*)

Spike Lee

Your wife recommended the novel to you, right?

She had it on a bookshelf and she told me to read it. She knew that I was looking to do something in Italy and knows my taste and thought it would be a good read.

Why Italy?

I've been going to Italy since 1986. I enjoy the country and the culture.

What made the novel cinematic?

Right away I said this has the potential to be a great film because it had the scope, the locale and the relationships throughout the story...You have bombs going off, machine gun fire and Nazis and Buffalo Soldiers the Partisans and you have to stage that stuff.

How did James McBride react when you contacted him?

I hunted down his phone number and told him 'I'd like to make your book into a film.' At first he didn't believe it was me. He thought it was a crank call. But then we talked about what needed to be done.

Was it challenging to film a war movie?

I have done epics before, like *Malcom X*,

but this was on a bigger scale. I had never done this before but I had a great military advisor. His name was Billy Budd. He was instrumental in getting the actors together and mapping out how to shoot this.

Did you film in the actual location?

The massacre was filmed in the actual location. It is a small village in Tuscany. On August 12, 1944 the Nazis massacred 560 innocent Italian women and children. You definitely felt the spirits and the souls of the people who were slaughtered on that day. We did a lot of research to be as honest to what actually happened on that day. We relied on the accounts of the survivors. There were not that many and they were children when it happened.

You have mentioned that World War II helped set the stage for the Civil Rights movement in the United States. Can you elaborate?

I just think that a lot of the black soldiers who came back from Europe having put their life on the line for this country became radicalized. They were not going to go for the same stuff they had gone through before the war [in the United States].

You have been doing a lot of television as well as your documentary on New Orleans, how was it getting back to features?

It was no big deal. I don't make a great

distinction between narrative and documentary films. Its not like I flip on a switch. It is story telling. I don't even think about it until people remind me. It's not a metamorphosis going from *Inside Man* to *When the Levees Broke* to *Miracle at St. Anna*.

How has your work evolved through the years?

I let other people think about that. I am just trying to tell different stories.

What makes a good story?

I can't answer that question. I don't have a checklist. It is not just one thing. It is something that is really intuitive and I just know when I read it and when I see it.

James McBride

Other than overhearing your uncles talk about their World War II exploits, what pointed you to this specific story?

The whole notion of World War II as a story telling device is too delicious for most writers to pass up. I am no exception. I was curious about the African Americans, Asians and Latinos, the other soldiers outside of the typical GI Joe characters we often associate with World War II. That is not to diminish the valiant effort and sacrifice of white American males but they were not the only ones to suffer...I also wanted

To director Spike Lee, *Miracle at St. Anna*, James McBride's World War II novel, had all the elements of a sweeping feature film. The novel, set in the hills of Tuscany during the brutal last stages of the war, tells the story of four Buffalo Soldiers from the army's 92nd division who are separated from their unit behind enemy lines. Upon meeting McBride, Lee asked him if he wanted to write the screenplay. But the best selling author was leery. His past experience with Hollywood, when there was interest in making a film based on his acclaimed memoir *The Color of Water*, was an unhappy one. After several meetings, however, McBride found Lee to be authentic, open to ideas and most important, straight up. The pair have much in common including a love for Brooklyn and being jazz musicians. Lee's next projects include a documentary on Kobe Bryant and a film version of the play *Passing Strange*. McBride's latest novel, *Song yet Sung*, has been published and he is already starting to write his next novel. Lee and McBride were interviewed separately.

BY: LORENZA MUNOZ

to, in some degree, write objectively in terms of what was really happening. For me that was a really refreshing exercise. When I read the historical accounts about the allied campaign in Italy and then when I spoke about it with the black soldiers and some of the white soldiers, their perspective was often quite different. I just felt like the 92nd Division was a good story to tell. The story dealt with difficult moral choices that needed to be made, great characters and a freshness...This was a story that no one had mined. It was a fresh vein. Writers always look for new stories.

That is unusual too, considering that World War II has been the subject of so much fiction and non-fiction...

Miracle at St. Anna is not about World War II. It's about how people have to make difficult moral choices when the bedrock of society has been taken from beneath their feet. It's about human beings. That is what all my work is about.

Miracle at St. Anna was your first novel, how did it differ from writing your memoir, *The Color of Water*?

Writing a novel is like driving a truck down a dark road—you can only see as far as your headlights. And that really says it all. You know where you have to go but you don't know what obstacles lay ahead of you. There is a real lack of freedom that doesn't exist in non-fiction. In fiction once

the characters get moving it is impossible to make them do things they don't want to do. You have to trust the characters. The *Color of Water* was the story of my life. But I still had to research. The writing is relatively easy compared to research.

How many years of research did you spend on *Miracle*?

