

**July 5, 2016**  **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

The**Willson Oakville Film Festival,**Oakville’s first and only independent film festival, and **Film.ca,** the festival’s Lead Venue Sponsor, are proud to announce the winners of the **Film.ca** **Audience Choice Awards** following its third annual film festival, which occurred **June 24-26**, in Oakville, Ontario.

 The Winner of **BEST FEATURE** is the Canadian Indie Film **SCRATCH**, which was a world premiere for the festival, with a sold out audience. The film is an action heist “on the edge of your seat” film featuring a female rookie armoured truck guard, caught between her coworkers plot to rob their own truck and greedy gangsters desperate to grab the loot. **SCRATCH** sold out a few weeks before the festival.

Director Maninder Chana intends to release the film theatrically later this year.  Chana and Producer Michael Dragnea are thrilled with the award: “This is amazing! Thank you so much for putting *Scratch* into the festival. This is the best result moving forward with this film that we could have hoped for..This has been one of the best festival experiences I've had and I've had films screened around the world. For three years in you have your act together better than those that have been doing it for decades. Continued success. Keep going!”

Chana’s four-language feature *Little Terrors,* starring Bollywood legend Om Puri (*Gandhi, East is East*) was released theatrically Fall of 2014 to rave reviews and was just released on VOD across North America. His supernatural thriller *Cell 213*, released theatrically in 2011, stars Eric Balfour (*Skyline*), Michael Rooker (*Walking Dead, Guardians of the Galaxy*), and Bruce Greenwood (*Star Trek*).

The winner of Best Short is local Producer/Director Jeremy McCracken’s poignant ten minute short film, ***Fastball***, in which a young boy deals with his grief over losing his mother by playing baseball.

*We really enjoyed the experience of screening our short film Fastball at the Willson Oakville Film Festival. It was the North American premiere, so this was the first time we were able to view it in a theatre, on the big screen. Hearing that we won the audience award for best short film was just incredible.* ***Fastball*** *is a very personal film created with the hopes that the audience would connect with it, so it’s meaningful to get that feedback.*

Next up for ***Fastball*** is a continuation of the festival circuit as it has been selected to program in three more international festivals, including a screening at the Rivne International Film Festival in Ukraine, at the end of August.

Jeff Knoll, CEO of Film.ca, is excited about the calibre of this year’s winners: "We were thrilled to host the festival at Film.Ca again this year. We always love supporting local and independent filmmakers and think that the Film.Ca Audience Choice award winners show off some of the best of what our very talented filmmaking community has to offer.”

Winners get a cash prize and certificate from the festival. The 2016 Willson Oakville Film Festival occurred from 24-26 June and attracted record numbers, with four sold out films.

**About the Oakville Festivals of Film and Art**

Oakville Festivals of Film and Art (OFFA) is a registered, not-for-profit organization headquartered in Oakville, Ontario. *We are* a community organization whose mandate is to provide award-winning world and Canadian festival premieres that will appeal to dedicated cinephiles and those interested in arts and culture. At the same time, our distinctive approach includes photography and art exhibits that will appeal to the burgeoning artistic community.

**About Film.ca**

FILM.CA CINEMAS INC. is based in Oakville, Ontario, and has been providing a cheaper, friendlier, independent alternative to the multiplexes to the Oakville, Burlington and Mississauga communities under the name Encore Cinemas since 1998, rebranding in 2014. Headed up by CEO Jeff Knoll, General Manager Jason Speers and Director David Jenkins, [Film.ca](http://Film.ca) Cinemas is proud to be able to continue to serve the community through the magic of the movies.

**About Willson International**

Willson International is a fourth-generation, family owned business with deep-rooted experience and expertise in the regulatory environment of international trade. Since 1918, Willson International has been an innovative force, simplifying North American cross-border trade with client-focused customs brokerage and logistics solutions. With service locations at major gateways along the Canada-U.S. border, including recent expansion to BC, Willson promises excellence in execution, helping clients optimize customs operations and customer service, while minimizing costs.

**Media Contacts (OFFA):**

* Wendy Donnan, Executive Director, wendy@offa.ca, 647-557-2210 or cell: (905) 302 9017
* Judah Hernandez, Artistic Director, judah@offa.ca, 647-557-2210 or cell: (416) 417 2570
* Suzy Godefroy, Godefroy Marketing sgodefroy@cogeco.ca 905-599-1907
* Victoria Nixon, Film.ca Marketing contact, vnixon@film.ca, 905-338-0494, ext. 1002

**-30-**





