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BROKEN, A FILM SHOT FOR LESS THAN \$1,000 IN OHIO & MICHIGAN, PREMIERES IN CLEVELAND
“Broken” screenplay was a finalist in the “Project Greenlight” Bravo TV series sponsored by Miramax, Matt Damon and Ben Affleck

(DETROIT, MI) June 4, 2007 ... After a huge premiere in Detroit, *Broken*, a feature film directed by David DeLeon of Sandusky and Derek Justice, a native of Norwalk (now living in metro Detroit), for Top 250 Productions, premieres on June 23 at The Lorain Palace Theater in Lorain. The team made the film for less than \$1,000 and the screenplay was among the top 250 finalists in the first season of *Project Greenlight*, the Bravo TV series sponsored by Miramax, Matt Damon and Ben Affleck.

Broken is the story of Christian, played by David Gries, whose life was shattered as an eight-year-old after he watched his father brutally murder his mother. Now, twenty years later, he wrestles with his demons through art and heroin. Aziza Amy Poggi co-stars as Beth, an abused magazine editor sent to retrieve Christian’s artwork for the next issue. Steve Hopton plays Beth’s abusive boyfriend. This is the beginning of a dark descent into hell for The Junkie, The Girl, The Boyfriend and three lives full of secrets.

LeeAlan Weddel, Chuck Diamond, Jayk Hanna, Matt Lang, Altonio Seahorn, Jr. and Adam Hill complete the cast. Several bands contributed music including Dendura, Riot in Progress, Unfinished Thought and David Gries. Susan Stanek created the art that would later become Christian’s work in the film.

Justice and DeLeon based the screenplay on a short story that DeLeon wrote years ago.

“*Broken* is a story about abuse. Drug abuse, mental abuse, physical abuse,” DeLeon said. “It’s the stuff that happens every day to so many people; people close to us, people we care about, maybe even ourselves. We’ve tried to bring to the screen a group of people dealing with a set of circumstances that everyone can empathize with.”

At the time, DeLeon was about 20 and going through the customary artistic, Bohemian phase - all dark and broody. The idea of a barefoot hippy chick came to him, complete with a loose flower-print dress and long, dark hair. The character shared his artistic outlook on life - somewhat cynical, yet with the firm belief that if his art couldn’t change the world, then maybe it could change a mind or two. From there came the love interest, Christian and the abusive ex-boyfriend.

“At its core, this is a love story, albeit a dark love story,” Justice said. “Beth is the unknowing catalyst that sets each of the characters on their downward spiral. People differ in their opinions of who exactly the story is about, Beth or Christian. I still see it more as Christian’s story. From the opening scene to the closing scene, you see Christian’s path come full circle. He is definitely the anti-hero. He’s not a perfect person by any means, but people tend to sympathize with him and his struggles.”

After several revisions, the story eventually morphed into the finished script that the pair entered into numerous contests including *Project Greenlight*. The contest generated approximately 7,000 entries. *Broken* was shortlisted and became one of the top 250 finalists.



After *Project Greenlight*, Justice and DeLeon swore off contests. The script sat on a shelf for a while. In the meantime, DeLeon wrote a horror script that was optioned by a producer and re-wrote a script for another independent filmmaker. Justice worked on two features, *Generation Xtinct* and *Above Ground*.

However, they returned to *Project Greenlight* for the third season. This time, Justice and DeLeon threw their hat into the directing category with a short film called *Sequence 1*. They competed against nearly 5,000 entries and advanced to the top 250 finalists.

Justice and DeLeon finally realized that the best way to bring the project to the screen was to do it themselves. They surrounded themselves with a team of people who put their talent, faith and sweat equity into the project. They shot in Ohio and Michigan.

"When making a movie for as little money as we have, you use what's available to you," DeLeon said. "Thankfully the Cleveland area, with its annual Cleveland International Film Festival, has a rich history of independent cinema and a wealth of talented people interested in seeing each other succeed. Our webmaster, special effects artist and film composer are all from this area. Their talents and love of their craft have helped make *Broken* what it is today."

During the film shoot, *Broken* was not without its share of production nightmares. They lost locations before the scenes at those locations were completed. They faced difficult schedules from cast and crew who, at times, drove more than two hours to get to a location on the other side of the state. And, since one location was in the traffic path for planes arriving at Detroit Metro Airport, the scenes shot at Christian's house were often interrupted with ambient noise.

In the end, Justice and DeLeon made *Broken* for \$985. They spent \$285 on tape and other production supplies and \$700 on catering for the cast and crew.

Broken premieres in Lorain on June 23 at The Lorain Palace Theater at 617 Broadway. Call 440. 245. 2323 for more information. Tickets are \$10 at the door or \$11 in advance via PayPal. Although the film is unrated, nobody under 17 will be admitted unless accompanied by an adult due to language, drug use and sexual situations. Arrive at 6 pm for *Peep Show*, a collection of trailers and short films by Ohio and Michigan filmmakers. *Broken* begins at 7 pm. For ticket information or to see the trailer, visit www.myspace.com/brokenmovie or www.broken-movie.com.

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(Editor's note: Contact Lee Runchey for a review copy. Click here for high-res photos:
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/8382480@N05/>