Maybe three. I don't really count. I just do it until it's done. I moved to Italy for six months... Whatever you need to do to get to your story, that is what you do.

Spike said that when he called you, you didn't believe it was him...

I thought it was my buddy Damon messing around. I was really quite shocked. I can remember where I was when he called. I was on the road in Pennsylvania near a gas station. I heard someone on the other line say "James McBride? This is Spike Lee." I think I said "Man, what's the matter with you?" But then when I realized it was Spike, I was quite excited. I have always liked Spike's movies. As a Brooklyn-ite and New Yorker I was very proud of him and what he had done with his work.

And then you met for coffee?

He came by my office. I have a little dump on 43 rd Street—a cold water flat in Hell's Kitchen. The bell rang and he was standing there—no entourage. He came up and

he talked about what he wanted to do. He said are you interested in writing it and I said yeah. And then we started talking about the script. He wanted me to write it on spec. I was nervous about it because of what had happened to me before.

What happened to you before?

Many things happened and then didn't happen during *The Color of Water*. It wasn't something that I had a very pleasant experience with. When a writer goes to Hollywood it is just a different world. Producers drop in and out...You have to deal with executives who are involved with the creative process and think they know what they are talking about. So, I saw a couple of people who knew Spike and I asked them if Spike could be trusted. And they said "Yes, very much so. He is a straight up guy." So, when he called again we met and got to work. We wrote the whole thing on a handshake agreement...The writing took maybe three months. We met, we talked then I did a treatment then we met again and then I did another treatment. Then I started writing the script 10-15 pages at a time. We did that through the whole first draft. It was cool. It worked out because after meeting with him three or four times I could see this was a guy who could be trusted.

[Continue reading our interview with James McBride at FilmIndependent.org \(click on "News"\)](#)

SEPTEMBER

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SAT/SUN MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY

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	FILM INDEPENDENT OFFICE IS CLOSED	Late Library until 9:30 pm Membership Orientation 6:00 pm Film Independent office		Final Cut Pro 6: A Two-Day Introduction 10:00 am Moviola Education Center	
6	8	9	10	11	12
		Tech Talk: Let's Go Tapeless 7:30 pm Film Independent office			FILM INDEPENDENT OFFICE IS CLOSED
13	15	16	17	18	19
	PREVIEW SCREENING: Rachel Getting Married 7:30 pm WGA Theater	IndieLink: Editors, Producers and Directors 7:30 pm Film Independent office CINEMA LOUNGE 7:30 pm Poolside at the W Los Angeles - Westwood			
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20	22	23	24	25	26
	Editing Principles and Aesthetics begins 7:00 pm Film Independent office	PREVIEW SCREENING: Battle in Seattle 7:30 pm The Landmark - West Los Angeles		Introduction to DVD Authoring 10:00 am-4:30 pm Film Independent office PREVIEW SCREENING: Miracle at St. Anna 7:30 pm The Landmark - West Los Angeles	FILMMAKER FORUM SPECIAL SCREENING: The Brothers Bloom Note Time: 7:00 pm Directors Guild of America
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					Filmmaker Forum Directors Guild of America, Los Angeles

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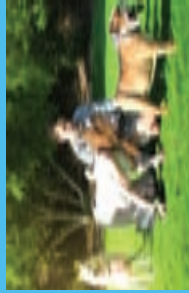
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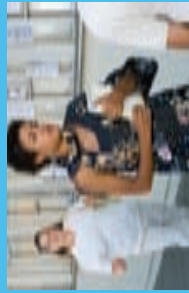
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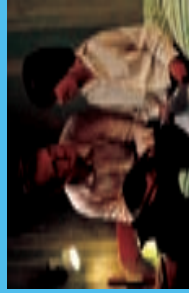
Dog Lovers



Stitches



The Job



The Brothers Bloom



The Postcard



Career Opportunities in Poetry

2 Membership Orientation 6:00 pm

We'll cover the organization's events, policies, and resources. It's also a great way to meet fellow filmmakers and film lovers.

Where: Film Independent office.
Price: Free and open to the general public.
Reservations: Not required.

4,5 Final Cut Pro 6: A Two-Day Introduction

Thursday and Friday 10:00 am–4:30 pm

Where: Moviola Education Center
Price: Tickets are \$250 for Film Independent members only. Special price of \$130 for a single day, subject to availability.

Reservations: Required—call 310.432.1222 or email Reservations@FilmIndependent.org (seating is extremely limited). LATE COMERS WILL NOT BE SEATED AND REFUNDS WILL NOT BE ISSUED. See [page 11](#) for more information.

9 Tech Talk: Let's Go Tapeless 7:30 pm

Where: Film Independent office.

Price: Free to members only
Reservations: Required—call 310.432.1222 or email Reservations@FilmIndependent.org See [page 11](#) for more information.

