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Sad tale of abuse named the best

'Self-Medicating' wins prize at film festival

By **John Beifuss**
Contact
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"Self-Medicating," the story of a troubled young man subjected to physical and emotional abuse in a corrupt rehab facility, was named Best Feature Saturday at the seventh annual Memphis International Film Festival.

The autobiographical movie -- written and directed by its Las Vegas-based star, Monty Lapica -- screens at noon today at Malco's Studio on the Square, 2105 Court.

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A review in Variety described "Self-Medicating" as "searing" and "surprisingly trenchant," with a plot that conveys something of the "anarchic thrill" of "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest."

In other festival awards, the 21-minute Italian-language film "Dammi il La," written by Memphian Sarah Ledbetter and directed by Matteo Servente, was named Best Short.

Director Allan L. Durand's "Willie Francis Must Die Again," the story of a 16-year-old African-American ordered to return to the electric chair in 1946 Louisiana after a first attempt to execute him failed, was named Best

Documentary.

Best Animated Film went to Henry Selick's "Moongirl."

The judges were film professionals and experts chosen by the Memphis Film Forum, the not-for-profit organization that coordinates the event.

The festival ends today at Studio on the Square with a schedule that includes such features as the documentary "Pizza! The Movie" at noon; a pair of Memphis-connected music documentaries -- "Amazing Grace: Jeff Buckley" and "Altered by Elvis" -- at 4:30 p.m.; and director Claire Denis' 1999 masterpiece set in a French Foreign Legion outpost, "Beau Travail," at 7:30 p.m.

Admission is \$7 per program. For a complete schedule, visit memphisfilmforum.org.

-- John Beifuss: 529-2394

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