



## REEL FESTIVAL WRAP: HBFF Celebrates 10 Year Anniversary; Winners announced.

By Jacqueline 'Jackie' Scott / jaxsnaps@aol.com  
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\*Tanya Kersey's Hollywood Black Film Festival (HBFF), dubbed the "Black Sundance" ran its 10th annual 6 day festival from June 2-7.

Drawing nearly 100 "industry insiders," HBFF panelists and guests included: Preston Whitmore, Antwone Fisher, Rockmond Dunbar, Bill Duke, George Tillman, Benny Boom, Oz Scott, Don Welch. Cast members from the opening night film DOUGH BOYS, the closing night film N SECURE [Essence Atkins], as well as NOTORIOUS [Jamal Woolard], and many others were present for screenings, panels, mixers and after-parties.

The Infotainment sessions featured film makers, directors, actors, as well as prominent attorneys, agents, and network executives from ABC, NBC, CBS, The CW, OWN: The Oprah Winfrey Network, and several more. Keeping with the festival's mott "Access. Opportunities. Deals," the panelists extended individualized and specialized attention to attendees, well after sessions ended.

Near or at capacity, the Infotainment sessions were informative and lively, including the Pitchathon, one of the most spirited of all, moderated by Richard Willis. Also, EURweb's Lee Bailey moderated the Proudcers Roundtable, featuring executives from The CW, OWN (Oprah Winfrey Network), and Melee Entertainment.

Tanya Kersey, Founder & Executive Director of HBFF has created an atmosphere that fosters and nurtures an open arms interchange amongst panelists, special guests, and attendees.

The festival has had an impact "empowering, educating, inspiring, and enlightening those interested in beginning a career," says Kersey. HBFF has provided a "strong foundation and business tools" for them to be "the best and most professional" as they pursue film endeavors. As the festival continues to grow, Kersey hopes to maintain the "family atmosphere" and evident warmth that participants experience.

"People coming together, networking, collaborating, is what makes this event important. We don't do enough of it," said Bill Duke.

"It is important that the voice of the black film maker is heard. If there's any nuggets or jewels I can give, I want to give those back," said Benny Boom.

Many attendees who have been present throughout HBFF's decade of festivals, categorize this year's festival as the best one. Even with the economic downturn, the turnout and experience was a success.

Filmmakers from countries including the US, UK, Canada, France, Japan, the Bahamas, Central Africa, and Ghana screened 102 films.

The first place winners include: Director Lucky Ejim's feature film THE TENANT; BLUE, directed by Ryan Mingham; (MIS)LEADING MAN written and directed by Morocco Omari; Llewellyn Smith's documentary HERSKOVITS AT THE HEART OF BLACKNESS; and THE SECOND HALF written by Andrew Chang and directed by Ralph Jeffrey Elmont. 1 OUT OF 10, directed by Q, won in the music video category. GOOD MOTHER written by Cassie Henderson won first place in the HBFF Storyteller Competition.

By the close of HBFF, 44 meetings had been scheduled with agents, managers, development, acquisition and distribution executives for the filmmaker and storyteller winners.