15 PREVIEW SCREENING : Rachel Getting Married 7:30 pm


Directed by Jonathan Demme. Written by Jenny Lumet. Produced by Neda Armian, Marc E. Platt.

When Kym returns to the Buchman family home for the wedding of her sister Rachel she brings a long history of personal crisis and family conflict along with her. The wedding party's abundant cast of friends and relations have gathered for an idyllic weekend of feasting, music and love, but Kym—with her black-comic one-liners and knack for bombshell drama—is a catalyst for long-simmering tensions in the family dynamic. Starring Anne Hathaway, Rosemarie Dewitt, Bill Irwin, Tunde Adebimpe, Mather Zickel, Anna Devereare Smith, Anisa George, Debra Winger. A Sony Pictures Classics release.

Q&A and reception to follow

Where: WGA Theater
Price: Free for Film Independent members and one guest.

Reservations: Not required—first come, first served.
Note: *This is a shared screening*

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16 IndieLink: Editors, Producers and Directors 7:30 pm

Where: Film Independent office.

Price: Free to members only
Reservations: Required—call 310.432.1222 or email Reservations@FilmIndependent.org

Reception will follow

See [page 11](#) for more information.

Cinema Lounge

New time: 7:30 pm Happy Hour
Screening will begin at sunset followed by a Q&A with filmmakers

This month's line-up of socializing and great short films includes:

Bookie: Directed and written by Bao Tran; produced by Nick Risinger. Set in 1963 Seattle, a gambling bookie risks everything for a waitress down on her luck.

Dog Lovers: Directed and Produced by Danny Roew; written by Tonya Cornelisse & Graham Sibley. Two potential lovers meet to talk about their affection for dogs... and genitalia.

The Postcard: Directed and written by Josh Kim; produced by Cho Sung Yeon. Someone tries to get a postal worker's attention through writing open love letters on postcards.

Career Opportunities in Poetry: Directed and written by Andrew Smith and Courtney Saunders. Kenneth is a poet, a romantic trying to make a living in the modern world. Will his love of language undo him?

The Job: Directed and written by Jonathan Browning; produced by Leslie McManus, Sean Buck. *The Job* takes a hot button political issue and turns it on its head in this satirical look at the immigration debate.

Stitches: Directed and written by Pamela K. Johnson; produced by Romell Foster-Owens, Jennifer Jones. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, a teen fashionista must share room with a girl who's a fashion disaster.

Price: Poolside at the W Los Angeles - Westwood.
Where: Free for Film Independent members and their guests.

Reservations: Not required—first come, first served.

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22 Editing Principles and Aesthetics

Every Monday, September 22 – Monday, October 20 (Five sessions), 7:00 pm – 10:00 pm

Where: Film Independent office

Price: \$195 for Film Independent members, \$250 for non-members

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Reservations: Required—call 310.432.1222 or email Reservations@FilmIndependent.org. Class is open to 20 students on a first come, first served basis. See [page 11](#) for more information.

23 PREVIEW SCREENING : Battle in Seattle 7:30 pm

Directed and written by Stuart Townsend. Produced by Kirk Shaw, Maxime Remillard, Mary Aloe, Stuart Townsend

In 1999, five days rocked the world as tens of thousands of demonstrators took to the streets of Seattle in protest of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Environmentalists, consumer advocates, labor unions, students, anarchists, and pacifists all converged bringing attention to how the WTO's laws were affecting democracy around the world. A peaceful demonstration to stop the WTO talks quickly escalates into a full-scale riot and an eventual State of Emergency results. Starring Charlize Theron, Woody Harrelson, Martin Henderson, Andre Benjamin, Ray Liotta, Channing Tatum, and Michelle Rodriguez. 98 minutes; a Redwood Palms Pictures release.

Q&A with director Stuart Townsend

Where: The Landmark – West Los Angeles

Price: Free for Film Independent members and one guest.

Reservations: Not required—first come, first served.

Check-in will open at 5:00 pm.

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25 PREVIEW SCREENING : Miracle at St. Anna 7:30 pm

Directed by Spike Lee. Screenplay by James McBride, based on the novel by James McBride. Produced by Roberto Ciutto, Luigi Musini, and Spike Lee.

The film chronicles the story of four African-American soldiers who are members of the U.S. Army as part of the all-black 92nd Buffalo Soldier Division stationed in Tuscany, Italy, during World War II. They experience the tragedy and triumph of the war as they find themselves trapped behind enemy lines and separated from their unit after one of them risks his life to save an Italian boy. Starring Derek Luke, Michael Ealy, Laz Alonso, Omar Benson Miller, Pierfrancesco Favino, Valentina Cervi. Approx. 155 minutes; a Buena Vista Pictures Distribution release.

Where: The Landmark – West Los Angeles

Price: Free for Film Independent members and one guest.

