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**AT 2008 URBANWORLD FILM FESTIVAL, A SERIES OF
DISCUSSION PANELS EXPLORE VITAL ISSUES IN URBAN
FILMMAKING**

**2008 Panels Include Industry Experts Damon Dash, Pharaoh Monch,
George Alexander, Neil Drumming, Gina Prince-Bythewood, and many
more.**

*Festival Sponsors Include BET Networks, HBO, Time Warner Cable, Grey
Goose, Macy's, Covergirl, WNBC, Black Enterprise, ESSENCE, VIBE,
Power 105.1, the Directors Guild of America, AMC Theatres, Fox
Searchlight Pictures and The Weinstein Company*

(New York, NY)—The Urbanworld Film Festival presented by BET Networks, the largest international competitive festival of its kind, today announced that it will include in its slate four panel discussions, each exploring different aspects of the urban filmmaking industry as it exists today. Dedicated to the exhibition of independent and mainstream cinema by and about people of color, Urbanworld will present the panels, in addition to 85 films, at this year's festival in **New York City from September 10-14**. All panel discussions will be held at the **Hilton Times Square**, which is also the host hotel of the festival.

This year, from QD3 Entertainment, the production company that brought you the hit documentaries *Beef & Beef 2*, comes another documentary feature that sheds light on the unexplored regions of hip-hop culture—spotlight feature **Number One With A Bullet**. Directed by James Dziura, this riveting new film attempts to pull back the curtain on gun

violence in today's increasingly belligerent hip-hop landscape. Similarly, hip-hop star Pharaoh Monch and anti-violence activist Hezues R' will be featured panelists at **Stop The Violence: The Impact Of Media On Culture**, a panel discussion which touches on many of the same issues as his eye-opening new documentary. Hezues R' is the founder of **Guns 4 Cameras**, a non-profit organization that designed to get kids to give up their guns in exchange for video cameras. Likewise, Pharaoh Monch is the celebrity spokesperson for the organization. The program does not currently foster the exchange (due to legal limitations) but rather encourages the "choice", to inspire kids to make that decision for themselves, while providing them with the tools and resources to pursue production. The focus is to take something that destroys life out of their hands and replace it with something that creates life. Urbanworld founder Stacey Spikes says, "The panels at Urbanworld are an excellent way for emerging filmmakers to get access to experienced seasoned veterans. The panels are also a place to address issues that plague our communities like gun violence." The **Stop The Violence** panel will also feature additional, though as of yet unannounced, celebrity talent from **#1 With A Bullet**. Together, film, panel, and non-profit organization will work to incite a productive dialogue about the danger of glorifying violence within minority art forms.

Panels 2 & 3, **The Anatomy Of A Film: Blackout Case Study** and **Succeeding In Today's Entertainment Business: A Producer's Perspective**, both discuss the challenges and rewards of producing independent urban cinema in this day and age. The **Anatomy Of A Film** panel uses a film from last year's Urbanworld Festival—the critically acclaimed indie **Blackout**—as an illustration of its theme. Finally, **ESSENCE Presents Black Women In Hollywood: The Inside Story**, will feature a number of panelists involved with the festival's special closing night screening, **The Secret Life Of Bees**. Director Gina Prince-Bythewood (*Love And Basketball*), actor Sophie Okonedo (*Hotel Rwanda*), and Fox Searchlight production executive Zola B. Mashariki will all take part in a constructive discussion about their journey as women of color in the filmed entertainment industry. Together, these four panel discussions serve to define the unique position that urban cinema occupies within the contemporary film industry, and in doing so, they emphasize Urbanworld's commitment to multicultural dialogue in the arts.

Panels at 2008 Urbanworld Film Festival Include:

PANEL I

Thursday, September 11, 11:00am – 12:30pm

STOP THE VIOLENCE: THE CULTURAL IMPACT ON MEDIA

In a world where media shapes perceptions and behavior, the pervasiveness of violence accessible to the youth population of today is alarming. This panel will examine the critical issues around the prevalence of violence in media and entertainment. With a focus on film, music, and television, the dialogue will explore the cultural impact of violence on communities of color, as well as discuss avenues for implementing more anti-violence messaging/images in the media.

PANELISTS:

Moderator: George Alexander—Author, Journalist, & Screenwriter
Pharaoh Monch—Hip Hop Artist
Damon Dash—Entrepreneur / Film Producer
Keith Brown—SVP of News and Public Affairs for BET
Hezues R'—Chairman, Eye On It Corporation & Founder, Guns 4 Cameras

PANEL II

Thursday, September 11, 3:30pm – 5:00pm

THE ANATOMY OF A FILM: BLACKOUT CASE STUDY

In an unprecedented move at its 2007 festival, Urbanworld presented the independent project BLACKOUT as its opening night film. This panel will examine the holistic issues around filmmaking today, including script development, financing procurement, cost effective quality film production, talent outreach, and shopping/landing a solid distribution deal. Through a case study format, the discussion will seek to further empower today's filmmaker with new information and innovative thinking around how to successfully deliver content to the marketplace.

