



NEWS RELEASE

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SCREENWRITER AND DIRECTOR ALAN BALL TO RECEIVE SHOWEST GROUNDBREAKING FILMMAKER OF 2008 AWARD

BALL'S BIG SCREEN DIRECTORIAL DEBUT, *TOWELHEAD*, WILL BE RELEASED IN AUGUST 2008

LOS ANGELES — **Alan Ball** will receive the ShoWest Groundbreaking Filmmaker of 2008 award, it was announced today by Mitch Neuhauser, co-managing director of the event that will be held March 10-13, 2008 in Las Vegas. Ball will be presented with his award at the Opening Day Luncheon to be held on Tuesday, March 11th at Bally's Paris Las Vegas. The focus of this year's luncheon is going to be on the importance of Specialty and Independent films and distribution companies in today's marketplace.

"Alan Ball is a celebrated director and screenwriter in both the world of television and film who has been honored by his peers with the highest endorsement in our industry when he received an Academy Award® for *American Beauty*," said Neuhauser. "Ball's wide range of highly recognized work from his award-winning production of *American Beauty* to his award-winning direction and writing for "Six Feet Under," proves him to be an influential writer, director and producer. ShoWest is honored to be presenting him with its own Groundbreaking Filmmaker of 2008 award."

Ball's directorial debut is Warner Independent Picture's *Towelhead*, which will be released theatrically in August 2008. Based on the critically acclaimed novel by Alicia Erian and written for the screen and directed by Ball, *Towelhead* stars Aaron Eckhart, Toni Collette, Maria Bello, Peter Macdissi and newcomer Summer Bishil as Jasira. Jasira wants something she can't define: attention, love, acceptance or a normal life. Unfortunately, she doesn't know the right way to find it. When Jasira's mother exiles her to Houston to live with her strict, quick-to-anger Lebanese father, she quickly learns what aspects of herself to suppress in front of him. In private, however, she conducts her sexual awakening with all the false confidence that pop culture and her neighbor's magazines have provided. The result is a funny, dark, bold and harrowing look at the confusion and misguided exploration of youth in America's track houses, public schools and suburban wastelands. *Towelhead* delivers to fans exactly what Ball is known for, bringing real life to the screen with drama and humor.

Ball's career began in New York as an art director for various trade publications before he became a playwright, writing such plays as "Five Women Wearing the Same Dress," "The M Word," "Made for a Woman," "Bachelor Holiday," "The Amazing Adventures of Tense Guy," and "Your Mother's Butt." Ball then moved to Hollywood where he worked in television garnering credits for "Oh Grow Up," "Cybill," and "Grace Under Fire." His first produced feature film screenplay was *American Beauty*, for which he received the 1999 Academy Award® for Best Original Screenplay, the Writers Guild of America award for Best Original Screenplay and the Golden Globe award for Best Screenplay, among others. Next, Ball created and executive produced "Six Feet Under," the critically acclaimed drama series on HBO. The series garnered many awards including three Golden Globes, seven Emmy awards and a George Foster Peabody Award. Alan was awarded an Emmy and a DGA award for directing the pilot of "Six Feet Under," his television directorial debut. More recently, Ball has completed work on his new HBO pilot, "True Blood," which he directed and adapted from the novel *Dead Until Dark* by Charlaine Harris.

ShoWest is the largest annual convention for the motion picture industry. It is the only international gathering devoted exclusively to the movie business and the single largest international gathering of motion picture professionals and theatre owners in the world. The 2008 edition of ShoWest will be held March 10 - 13, 2008 at Bally's and Paris Las Vegas and is expected to draw more than 5,000 members of the motion picture industry. Each year, ShoWest attracts delegates from more than 50 countries in North and South America, Europe, Asia and Australia. ShoWest is produced by the Film Group at Nielsen Business Media, the leading trade show producer in the U.S. The Nielsen Business Media Film Group also includes ShowEast, CineAsia, Cinema Expo International and Film Journal International, as well as sister publication, The Hollywood Reporter.

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