Reservations: Not required—first come, first served.

Check-in will open at 5:00 pm.

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Introduction to DVD Authoring

10:00am–4:30 pm

Where: Moviola Education Center

Price: \$130 for members, \$150 for non-members

Reservations: Required (seating is extremely limited) Reservations@FilmIndependent.org See [page 11](#) for more information.

26 FILMMAKER FORUM SCREENING : The Brothers Bloom Note early start time 7:00 pm

Directed and written by Rian Johnson. Produced by Ram Bergman, James D. Stern, Wendy Japhet.

The Bloom brothers are two young con men whose lives change forever upon meeting Penelope. While initially, the brothers plan to con her, she becomes an unlikely partner in their latest scheme. The plot thickens when Penelope's beauty and brains enchants one of the brothers, and threatens to break a lifelong bond of kinship. Starring Rachel Weisz, Adrien Brody, Mark Ruffalo, and Rinko Kikuchi.

After the screening, director Rian Johnson and producer Ram Bergman will be on hand for a Q&A. Forum passholders can then network during a cocktail reception in the DGA Atrium.

Where: DGA

Price: Free for Filmmaker Forum pass holders and Film Independent members. Forum pass prices are \$300 for Film Independent members and \$350 for non-members.

Reservations: Not required

Seating Policy: Purchase your Forum pass in advance to secure your seat. Film Independent members not attending the forum may attend the screening on a first-come, first served basis.

26, 27, 28 Filmmaker Forum

Join us for the 2008 Filmmaker Forum for three important days that will both enlighten you on the current state of the industry, and empower you to help shape its future. You'll learn why now is not the time to lose control, but to take charge. And the top filmmakers, gatekeepers, decision makers and mavericks will offer you vital tips to make and sell your film in this brave new world.

Where: Directors Guild of America, Los Angeles

Price: \$300 for Film Independent members and partners. \$350 for non-members

Reservations: Required—call 310.432.1222 or email Reservations@FilmIndependent.org

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LOCATIONS

Film Independent Office & Meeting Room

9911 W. Pico Boulevard
11th floor, Los Angeles

Free parking for Film Independent
visitors after 5:30 pm.

Directors Guild of America

7920 Sunset Blvd., West Hollywood
Free parking: enter DGA lot on
Hayworth.

The Landmark – West Los Angeles

10850 W. Pico Boulevard at
Westwood Boulevard, West L.A.
Free parking: enter on Westwood
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Moviola Education Center

1135 N. Mansfield Avenue (west of
Highland, north of Santa Monica
Boulevard), Hollywood. Limited free
parking available.

Poolside at the W Los Angeles - Westwood

930 Hilgard Avenue, West Los Angeles
\$10 valet parking, \$5 with purchase

Writers Guild of America West Theater

135 South Doheny Drive
Beverly Hills, CA

RESERVATIONS POLICY

For events requiring reservations, call 310.432.1222 or
send an e-mail to Reservations@FilmIndependent.org.

Events

In order to give all members equal opportunity to attend
events with limited capacity, please check the calendar
section for reservation requirements. When making
reservations, please provide your name, membership
number, telephone number, and Visa or MasterCard
number. We cannot accept reservations without payment.
Once we process your reservation, you will receive a
confirmation email. We stop taking reservations at 3:00
pm the day before the event, but accept payment at the
door as seating permits.

Screenings

Doors will open 30 minutes prior to the scheduled
screening time. There is no late seating. Guests must
be accompanied by a Film Independent member.

Cancellation Policy

In order to receive a refund for any program or
workshop, you must submit the request in writing.
Series cancellations must be made in writing no later
than 72 hours prior to the second session (for series
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conference cancellations must be made in writing no later
than 48 hours before the start of the event. Cancellations
for screenwriting classes and all other courses must be
made in writing no later than 24 hours after the first
session. An administrative fee equivalent to 15% of the
total cost of course/series will apply to all cancellations
and refunds. You will receive a pro-rated refund based on
when you cancel minus the administrative fee. If
your course is canceled or rescheduled, we will issue
a full refund.

Seating Policy for Free Education Events

Seating for our Filmmaker Tuesdays and other free events
is limited and reservations are usually required. Due to a
large percentage of no-shows and the high demand for
seating, we will only hold reservations for free events until 15
minutes prior to start time. You must check in for the event
15 minutes before the scheduled start or your seat may be
given away to other waiting members. No one will be seated
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CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

Final Cut Pro 6: A Two-Day Introduction

Film Independent is offering the opportunity to take a two-day introductory course in Final Cut Pro 6. The course will include both demonstration and hands-on practice, with time for experimentation with sample material. Topics on Day 1 will include project management, log and capturing videotape, creation of sequences, 3-point editing techniques, edit sync material, trim sequences, audio editing, video transitions, and final output to video file. Topics on Day 2 will include: dialogue trimming techniques; slip and slide editing; audio mixing; basic motion effects and filters; titling; using Compressor for compressing video for internet or DVD. It is required that all participants have basic Macintosh skills to take this intensive course.