PANELISTS:

Moderator: George Alexander—Author, Journalist, & Screenwriter
Judith Aidoo—Entrepreneur / Investor / Producer
Constance Cribbs Knight—VP of Home Entertainment & Content Acquisitions, BET
Jerry Lamothe—Writer / Director / Producer
Debra Tate—President, Unlimited Contracts, Inc. / Producer
Jamie Hector – Actor (Blackout, The Wire)

PANEL III

Friday, September 12, 11:00am – 12:30pm

SUCCEEDING IN TODAY'S ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESS: A PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

This panel will examine the key issues in filmmaking today, with a nuanced lens, including an interactive dialogue around content development, raising money, assembling a crew, touring the festival circuit, and negotiating favorable distribution deals. Panel participants will aim to share experience, wisdom, and achievements, as well as common industry pitfalls, all in the effort to arm the emerging filmmaker community with the tools needed to be successful as content creators.

PANELISTS:

Moderator: Neil Drumming—Journalist
Eva Davis—SVP, Acquisitions & Business Development, Warner Premiere
Brett Dismuke—Acquisitions & Urban Programming, Image Entertainment
Lee Daniels—Producer / Director, Lee Daniels Entertainment

Charisse Nesbit—Creative Executive, Lionsgate Films

PANEL IV

Friday, September 12, 3:30pm – 5:00pm

ESSENCE PRESENTS BLACK WOMEN IN HOLLYWOOD: THE INSIDE STORY

This ESSENCE-hosted panel will welcome a powerhouse roster of successful women who have all played a role in shaping the progression of Black cinema, and will continue to do so. This dialogue will include diverse perspectives from industry veterans and breakthrough talents, lauding great accomplishments, lessons learned, other women to watch, innovative paths to success and what fuels the unrelenting passion that drives these women to take risks and persevere.

PANELISTS:

Moderator: Cori Murray—Entertainment Director, ESSENCE Magazine

Suzanne de Passe—CEO, de Passe Entertainment Group, LLC

Zola B. Mashariki—SVP, Production, Fox Searchlight Pictures

Gina Prince-Bythewood—Screenwriter / Director

Sophie Okenedo—Actor

ABOUT THE 2008 URBANWORLD FILM FESTIVAL:

Beginning this year, BET Networks has signed on for a three-year strategic partnership to present the **Urbanworld Film Festival**. The unique partnership, strengthened by BET's position as the leading media and entertainment provider for African Americans and consumers of Black culture, will further establish the festival as one of the world's largest competitive film festivals designed to redefine and enhance the roles of multicultural constituents in contemporary cinema.

ABOUT MACY'S AND FILM MEETS FASHION:

This year, Macy's, a proud sponsor of Urbanworld, will continue its season-long 150th birthday celebration by bringing the Macy's Red Star experience to the film festival at the Closing Night After-Party. Film Meets Fashion will be a monumental fashion retrospective chronicling the last 40 years of iconic film and the role fashion has played in its scope. Martine Reardon, a Macy's executive, says, "As a company that 'curates' fashion for our customers across the country, we are honored to join Urbanworld and BET in a presentation of the dynamic intersection of pop culture, fashion and film."

ABOUT BET NETWORKS:

BET Networks, a division of Viacom Inc. (NYSE: VIA, VIA.B), is the nation's leading provider of quality entertainment, music, news and public affairs television programming

for the African-American audience. The primary BET channel reaches more than 87 million households according to Nielsen Media Research, and can be seen in the U.S., Canada and the Caribbean. BET is the dominant African-American consumer brand with a diverse group of business extensions: BET.com, a leading internet destination for Black entertainment, music, culture, and news; BET Digital Networks - BET J, BET Gospel and BET Hip Hop, attractive alternatives for cutting-edge entertainment tastes; BET Event Productions, a full-scale event management and production company; BET Home Entertainment, a collection of BET-branded offerings for the home environment including DVDs and video-on-demand; BET Mobile, which provides ringtones, games and video content for wireless devices; and BET International, an extension of BET network programming for global distribution.

ABOUT URBANWORLD FILM FESTIVAL:

Urbanworld launched in August 1997 and was founded by former executive at Miramax Stacy Spikes. Over the past eleven years, Urbanworld has presented approximately 700 features, shorts and documentaries, with estimated attendance reaching 15,000+. Now in its twelfth year, the Urbanworld Film Festival is the largest internationally competitive festival of its kind. Urbanworld re-defines the competitive film festival landscape with its fresh and necessary approach to spreading the voices of a multicultural world. The Urbanworld Film Festival is an initiative produced by the Urbanworld Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to implementing programs and events that support the development and success of the urban filmmaking community. Stacy Spikes serves as chairman emeritus. Gabrielle Glore serves as executive producer.

www.urbanworld.org

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