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Philly Independent Film Festival gears up

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By Annie Bydlon

The 4th annual **Philadelphia Independent Film Festival runs from June 23-26** at sites around the city and features a handful of films made in or inspired by Philly.

In one film to be screened tonight, Ryan Dunne, the *Jackass* star killed in a car crash this week, has a speaking part.

Originally started as an opportunity for indie filmmaker to get the recognition they deserve, the festival now offers the Philly film community a chance to network and see movies that don't often make it to the screen.

Venues include both the Franklin and IMAX theatres at the Franklin Institute, the Media Bureau (725 N. 4th Street Philadelphia, PA 19123), Café Treece (338 Brown Street Philadelphia, PA 19123) and the Random Tea Room and Curiosity Shop (713 N 4th Street Philadelphia, PA 19123) and the Raven Comedy Lounge (1718 Sansom Street Philadelphia, PA 19103). Tickets can be purchased by calling the box office of the specific venue.

The festival offers a wide range of selections – from slasher films and cop comedies to social documentaries, international films, music videos and shorts. Most of the films were made on dramatically smaller budgets than their Hollywood counterparts.

Screening at the Franklin Theatre tonight at 7:00 p.m. is **Meet Me on South Street: The Story of JC Dobbs**. Centered on the legendary Philadelphia rock and roll bar, the film traces the influence that JC Dobbs had on the city's sub-culture, as it brought acts as diverse as Bo Diddley, Oasis, Dwight Yaokum and Nirvana to the stage until its closing in 1996.

Other highlights of the festival include:

- ***Close-Up*** Written and directed by local filmmaker Jose E. Cruz Jr. , former drug-dealer turned Temple Film School graduate, this film tells the story of a failed Philly actor and former drug addict who has once again fallen off the wagon. Playing his drug dealer is Ryan Dunne, Philly native of *Jackass* fame, in one of his final roles before his death just a few days ago. tonight – 6:00 p.m. at the Media Bureau

- [*Tell Your Friends! The Concert Film!*](#) From Liam McEaney, creator of the weekly alternative stand-up comedy show *Tell Your Friends*, this documentary blends live stage footage and interviews with coming performers including Christian Finnegan, Kristen Schaal and Reggie Watts. Established comedians Janeane Garofalo, Jim Gaffigan and Colin Quinn also offer up their opinions on the business of being a comedian. Thurs. June 23 - 6:00 p.m. at the IMAX Theatre, Friday. June 24 - 6:00 p.m. at the Raven Comedy Lounge
- [*Cure for the Crash: The Art of Train Hoppin'*](#) filmmaker Brian Paul Higgins spent five months living the life of a hobo and this hybrid documentary is the result of his experiences. Higgins, of Lansdowne, Pa., met many interesting people as he crossed the American landscape one train to another and this film offers a unique look into the hobo lifestyle. Friday, June 24 - 7:00 p.m. at the IMAX theatre
- [*In the Footsteps of Elie Wiesel*](#) A documentary following 12 high school students as they trace the life of Wiesel, author and Holocaust survivor. Presented by the Echo Foundation, for which Wiesel serves as Honorary Chair, the film combines the experiences of the students with archive footage of Wiesel. Sunday June 26 – 12:00 p.m. at the Media Bureau
- Barry J. Hershey, director of the *The Empty Mirror*, will be screening the re-edited version of his award-winning film to celebrate the 15th anniversary of its world premier at the Cannes International Film Festival. The directors cut, now titled [A. Hitler](#), offers a unique look into the mind of Hitler as he dictates his memoirs. Sun. June 26 - 2:00 p.m. at the Media Bureau
- [*Rachel & Diana*](#) The first feature from writer/director Dave Jannetta, filmed in 20 states with a crew consisting of less than ten people, this film tells the story of a twenty-something Rachel, who has just received a package containing some life-changing information. She embarks on a journey to learn more about the contents of the package – including a '60's vintage Diana camera. Sun. June 26 – 5:00 p.m. at Café Treece
- The Animation Festival that runs alongside PIFF will be screening selections as a block on June 25 @ 8:00 p.m. (Random Tea Room), June 26 @ 1:30 p.m. (the Media Bureau) and June 27 @ 4:00 p.m. (Doll Face) and includes shorts from artists Bill Plimpton, Robert Kohr, Serguei Kouchnerov and Caroline Foley.