When: Thursday, September 4, 10:00 am – 4:30 pm
Friday, September 5, 10:00 am – 4:30 pm

Where: Moviola Education Center

Price: Tickets are \$250 for Film Independent members only. Special price of \$130 for a single day, subject to availability.

Reservations: Required—call 310.432.1222 or email Reservations@FilmIndependent.org (seating is extremely limited). LATE COMERS WILL NOT BE SEATED AND REFUNDS WILL NOT BE ISSUED.

Tech Talk: Let's go Tapeless

Film Independent is going tapeless. Starting next month we will be renting tapeless hard drives with all our cameras. Representatives from Shining Technology will be on hand to demonstrate the patented, award-winning CitiDISK™ hard drives which can hold up to 7 hours of HDV footage. With CitiDISK, you can record simultaneously to tape and the hard drive or you can "recapture" your time instead of digitizing – and say goodbye to tape forever.

When: Tuesday, September 9, 7:30 pm

Where: Film Independent office

Price: Free for Film Independent members

Reservations: Required—call 310.432.1222 or email Reservations@FilmIndependent.org.

IndieLink: Editors, Producers and Directors

Our next IndieLink will be showcasing editors for the first time. The first 30 editors to register will get to present their reels to an audience of Producers, Directors and other Editors. If you are looking for a talented editor or if you are an editor looking for future work, this is the event for you. A networking reception will follow the presentations.

When: Tuesday, September 16, 7:30 pm

Where: Film Independent office

Price: Free to members only

Reservations: Required—call 310.432.1222 or email Reservations@FilmIndependent.org.

Reception will follow

Editing Principles and Aesthetics

This course is for filmmakers who want to learn about editing principles, techniques, and aesthetics as they relate to storytelling. It will provide a thorough understanding of editing as a powerful tool to advance story development and communicate emotions and ideas. Class sessions will be divided into lectures on the variety of editing styles, techniques, and principles; screening of edited and unedited clips of film scenes and sequences; and class discussions.

About the Instructor:

Class will be taught by Reine-Claire, a professional documentary film editor with more than 10 years experience. She started her editing career as an assistant editor in narrative features such as *Dave*, *Junior*, *Beethoven 2nd*, and *Space Jam*. Ms. Claire received an MA in Political Science in France and holds a BA in Cinema from Columbia University. She has taught Editing at the Cinema Department of San Francisco State University and is an Avid Certified Instructor currently teaching at USC's Cinema-Television.

When: Every Monday, September 22 – Monday, October 20 (Five sessions), 7:00 pm–10:00 pm.

Where: Film Independent office

Price: \$195 for Film Independent members, \$250 for non-members

Reservations: Required—call 310.432.1222 or email Reservations@FilmIndependent.org. Class is open to 20 students on a first-come, first-served basis.

Introduction to DVD Authoring

Film Independent is pleased to offer a special introductory hands-on class on Apple's DVD Studio Pro. Students learn the basics of DVD production in this comprehensive and exciting 6-hour class. Topics include: story boarding, navigation, menus, design, bit budgeting, video and audio encoding, authoring, web-links, proofing and pre-mastering. This class is designed for DVD enthusiasts, electronic publishers, film studio development executives, Final Cut Pro users, website designers, and anyone else who wants to learn how to create a professional-looking DVD on the Apple platform.

Prerequisites: Basic Macintosh skills.

When: Thursday, September 25, 10:00 am – 4:30 pm

Where: Moviola Education Center

Price: \$130 for members, \$150 for non-members

Reservations: Required (seating is extremely limited) Reservations@FilmIndependent.org

FILMMAKER FORUM

Join us for the 2008 Filmmaker Forum for three important days that will both enlighten you on the current state of the industry, and empower you to help shape its future. You'll learn why now is not the time to lose control, but to take charge. And the top filmmakers, gatekeepers, decision makers and mavericks will offer you vital tips to make and sell your film in this brave new world.

When: Friday, September 26 – Sunday, September 28

Where: Directors Guild of America, Los Angeles

Price: \$300 for Film Independent members and partners. \$350 for non-members

Reservations: Required—call 310.432.1222 or email Reservations@FilmIndependent.org.

Introduction to Screenwriting

Film Independent's Screenwriting Program is once again offering our Introduction to Screenwriting Workshop beginning this fall. This workshop will focus on the process of writing exploring the development of ideas and experiences into a story. Through short exercises and in-class commentary, students will learn the basics of the writing process and will develop the treatment for a screenplay. Class is geared to students who do not have previous screenwriting experience who would like to explore different approaches to writing. Class will be taught by filmmaker Josslyn Luckett.

