

*** MEDIA ALERT ***

March 12, 2012

“LESSON PLAN”

A Documentary About Human Behavior

The Power of the Human Mind. What Is “Good”? What Is “Evil”?

LOS ANGELES -- The award-winning documentary “Lesson Plan” will be showcased at the 14th Annual Independent Filmmakers Showcase (IFS) Film Festival on March 21 in Santa Monica, Calif. This film is a thought-provoking documentary about one teacher’s controversial experiment in 1967, and the backlash that ensued. Co-directed by David Jeffery and Philip Neel, an original member of the classroom experiment, “Lesson Plan” has been awarded “Best Documentary Feature” and “Best Director” by the IFS festival. The film will screen at 10:30 p.m. and will be followed by a Q&A session with the subject of the documentary, Ron Jones, the teacher who conducted the experiment. The 14th Annual IFS Film Festival will be screening films March 21 at the Laemmle Monica 4-plex in Santa Monica, and March 22 through 28 at the IFS Screening Rooms in Los Angeles.

“Lesson Plan” recounts the harrowing days in the spring of ‘67, when young history teacher Ron Jones led a class of teenagers at Cubberley Senior High School in Palo Alto, Calif., through a re-creation of the environment that fostered the rise of fascism and eventual humanitarian horror in Nazi Germany. The documentary contains interviews with Jones and a select group of former students, recounting the experience and resulting chaos and tension at Cubberley as more and more students gravitated toward Jones’ manufactured brand of fascist indoctrination and hyperbole.

Jones was inspired at the time by a question from one of his pupils: How could the German people have missed the signs of a rising fascist Nazi regime? He proceeded to conduct an experiment with his class of 15-year-olds, sampling the experience of the attraction and rise of the Nazi movement in Germany prior to World War II. Within days of the classroom experiment’s start, events spun out of control as teens attracted to the movement turned into aggressive zealots and strict rules gave way to confusion and chaos.

“Lesson Plan” has been honored by a bevy of film festivals and publications, including the Chicago United Film Festival, Newport Beach (Calif.) Film Festival, San Francisco United Film Festival, Victoria (B.C.) Film Festival, Mill Valley (Calif.) Film Festival, Seattle International Film Festival, SoHo (New York) International Film Festival and CINE. Paul de Barros of *The Seattle Times* gave the film three out of four stars, calling it “a fascinating documentary.” Robert Butler of Butler’s Cinema Scene recommended “Lesson Plan” as one of the 10 must-see films of 2011.” And Calli Parker of KC Metropolis described “Lesson Plan” as a “powerful touchstone for understanding how easily group dynamics can be transformed into group control.”

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