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SXSW POV SHORT FILM “RANDOM STOP” LAUNCHES ON SHORT OF THE WEEK

Los Angeles, June 30, 2014 – “Random Stop” - a dual MFA thesis film from UCLA's masters program – launches online today on Short of the Week. The film had its festival premiere at SXSW 2014, was a finalist for the BAFTA student film awards, and was featured in June's issue of American Cinematographer Magazine. A prime example of the burgeoning “Experiential Cinema” movement, the 7-minute film’s debut on Short of the Week is not to be missed.

<http://www.shortoftheweek.com/2014/06/30/random-stop/>

The film is a single seven-minute take, all shot in first person POV, which places the audience *literally* in the protagonist’s shoes. Based on the true story of a traffic stop gone wrong, the film is the ultimate oner - heart pounding, thrilling, and ultimately thought provoking. Audiences on the festival circuit have responded strongly to the film, and the filmmakers – writer/director Benjamin Arfmann (UCLA MFA ‘14), producer JP Castel (UCLA BA ‘11), and director of photography Justin Perkinson (UCLA MFA ‘14) – are overjoyed to premiere the film online on Short of the Week.

“Random Stop” is based on the true story of Sheriff’s Deputy Kyle Dinkheller who - at the end of a shift - pulled over a speeding pickup truck driven by disturbed Vietnam veteran, Andrew Brannan. The results of this routine traffic stop were both tragic and deadly. Footage of the stop is now used in police training throughout the world. Told from an incredibly unique perspective, “Random Stop” gives viewers unprecedented insight into the dangers that law enforcement officers face daily, and has been embraced by the law enforcement community. The filmmakers worked closely with LAPD patrolmen and LAPD Asst. Chief Sandy Joe McArthur to ensure the film’s accuracy in portraying these tragic events.

“Kyle Dinkheller’s story is one that I discovered completely by accident. In December of 2012, I was reading an article on gun control and found, in the comments section, a link titled: “This is What a Semi-Automatic Rifle Can Do.” The link led to a grainy YouTube video of footage from a traffic stop in 1998. A young police officer pulled over an older man, they got into an argument, it turned violent, and - without much warning - the older man shot the younger one to death. All in the space of a few minutes. This was the police car dashcam footage of Kyle’s murder. It was the most disturbing thing I had ever seen. I was in shock - the cruelty and the speed of the violence were completely beyond anything my life had trained me to expect from such a mundane scenario. The experience of watching that footage stuck with me. For a long time. It felt important, and raw. When it came time to direct my thesis film at UCLA, I knew instinctively that this would be the story I should tackle. Kyle’s story showed me a side of law enforcement that I had never seen before – a vulnerable and profoundly human side – and I’ve spent the better part of the last year doing my best to bring that story to the widest audience possible.” - Benjamin Arfmann - Director

POV cinematography is an immense technical undertaking and it took many months of testing before the filmmakers developed a practical shooting strategy. Partnering with Radiant Images, director of photography Justin Perkinson helped adapt the SI2K cameras used in “End of Watch” onto a custom helmet rig to achieve a shockingly real point-of-view perspective. “We tested several cameras and mounting solutions to determine how to place the camera/lens on a helmet rig so that I could both see what I was shooting and properly frame myself as the deputy,” recalls director of photography, Justin Perkinson.

The film was shot over a period of 3 days just north of Santa Clarita on an old section of the I-5. The filmmakers worked with Film LA and the local police authorities to shut down sections of the highway to perform the stunt driving sequence of the film. Under the supervision of Stunt Coordinator Webster Whinery (Pirates of the Caribbean, Into the Storm), the team captured the police chase sequence at speeds in excess of 80 mph. “The chase sequence was definitely a challenge, involving five separate permitting office and detailed rehearsals, but we really nailed it. A chase in POV isn’t something an audience will soon forget,” recounts producer JP Castel.

The film stars Brian Krause, best know for his portrayal of Leo Wyatt on the popular TV program Charmed, as the veteran Andrew Brannon, and newcomer Geoffrey Kennedy as Officer Dinkheller. Because the film was told in a single take, the performances had to be seamless. “We approached the film like a theater piece, rehearsing in the morning and shooting in the afternoon to maximize our narrow lighting window,” says writer/director Benjamin Arfmann.

Like many modern long takes, the film required a great deal of post work to maintain the illusion of continuous action. Producer and visual effects artist JP Castel worked tirelessly to use techniques such as pan & scan, camera projection, and rotoscoping in Adobe After Effects to finish the film. The film was later colored at Light Iron Digital and sound mixed by the late Todd | Soundeluxe.

With the success of “Random Stop” at SXSW and on Short of the Week, the filmmaking team looks forward to continuing to push the envelope when it comes to non-traditional storytelling. “We’re just starting to scratch the surface with what can be done in experiential storytelling. With technology like the Oculus Rift, and a myriad of live-action virtual reality solutions in development, it’s a very exciting time to be telling stories. Ben, Justin and I are extremely excited about our upcoming projects,” says producer JP Castel.

“When I first encountered this story over a year ago, I felt a deep and permanent shift in my view of the thin blue line, and the men and women who walk it every day. My respect and admiration grew for them immensely. My hope is that in making this film, and presenting it to the public, I’ve done a little to help that respect and admiration spread and grow. Sharing these stories is important; thank you for taking the time to look at Kyle’s.” - Benjamin Arfmann - Director

For more information about “Random Stop,” including insight into how the film was made, visit www.randomstopfilm.com.

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