FREE FINAL DRAFT SOFTWARE!

The first five students to enroll will receive a free copy of Final Draft screenwriting software. Other participants in the class will be eligible for several surprise drawings to be held during the course of the ten-week class.

When: October 4 – December 8 (Mondays), 7:00 pm – 10:00 pm 10 week course

Where: Film Independent office

Price: \$350 for FIND members; \$400 for general public

Reservations: Required—call 310.432.1222 or email Reservations@FilmIndependent.org (space is limited)

For reservations, call 310.432.1222 or email Reservations@FilmIndependent.org. More details and updates can always be found at FilmIndependent.org.

FILM INDEPENDENT TALENT DEVELOPMENT FELLOWS

At Film Independent, several of our programs—the Filmmaker Labs, Project:Involve (P:I), Fast Track (a program of the Los Angeles Film Festival), and the Spirit Awards filmmaker grants—were established with the goal of helping filmmakers develop their talent and get their projects made. We've brought these programs together under one umbrella: the Film Independent Talent Development Program. Participants are recognized as "Film Independent Fellows" and become members of Film Independent. Here's the latest on what some of our Fellows are up to.



The Kids Are Alright: An Interview with Tze Chun

Writer/director Tze Chun (2008 Project: Involve) is an accomplished filmmaker with numerous shorts under his belt, including the remarkable *Windowbreaker*, which played the 2007 Sundance Film Festival and was in this year's Project: Involve Filmmakers Showcase.

Wasting no time, this year Tze shot his debut feature *The Kids Are Alright*, which was developed out of the short *Windowbreaker*. Josh Welsh, Director of Talent Development, talks with Tze about the film, which recently wrapped principal photography. To learn more about Tze's films, go to www.tzechun.com



Writer/director Tze Chun on the set of *The Kids Are Alright*

Your feature *The Kids Are Alright* is based on your acclaimed short film, *Windowbreaker*. Could you talk about the process of developing the story into a feature length film? How long did it take you, and when did you decide to attempt it?

Unlike a lot of short films, *Windowbreaker* was never intended to be a feature. It wasn't until I moved out to LA last July that I started thinking about expanding it. All in all, it took about a year, since I was finishing drafts of two other screenplays and writing as my day job on ABC's short-lived *Cashmere Mafia*. It seems crazy looking back on it, but I'd be at Sony writing all day for *Cashmere*, and at around nine I would go to the Santa Monica Pier, play half-an-hour of ski-ball, then work on my own stuff until midnight or so. I think I just like writing. This last month of production has been the longest that I've gone without opening Final Draft, and I can't wait to get back to it.

Were there specific things on the feature that you wanted to approach differently than you did on *Windowbreaker*—either the visual look, the acting style, the overall tone—or did

the short really provide the template for what you were doing with the feature?

I knew I wanted *The Kids Are Alright* to be more polished than *Windowbreaker*, while still retaining the documentary quality of the short. I experimented a lot with the short, and though I didn't know it at the time, it was a good trial run for the feature, to find out what worked and what didn't. Something else I wanted to attempt for the feature was me not having to hold the camera, and the producer not having to hold the boom. Mission accomplished! But seriously, the crew for the feature was more than ten times the size of the crew for *Windowbreaker*.

Tell us the basics of your shoot: When and where did you shoot, and what format did you shoot on?

We shot on HD. The film takes place in Boston, but since the crew is from the NY area, we ended up splitting the shoot between the two places. We also did about eight days in Jersey.

Who was your DP and how did you come to work with him or her? Also, how did you come to work with your producer, Mynette Louie?

I saw our DP Chris Teague's short film *Thorndike*, which he wrote and directed, at the Woodstock Film Festival. I ran up to him after the screening to tell him how amazing the film is. He was in Columbia Grad when I was in undergrad, but we never crossed paths. He's shot three shorts that have showed at Sundance, and this is his first feature. He's a DP, but he thinks like a director, and it was a great experience working with him. I met Mynette during Tribeca last year at a big filmmaker dinner. I did some work on Andrew Bujalski's *Mutual Appreciation*, which

she co-produced, but we didn't meet up during that shoot. I sincerely believe she's the only producer in America that could have put together this movie on our budget.

Were there any particularly challenging aspects to the shoot?

There's a saying about independent film: "Quick, Cheap, and Good. You get two of those." And, like a lot of independent films, we were trying to do all three... But, in general the shoot was extremely smooth. We didn't go over schedule on any of our days, the crew got along, and every time we brought the camera out, the rain went away. I feel really lucky.

What is your post schedule?

