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## **Indie vs. Goliath**

### **Animated Short Oscar Pits Ex-Pixar Indie Against Big-Budget Studios**

**San Francisco Bay Area, Feb. 21, 2011** – It's a David and Goliath battle waged with pencils and computers. "Let's Pollute," the social satire with a green message nominated for the Best Animated Short Oscar<sup>®</sup>, was created on a shoestring budget almost singlehandedly by former Pixar animator turned indie filmmaker Geefwee Boedoe. The budgets and staffing of the other films to receive the nomination, Pixar's "Day & Night" and three foreign productions, dwarf those of Mr. Boedoe's labor of love.

"Let's Pollute," Mr. Boedoe's first independent film, took more than three years of mostly solitary work in a home studio and was completed for under \$15,000 plus some volunteer labor. Its credits are barely long enough to scroll. Like most short films, it has gone largely unnoticed by the public, though it was well received at the Annecy International Animated Film Festival, was awarded Best Animated Film at the Orlando and Big Muddy festivals and took the Silver SpIFFy at the Spokane International Film Festival last week.

In stark contrast, Pixar's nominee, "Day & Night," gained a huge audience as the short preceding the \$200 million Disney-Pixar box office hit *Toy Story 3*, and is available for purchase on iTunes. The Australian and British nominees are both based on popular children's books. The French offering, though directed and animated by a single artist, was backed by a fully staffed production company.

A satire animated in the style of 1950s educational films, "Let's Pollute" uses humor to address a serious subject: our heritage and potential legacy of toxic, irresponsible living. "It follows an average family who wants to do their part and pollute to their maximum capacity for a better, blighted tomorrow," explained Mr. Boedoe, tongue firmly in cheek.

"'Let's Pollute' was a very personal project for me, dealing with a subject matter I'm extremely passionate about. Through humor, the film tackles the serious subject of pollution and waste in a way that is, I hope, accessible to a wide audience," said Mr. Boedoe from his El Cerrito, Calif., home.

"The film acts as a funhouse mirror to our modern lifestyle, inviting viewers to laugh at themselves a bit while they think about and perhaps reconsider some of their habits," he went on. It raises the question, 'Will you, and society as a whole, continue down the road of destruction, or take a new path?' My hope is that 'Let's Pollute' can be a catalyst for reflection and discussion and help move people toward positive change."

"Let's Pollute" is Mr. Boedoe's first Academy Award<sup>®</sup> nomination, though he is no stranger to critical acclaim – he received universal high praise in 2001 for the opening title sequence to Pixar's *Monsters, Inc.*, which he conceived, storyboarded, designed and for which he directed animation. Other well-known features with which Mr. Boedoe has been involved include *How to Train Your Dragon*, *WALL-E*, *The Incredibles* and *Beauty and the Beast*.

In 2002 he left Pixar to pursue an independent career as a filmmaker, designer and writer-illustrator of children's books. In 2004 his first children's book, *Arrowville* (HarperCollins), won the Reuben Award from the National Cartoonists Society for Book Illustration and was selected by the *New York Times Book Review* as one of the 10 best illustrated children's books of that year.

Among other projects that he is developing now are two other short satires, done in a similar tone to "Let's Pollute" to form a series. The second film, "Peace Is for Sissies," will warn of the dangers of diplomacy while singing the praises of the military industrial complex. The third satire, "Try Ignorance," will focus on the importance of cutting educational spending, the benefits of superstitions and the joy of prejudice.

"If 'Let's Pollute' gains enough momentum I'm hoping that I can find financial backing to make the two companion pieces. Then all three films could be shown together as a unified trio," noted Mr. Boedoe.

As to the Oscar<sup>®</sup>, he seems more interested in the exposure it affords than the kudos: "In general, not many people see short films, so getting more attention and winning awards will only help its message reach a larger audience."

Meanwhile, back at the Pixar compound in Emeryville, Calif., a well-stocked trophy case awaits yet another golden statuette. Will the Oscar go to a big-budget nominee? Or will it wind up with the lone animator whose goal is more green than gold? Only the Academy knows.

The 83<sup>rd</sup> Annual Academy Awards<sup>®</sup> will be presented February 27.

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**About "Let's Pollute" (2009, animated, running time: 6½ minutes)**

Presented in the style of a 1950s educational film, "Let's Pollute" is a modern satire on how pollution is our heritage and keeps our economy growing strong. After a brief history of the pollution imperative from before the Industrial Revolution to the present, "Let's Pollute" follows a nuclear family polluting its way through an average day. By connecting wasteful consumerism with its corporate allies and dire environmental consequences, the film instructs us all how to be better polluters for a better blighted tomorrow.

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