



## **2024 815HORTS: A 5SHORT FILM FESTIVAL EXPANDS TO TWO DAYS**

*Four Featured Guests, Return of Sundance Shorts Tour Highlight Festival's Third Year*

**ROCKFORD, Ill., October 29, 2024:** Plus Seven Company announced today that **815HORTS: A 5SHORT Film Festival**, which is set for Fri.-Sat., Dec. 13-14, 2024, at City Stage Studios, has expanded to two days of film screenings and content. Now in its third year, this year's 815HORTS includes four featured guests: **Edgar Barens**, Academy Award nominated filmmaker; **Madison Egan**, Tribeca Festival's shorts programmer; **Colleen Griffen**, award-winning indie filmmaker; and **Peter Hawley**, director of the Illinois Film Office. Moreover, the **Sundance Film Festival Shorts Tour** will be screened at 815HORTS for the third-straight year.

Barens is set to headline the evening program Dec. 13 when the festival's opening screening block will be capped off by "Prison Terminal", Barens's Oscar nominated short documentary about a prison hospice program at the Iowa State Penitentiary. Following the screening, Barens will be joined onstage by Hawley for a 5SHORT Talk interview about the acclaimed film and nonprofit work Barens continues today in support of prison hospice programs around the country.

On Saturday morning, Griffen, whose filmmaking and fundraising expertise has resulted in a variety of indie projects, will be joined by Barens on a panel discussion titled "How to Raise Money to Make a Film – or Make a Film When You Have No Money." On Saturday afternoon, Egan, the youngest shorts programmer in Tribeca Festival's history, will share industry best practices in a panel titled "Filmmaking That Gets Seen – And Screened!" Hawley, who returns as 815HORTS emcee for the second-straight year, will moderate the Saturday panels, which will include opportunities for audience Q&A.

"The City proudly celebrates the success of 815HORTS and is excited to support the ongoing growth of this remarkable film festival," said Sarah Leys, the City of Rockford's deputy director, community and economic development. "Rockford's film industry holds great potential, and this festival not only gives a platform to local filmmakers but also draws creative talent from outside our community."

In addition to the featured guests and educational content, 815HORTS will screen one short film block Friday evening and three short film blocks Saturday afternoon/evening. **Filmmakers can still submit short films for screening consideration through Nov. 22** at [www.FilmFreeway.com/815HORTS](http://www.FilmFreeway.com/815HORTS) or [www.815HORTS.com](http://www.815HORTS.com).

Festival doors are scheduled to open at 6 p.m. Dec. 13 and 10:30 a.m. Dec. 14, while winners of the 5SHORT Awards will be announced after the final screening block Saturday night. Ticketed guests are also encouraged to stay at City Stage Studios for a 5SHORT After-Party, an industry networking hour to close out both nights.

For festival admission, Friday general admission tickets cost \$15, Saturday general admission tickets cost \$20, and weekend general admission passes cost \$25. Children under 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Ticketed guests will be allowed re-entry.

For a complete program schedule and to purchase tickets in advance, visit [www.815HORTS.com](http://www.815HORTS.com) and [www.FilmFreeway.com/815HORTS](http://www.FilmFreeway.com/815HORTS).

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### THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING 815HORTS!

Plus Seven Company would like to thank the following partners and individuals for supporting 815HORTS:

- **Champion Partner:** City of Rockford
- **Premier Partner:** Illinois Film Office
- **Supporting Partner:** Ron Clewer
- **In-Kind Partner:** District Bar & Grill
- **Venue Partner:** City Stage Studios
- **Special Thanks:** Dena Altamore, Edgar Barens, Madison Egan, Colleen Griffen, Don Hatton, Peter Hawley, Jerry LaBuy, Josiah Sjöström

### ABOUT EDGAR BARENS

**Edgar Barens** is an acclaimed documentary filmmaker whose work explores the human stories within the American criminal justice system, exposing the personal toll of its systemic challenges. Known for his powerful documentaries, experimental shorts, and public service announcements, Barens uniquely captures intimate narratives that humanize these complex issues. His Academy Award-nominated documentary “Prison Terminal” (2014) has raised awareness of the need for humane end-of-life care in prisons, screening widely in correctional facilities, academic institutions, conferences, and community centers. The film highlights Iowa State Penitentiary’s pioneering peer-caregiver hospice program, a model Barens hopes will inspire other facilities to adopt dignified care for incarcerated individuals facing death.