As fast as humanly possible. We've been running hard drives to our editor Anna Boden (*Half Nelson*, *Sugar*) for the last month. Right now she's in New Hampshire editing in an art colony. Before we head back to New York, we're gonna drop off another few hundred gigs, then go on a tax-free shopping spree.

How would you describe the filmic style of *The Kids Are Alright*?

"What if you got Sven Nykvist drunk and pushed him into a room full of Chinese people?" Alternately: "*The Brady Bunch* meets *Death of a Salesman*."

Continue reading our interview with Tze Chun at FilmIndependent.org (click on "News")

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS: 2009 DIRECTORS LAB

Film Independent is now accepting submissions for its 2009 Directors Lab. A maximum of ten directors will be chosen for this intensive program designed to help directors working in independent film improve their craft. The primary focus of the Lab is on learning to work with actors and the rehearsal process. Under the guidance of the lab instructor, Directors Lab Fellows select short scenes from their script to workshop. Additionally, Fellows go through a mini-production, learning how to break down a script into a shot list, collaborate with cinematographers, and construct a scene in the editing process. Film Independent provides the Lab participants with camera and sound packages to shoot their scenes.

A secondary goal of the program is to help advance the careers of the Lab Fellows by introducing them to film professionals who can advise them on both the craft and business of directing. Lab Fellows have one-on-one meetings with established directors and other industry professionals who act as advisors on the participant's projects.

Past Lab Instructors include Allison Anders (*Gas Food Lodging*, *Things Behind the Sun*), Anthony Drazan (*Hurlyburly*), Rodrigo García (*Passengers*, *Nine Lives*), Keith Gordon (*The Singing Detective*, *Waking the Dead*), Vondie Curtis Hall (*Gridlock'd*, *Waist Deep*), Charles Herman-Wurmfeld (*Kissing Jessica Stein*, *Legally Blonde*), Nicole Holofcener (*Friends With Money*, *Lovely and Amazing*), Jeremy Podeswa (*Fugitive Pieces*, *The Five Senses*), and Andrew Wagner (*Starting Out In The Evening*).

2009 Directors Lab, February 2–March 30, 7:00pm (Every Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday)

Early Deadline: October 6, 2008 (postmarked)
\$35 Film Independent members
\$55 Non-members

Late Deadline: November 3, 2008 (postmarked)
\$55 Film Independent members
\$75 Non-members

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For an application visit www.FilmIndependent.org

FELLOWS NEWS

Frozen River, written and directed by **Courtney Hunt** (2006 Fast Track) opened theatrically this summer, to fantastic reviews and box office. The film premiered at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival, where Courtney won the Grand Jury Prize, and more recently played the Los Angeles Film Festival. Also opening theatrically in August was the documentary *Beautiful Losers*, co-directed by Joshua Leonard (2007 Directors Lab).

Congratulations to **E.E. Cassidy** (2006 Screenwriters Lab) and **Jennifer Phang** (2003 Directors Lab, 2000 Project: Involve), both of whom are profiled in the new Filmmaker magazine's "25 New Faces of Indie Film" article. E.E. is currently in post-production on her film *We Are the Mods*, and Jennifer was recently announced as the Winner of the Emerging Director Award in Narrative Feature at the 2008 Asian American International Film Festival in New York, for her film *Half-Life*.

Congrats to **Moon Molson** (2008 Directors Lab) who was a recipient of a 2008 Annenberg Grant from the Sundance Institute, for his script *Meadowlandz*, as well as to **Carl Pfirman** (2004 Directors Lab) and **Cheryl Guerriero** (2007 Screenwriters Lab), both of whom were selected for the 2008 Outfest Screenwriters Lab. Carl was accepted with his script *Sugar Land*, and Cheryl with her script *Palmer*.

Two films by Lab fellows recently wrapped production on their features: **Cherien Dabis** (2005 Directors Lab, P:I, Fast Track) with her film *Amreeka*; and writer/director **Tina Mabry** (2008 Directors Lab, 2004 Project: Involve) and producer **Morgan Stiff** (2007 Producers Lab, 2004 Project: Involve), with their feature *Mississippi Damned*. Both films are currently in post. Writer/

director **Suzi Yoonessi** (2008 Directors Lab, 2007 Producers & Screenwriters Lab) is currently in production on her debut feature *Dear Lemon Lima*. The film is shooting in Seattle.

Four features by Film Independent Fellows have been selected to play the 2008 Toronto International Film Festival: *Goodbye Solo*, directed by **Ramin Bahrani** (2007 Someone to Watch Award Winner); *Pedro*, directed by **Nick Occano** (2008 Project: Involve); *The Real Shaolin*, directed by **Alexander Lee** (2006 Project: Involve); and *Treeless Mountain*, directed by **So Yong Kim** (2004 Producers Lab).

