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Emerging Brooklyn Screenwriter Jeff Seymann Wins Unrestricted Funds from NYFA for Feature Length Script "El Flaco"

Seymann is Latest in Long Line of NYFA's Geri Ashur Screenwriting Award Winners

New York, NY (June 17, 2008) – New York Foundation for the Arts, New York's leading provider of unrestricted funding to individual artists, has awarded a grant in the amount of \$10,000 to emerging New York screenwriter Jeff Seymann for the script *El Flaco* – which he plans to turn into a feature-length film. Seymann's grant, called the Geri Ashur Award, is awarded to the highest-ranked of NYFA's Playwriting/Screenwriting Fellows, a group of fifteen writers recently selected by a NYFA panel of working playwrights and screenwriters to receive highly sought after NYFA Fellowships. The panel reviewed scripts from over 500 applicants in all.

"I'm honored to win the Geri Ashur Award," said Seymann, who has done film editing work for National Geographic and the BBC, and who recently won a Best Director award at the Chilean International Film Festival. "It feels great to be acknowledged by my peers, and the recognition certainly gives me some confidence in what is a highly competitive business."

He continued: "Practically speaking, the unrestricted funds allow me to set aside more time for research and preparation in an effort to move this film forward. Having that kind of freedom is invaluable to the creative process."

El Flaco is a coming of age drama about Flaco, the Chicano son of an immigrant smuggler who is left in charge of a stranded Mexican girl who is unable to pay off her debt.

The **Geri Ashur Screenwriting Award** was established in 1984 in memory of Geraldine Ashur by her husband, Richard Brick, and her friends. Ms. Ashur, who died at age 37, graduated from Barnard College in 1968 and became a screenwriter, film editor, foreign language dubbing specialist and documentary film director. Since 1985, the recipient of the Geri Ashur award has been chosen when NYFA awards Fellowships to New York playwrights and screenwriters. The Ashur award winner stands out as the top-ranked in the group.

Mr. Brick, who raised the Ashur Award endowment with the assistance of a distinguished board of advisors, was the producer of three Woody Allen films including *Deconstructing Harry* and *Sweet and Lowdown*. He said: "I am pleased to have formed this partnership with NYFA to administer this living memorial to Geri Ashur."

About NYFA

New York Foundation for the Arts provides more support and services to artists and arts organizations in all disciplines than any other private organization in the country: nearly \$7 million annually. Nearly one out of every five public, modern artworks created for the New York subway and regional rail system was done by a former NYFA Fellow.

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