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## 25<sup>th</sup> Connecticut Gay & Lesbian Film Festival Winning Films Announced

**HARTFORD, Conn. – June 14, 2012** – The nine-day Connecticut Gay & Lesbian Film Festival concluded its historic 25<sup>th</sup> season on Saturday, June 9, with closing night hit ***Gaby*** taking the Audience Award for favorite feature film. The film's director, **Jonathan Lisecki**, who attended the sold-out screening at the Connecticut Science Center and the after party at the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, won the **Director Award**.

"Our committee went to great lengths to make this year's selection of films truly outstanding, and the audience scores indicate that we succeeded," said Film Festival Director Shane Engstrom. "Not only were the audience ratings overall very high, the scores for the top films were extraordinarily close. It's very gratifying to know that we delivered an exceptional audience experience in our 25<sup>th</sup> year."

Here is the lineup of award-winning films:

### **Best Feature - Audience Award**

Winner – ***Gayby***  
Runner Up – ***Melting Away***  
Special Mention – ***Cloudburst***

### **Best Documentary - Audience Award**

Winner – ***Love Free or Die***  
Runner Up – ***Vito***  
Special Mention – ***Wish Me Away***

### **Best Short - Jury Award**

Winner – ***dik***  
Runner Up (tied) – ***Change & The Coffee Klash***

### **Director Award**

**Jonathan Lisecki** (*Gayby*)

***Gayby*** is based on Jonathan Lisecki's short film by the same name that tied for second place in the short film category at last year's festival. It tells the story of a straight woman in her thirties who decides to have a baby with her gay best friend. "Jonathan did an amazing job adapting his short film into a full-length feature. He maintained the same high level of humor, added a wonderful mix of supporting characters and infused the film with a touching message about friendship and family," Engstrom said.

Engstrom also noted that Lisecki went out of his way to attend the screening in Hartford immediately after flying cross country from another festival. "Jonathan's question and answer session after the screening was thoroughly engaging and entertaining. He really made closing night memorable."

***Melting Away***, which took second place, is an Israeli film about a young man who runs away from home when his parents discover that he is cross dressing. Years later the mother searches for her son, but finds a daughter, in hopes that the dying father and his child can reconcile. Rounding out the top three is ***Cloudburst***, starring Oscar-winning actresses Olympia Dukakis and Brenda Fricker. They play two older lesbians who take a road trip to Canada to get married and have a series of adventures along the way.

In the Best Documentary category, the Audience Award went to ***Love Free or Die***, which chronicles Gene Robinson's journey as the first openly gay Episcopal bishop. Runner-up ***Vito*** examines the life of author and gay activist Vito Russo. ***Wish Me Away***, which earned special mention, shows how Chely Wright came out as the first openly gay country singing star.

The Jury Award for Best Short Film went to the Australian film ***dik***, a hilarious comedy of errors set in motion when a mom and dad react to the drawing their young boy brings home from school. In ***The Coffee Klash***, a mother's emotions take a series of very funny twists and turns when she finds out at brunch that her daughter is a lesbian. In ***Change***, an African American teenager grapples with his sexual identity on the night that Barack Obama is elected president and Proposition 8 passes in California.

**Out Film CT** is a nonprofit cultural organization dedicated to presenting outstanding LGBT cinema throughout the year, culminating in the nine-day Connecticut Gay & Lesbian Film Festival. Preparations will soon begin for the 26<sup>th</sup> annual Festival next spring. The Connecticut Gay & Lesbian Film festival is the longest-running film festival of any kind in the state.

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