Kabluey, the debut feature of multi-hyphenate **Scott Prendergast** (All Labs, Fast Track), continued its run in Los Angeles and widened its release to San Francisco, Santa Cruz, Portland, Denver, and Austin, among other cities. The film will be released on DVD on September 16.

Sizzlean, a new short film by writer/director **Scott Keiner** (2005 Screenwriters Lab) and produced by **Chris Stinson** (2005 Producers Lab) played the inaugural Downtown Film Festival of Los Angeles this August. Also playing the fest was *The Call* by **Gerald Donahoe** (2004 Producers Lab). *Homeless Village*, directed by **Mahesh Pailoor** (2008 Project: Involve) and produced by **Petra Kauraisa** (2008 Project: Involve); and two films produced by **Alex Castillo** (2006 Project: Involve)—*El Primo*, directed by **Nick Oceano** (2007 Project: Involve) and *The Stain on the Sidewalk*, directed by Adam Schlachter.

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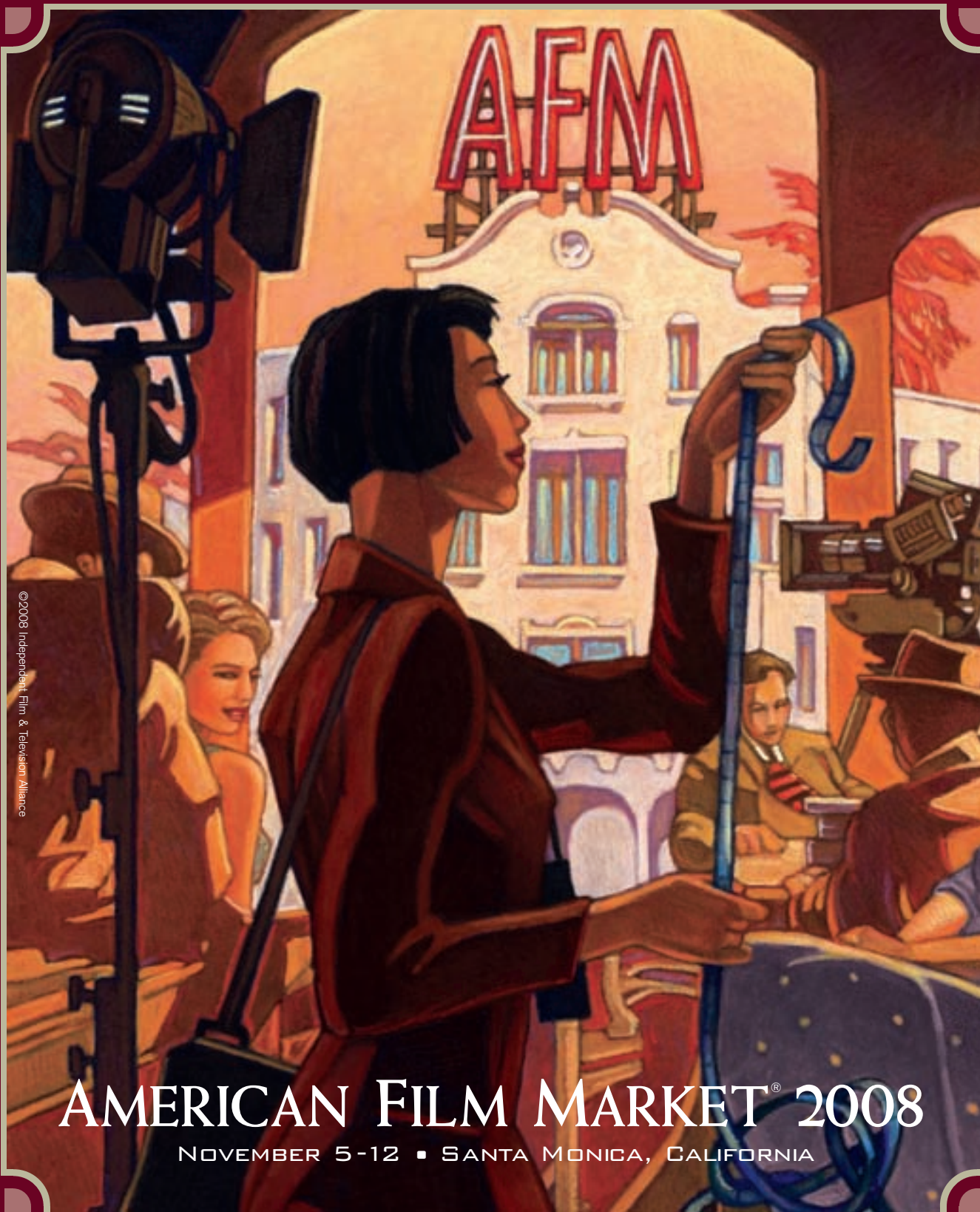
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