



Filmmakers take home honors at festival

The sixth annual "American Black Film Festival"

announced the winners of its 2002 competitions, during the recent ABFF Awards Show presented by Lincoln and co-hosted by Robert Townsend and Shaun Robinson at the Jackie Gleason Theatre, June 29, in South Beach. The star-studded gala culminated ABFF's five-day festival event, beginning June 26, and staged at various area sites.

"Florida is proud to host the American Black Film Festival," said Governor Jeb Bush. "Our state's cultural diversity as well as our connection with the film industry make this the perfect venue to celebrate African-American achievement in film. We intend to build on our relationship with the ABFF as it further expands and develops in the coming years. We also believe that Hollywood has just scratched the surface of the creative energy of the Sunshine State, and we are committed to making Florida a haven for filmmakers."

This year's awards included the top HBO Short Film Award, the Lincoln Filmmaker Trophy, the first Blockbuster Audience Award for Best Feature Film and five ABFF celebrity honors, including Best Actress and Best Actor Awards and the previously announced Rising Star and Career Achievement Awards.

"The Riff," directed and written by Mark Allen, and starring Antonio Fargas and Nia Peeples, won the Lincoln Filmmaker Trophy Award. The HBO Short Film Award, with a grand prize of \$20,000, went to "Quest to Ref" directed and written by Benjamin Watkins, who also starred in the film. "Civil Brand," directed by Emmy Award winner Neema Barnette, took the Blockbuster Audience Award for Best Feature

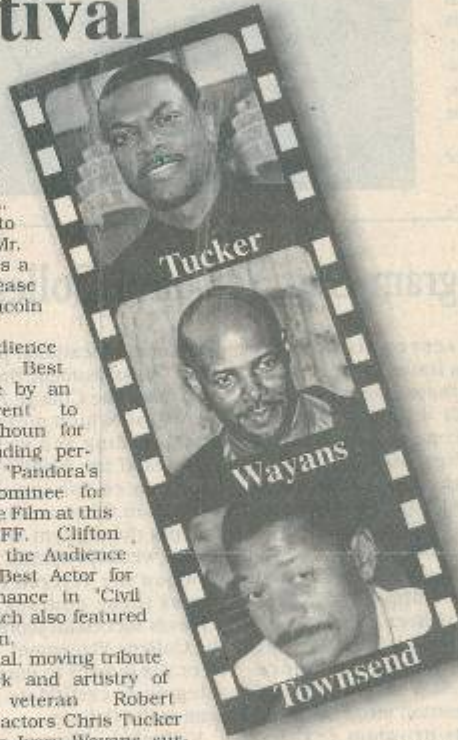
Film. Producer Roger M. Bobb accepted the award for Mr. Allen. In addition to his award, Mr. Allen receives a two-year lease on a Lincoln Navigator.

The Audience Award for Best Performance by an Actress went to Monica Calhoun for her outstanding performance in "Pandora's Box," a nominee for Best Feature Film at this year's ABFF. Clifton Powell won the Audience Award for Best Actor for his performance in "Civil Brand," which also featured Ms. Calhoun.

In a special, moving tribute to the work and artistry of industry veteran Robert Townsend, actors Chris Tucker and Keenen Ivory Wayans surprised Mr. Townsend with ABFF's 2002 Career Achievement-Male Award.

"We are deeply thankful for the continuing support of our founding sponsor, HBO, and our Platinum sponsor, Lincoln, as well as that of our many friends including Robert Townsend, Bill Duke, Chris Tucker and Keenen Ivory Wayans," said Jeff Friday, President & CEO, Film Life, Inc. and Executive Producer of the American Black Film Festival. "It is because of this allegiance and loyalty that ABFF has become the premiere multicultural film festival in the world."

The Blockbuster Audience Award film "Civil Brand" is a hard-edged hip-hop tale about



young Black women caught up in abuse and exploitation, and the reality of prisons as modern-day plantations. The women discover that a corporation is paying for the entire 'plantation setup' and making huge profits off their slave labor. Ms. Barnette directed from a script by Joyce Lewis and Preston Whitmore. The cast includes LisaRaye, Mos Def, N'Bushe Wright, Monica Calhoun, Da Brat, MC Lyle, Clifton Powell (who won the 2002 Best Actor Award for his performance in this film) and Tichina Arnold. Jeff Clanagan is executive producer of "Civil Brand" which received a \$15,000 prize from Blockbuster, Inc.