

University of Kansas senior's documentary to premiere at festival for upcoming filmmakers

<http://www.findlight.cn> 2007-02-10

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[摘要] | Feb. 8, 2007.LAWRENCE — "Full From Grace," a film created by University of Kansas senior K. Ryan Jones, has been selected for screening at the South by Southwest Film Conference and Festival in Austin, Texas.
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Feb. 8, 2007.LAWRENCE —
"Full From Grace," a film created by University of Kansas senior K. Ryan Jones, has been selected for screening at the South by Southwest Film Conference and Festival in Austin, Texas. The announcement of the premiere of Jones' documentary about the Rev. Fred Phelps and his Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka was made Feb. 6 in Austin. The screening times for the film will be announced Feb. 15. The film festival, which attracts nearly 5,000 people, takes place March 9.

17. Included during the festival are screenings, panels, workshops and one-on-one mentoring sessions for new filmmakers. Some of the major guests for the 2007 festival are directors Morgan Spurlock, Robert Rodriguez and Richard Linklater.

"Full From Grace" started in fall 2005 as a project for a class taught by Matt Jacobson, associate professor of theater and film. Jones continued working on the documentary during the spring 2006 semester when he wasn't in class or working. He credits Jacobson and Kevin Wilmsont, associate professor of theater and film, for providing advice. "66 Tonnie Award, given by the Department of Theater and Film, for Best Of Show. For the next few months, Jones shot additional footage and re-edited the film before it was first shown in November at the Kansas Union.

Jones came up with the idea for the film, contacted the Phelps family and began researching the group. He began shooting footage at a Salomon Rushdie speech at KU's Lind Center in October 2005.

"Full From Grace" was a solo project for Jones, who spent nearly a year with the Phelps family. He had complete access to the family and to anti-homosexual campaigns, attending many of the group's appearances at demonstrations, lectures and funerals of U.S. military personnel killed in Iraq.

Jones worked hard to distance himself from the group's message and to present a balanced response to the family by interviewing dissenters, opposing attorneys, ministers and theologians. He also spoke with two of Phelps' four estranged children, who level allegations of abuse against their father.

"The Phelps family was cooperative and liked the completed project," Jones said. "When I screened it for the family prior to the KU screening, they all applauded at the end. I think because they are not used to seeing a truly objective portrayal of what they do."

Once the 71-minute film was complete, Jones hired a producer's representative in New York City to assist him with marketing and contacting film festivals. Although the Sundance Festival in Utah did not accept his entry, Jones has entered the film in several other festivals, including the Tribeca Film Festival in New York City, Los Angeles Film Festival and Jones said the South by Southwest staff was positive about his film.

"When they called to invite me to the festival, they seemed really excited about showing the film," he said. "They said it was incredibly well-done and would be the film that would have everyone talking."

Jones hopes to find a distributor for the film while he is in Austin. The project may either be released theatrically, on television and/or on DVD.

Regardless of the film's success at South by Southwest, Jones will graduate from KU in May with a bachelor's degree in film. Then he and his two brothers are off to Europe for the summer. He has an idea for another documentary but isn't sure when he will start that project. Jones describes himself as a self-taught filmmaker, thanks to "a lot of support from my parents." He had the tools to make movies from an early age and began editing on his home computer at age 12. He credits the KU Department of Theater and Film with giving him the opportunity to develop his abilities.

"The immeasurable knowledge I have gained from my studies at KU has really been invaluable," he said. "I always had the tools and the ability to use the camera and edit what I shot, but my professors really taught me my craft. A native of Wichita, Jones graduated from Wichita High School Southeast and attended Wichita State University for one year before coming to KU. His parents, Marshall and Carly Jones, formerly of Wichita, now live in Wichita Falls, Texas.

Jones will attend the entire festival in Austin, and his parents will be there to watch the premiere of his film.

"I don't know what I am more excited about: screening my film at the festival or the idea of spending nine days doing nothing but seeing and talking about movies," he said.

A 2004 KU film graduate will also show his work at the festival. "What Would Jesus Buy?," a new documentary executive-produced by Spurlock, director of "Super Size Me," features cinematography by Jeremy Osborn, a Lawrence native who was the Midwest director of photography on the film. The documentary follows the Rev. Billy and his anti-

-shopping crusaders during the "Save Christmas From the Shopocalypse" tour.