Barens holds both a Bachelor’s and MFA in Cinema and Photography from Southern Illinois University. His earlier documentary, “A Sentence of Their Own”, earned him the CINE Golden Eagle and the National Council on Crime and Delinquency’s PASS Award, underscoring his dedication to capturing the struggles of those affected by incarceration. His work has received significant support from institutions like the Illinois Arts Council and Open Society Institutes’ Project on Death in America, solidifying his role as a documentarian committed to social justice. Barens now works with the Humane Prison Hospice Project, a California-based nonprofit promoting prison hospice programs inspired by “Prison Terminal”.

### ABOUT MADISON EGAN

Born and raised in New York, **Madison Egan** discovered a passion for film from a young age. She would go on to study Cinema History at SUNY Purchase College before obtaining her Masters in Film Theory at the University of Galway, Ireland. Egan’s foray into film festivals began at the Galway Film Fleadh and as a programming assistant for the first art house cinema on the West Coast of Ireland. Upon returning to the U.S. she held a variety of roles at some of the most prestigious festivals including Sundance, New York Film Festival and Tribeca Festival, where, in 2023, Egan was hired as the short film programmer – the youngest in the festival’s history.

### ABOUT COLLEEN GRIFFEN

**Colleen Griffen** wrote, directed, and produced the mockumentary web series, “boyband”, which was acquired by Fullscreen and Audience Network in May of 2016. She also wrote/produced/directed her feature directorial debut, “The Cold and the Quiet” in 2013, which won both Best Narrative and Best Direction at the

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Women's Independent Film Festival in Los Angeles. In addition, Griffen produced "Already Dead" (2007) for Sony Pictures and "Thieves Quartet" (1994) for Mooncoin Films. A graduate of Washington University in St. Louis (BA) and Northwestern University (MFA), she has taught film at both Northwestern and Columbia College in Chicago.

In 2019, IFC Films acquired "An Acceptable Loss" for theatrical distribution. Griffen produced this independent feature film, starring Jamie Lee Curtis and Tika Sumpter, for writer/director Joe Chappelle (The Wire, Black Bird, Godfather of Harlem, Fringe). The film is now streaming.

Currently, she is finishing her first novel.

#### **ABOUT PETER HAWLEY**

**Peter Hawley** is an award-winning filmmaker and college teacher. He produced the feature film "Driftless", and wrote and directed "Victimless Crimes", has directed numerous TV commercials, music videos, short films and documentaries, including the award-winning "What's 2+3?" He has been a college professor since 1996, teaching in the Film Departments of Columbia College Chicago, Tribeca Flashpoint College, and Columbia College Hollywood. Between 2014 and 2017 he was the Dean of Tribeca Flashpoint College and Columbia College Hollywood, merging the two schools. Since 2017 he has taught in the School of Communication at Loyola University Chicago. He is completing, "And They're Off!" a documentary on horse racing announcers. On May 1, 2019 he became Director of the Illinois Film Office.

#### **ABOUT SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL SHORT FILM TOUR**

The **2024 Sundance Film Festival Short Film Tour** is a 110-minute theatrical program of seven short films curated from the 2024 Sundance Film Festival, including three Festival Award-winning titles. The tour program is a sampling of Festival offerings and a testament to the unique storytelling potential that the format holds. Audiences can enjoy a mix of fiction, documentary, and animated shorts that are funny, sad, inspiring, and full of strong characters. Driven by innovation and experimentation, the Short Film Program seeks out filmmaking's most original voices from around the world.

#### **ABOUT PLUS SEVEN COMPANY**

**Plus Seven Company** (P7c) delivers winning sports and entertainment. Through its properties and services divisions, P7c's expertise covers events, branding, partnerships, public relations and tourism advisory. For more information, visit [www.PlusSevenCompany.com](http://www.PlusSevenCompany.com).

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