



For Immediate Release

**TRIBECA FILM INSTITUTE AND THE ALFRED P. SLOAN FOUNDATION ANNOUNCE
WINNER OF \$50,000 SLOAN STUDENT GRAND JURY PRIZE FOR SCREENWRITING**

Grainger David of NYU's Tisch School of the Arts to Receive Financial Support, Supervision and Guidance from the Tribeca Film Institute as the Winner of Sloan's Prize for Science-Themed Screenplay

Sloan Has Awarded over \$3.5 Million in Direct Grants to Film Students Since 1997

[New York, NY – April 5, 2012] – The Tribeca Film Institute (TFI) today announced the recipient of the 2012 Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Student Grand Jury Prize for Screenwriting. *Penny Stock* by Grainger David of NYU's Tisch School of the Arts was selected as the “best-of-the-best” screenplay from the winning scripts at six leading film schools participating in Sloan's decade-long National Film Program.

The \$50,000 grant was created last year by the Sloan Foundation to recognize exceptional feature screenplays that dramatize science and technology themes and/or that portray scientists, engineers, or mathematicians in prominent character roles. Grainger David from Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina will receive a \$30,000 cash prize, as well as an additional \$20,000 to be used in direct support of the project. The award includes year-round support from TFI, including mentorship and guidance from scientific and film industry professionals, networking opportunities, and industry exposure.

Penny Stock was selected by an awards committee comprised of actress Ally Sheedy (*The Breakfast Club*, *High Art*); director John Badham (*Saturday Night Fever*, *WarGames*); actress Rachael Leigh Cook (*She's All That*); scientist and bioweaponeer Sergei Popov, and neurobiologist Ricardo Gil da Costa (*Fringe*). Additional input came from the Sloan Foundation and its four partners in screenplay development: the Tribeca Film Institute, Film Independent, the Hamptons International Film Festival and Sundance Institute. Grainger David's screenplay was chosen from nominees that had previously won Sloan prizes at the Foundation's six affiliated film school programs: UCLA (School of Theatre, Film and Television), NYU (Tisch School of the Arts), USC (School of Cinematic Arts), Carnegie Mellon (School of Drama), AFI (America's Conservatory for Filmmakers), and Columbia (School of the Arts).

Penny Stock is a feature screenplay about a community college geology professor, who risks everything on a bold new theory in the race to discover an epic diamond pipe in the Northwest Territories. Becoming a mining prospector was never in the professor's plans – or his family's – but he feels that he is on the cusp of discovering something great, and he's willing to risk everything to prove it.

Last year's inaugural prize went to Robert Cohen of NYU for his work *Bystander*, which is based on the 1964 rape and murder of Kitty Genovese in Queens. Though the attack lasted over 30 minutes, none of the 37 witnesses called the police or intervened until she was already dead. Four years

later, a groundbreaking psychological study on the "Bystander Effect" explained the inaction of the witnesses. Though a fictional account of the attack's aftermath, the scientific research and theories in the script are historically and psychologically accurate. Since winning, Cohen has been paired with an industry mentor, producer Alexis Alexanian (*Pieces of April, Tadpole*), who has helped him with re-writes and feedback on option agreements he has received. TFI is also providing a social psychologist who will serve as a mentor to help Cohen maintain the authenticity of the science.

"We are pleased to once again join The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to nurture and encourage student filmmaking," said Tamir Muhammad, Director of Feature Programming, TFI. "The Sloan Student Grand Jury prize and our annual TFI Sloan Filmmaker Fund allow films that promote a greater understanding of science and mathematics to get the year-round support and funding they need to reach their full potential. Sloan is an integral part of the Tribeca community and we are grateful for their continued support."

"We are delighted to partner with Tribeca in selecting *Penny Stock*, the thrilling tale of an Indiana Jones-type geology professor in a race to discover diamonds, as this year's winner of the Sloan Student Grand Jury Prize," said Doron Weber, Vice President of Programs for the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. "For over a decade, Sloan has supported six of the nation's leading film schools with annual awards in screenwriting and film production for films that dramatize science and technology's themes and characters. This year several of those projects like *Robot and Frank* and *Valley of Saints*, have been successfully shot and released into the festival circuit. With Tribeca's skillful mentoring, we expect *Penny Stock* to speed its way into theaters and demonstrate yet again how films about science and technology can appeal to audiences everywhere."

The Sloan Student Grand Jury Prize was created to recognize the very best student screenplay in the nation that uses science and technology themes or characters to tell an engaging story. Since 1997, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation has given more than \$3.5 million in direct grants to film students throughout the country, including \$1.75 million in prize money to student screenwriters and more than \$1.75 million to student directors and producers. Established as part of Sloan's increasing commitment to support science and technology films through to commercial production, the Sloan Student Grand Jury Prize will boost development of the winning project, and introduce the work and its writer to the industry at large.

The award was presented at an evening reception in New York City on Thursday, April 5, 2012.

About the Tribeca Film Institute:

The Tribeca Film Institute is a 501(c)3 year round nonprofit arts organization founded by Robert De Niro, Jane Rosenthal, and Craig Hatkoff in the wake of September 11, 2001. TFI empowers filmmakers through grants and professional development, and is a resource and advocate for individual artists in the field. The Institute's educational programming leverages an extensive film community network to help underserved New York City students learn filmmaking and gain the media skills necessary to be productive citizens and creative individuals in the 21st century. Administering a dozen major programs annually, TFI is a critical contributor to the fabric of filmmaking and aids in protecting the livelihood of filmmakers and media artists.

For more information and a list of all TFI programs visit www.tribecafilminstitute.org/

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About the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation

The New York based Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, founded in 1934, makes grants in science, technology, and economic performance. Sloan's program in public understanding of science and

technology, directed by Doron Weber, supports books, radio, film, television, theater and new media to reach a wide, non-specialized audience.

Sloan's film program encourages filmmakers to create more realistic and accurate stories about science and technology and to challenge existing stereotypes about scientists and engineers in the popular imagination. In addition to Screenplay Development Programs, Sloan has supported such film projects as *Future Weather*, a coming of age story about a young woman who finds personal meaning in science, starring Lily Taylor and Amy Madigan (premiering at the Tribeca Film Festival), *Valley of Saints* and *Robot and Frank* both of which premiered at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival and shared the Sloan Feature Film Prize.

The Foundation has sponsored screenwriting and film production workshops at Sundance, the Hamptons, Tribeca, and Film Independent, and honored feature films such as *Obselidia*, *Agora* and *Another Earth*. Sloan also partners with Ensemble Studio Theatre and Manhattan Theatre Club in support of new science plays such as *Photograph 51*, the story of Rosalind Franklin and her role in the discovery of the double helical structure of DNA. For more information about the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation please visit www.sloan.org.

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