

Billy Corben's documentary 'Screwball' among the big award winners at Miami Film Fest

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Crowds lined up outside the Olympia Theater in downtown Miami for the opening night of the Miami Film Festival in March 2016. The festival will continue to screen films at the historic venue but is relocating the bulk of its screenings from Miami Beach to the Silverspot Cinema in downtown Miami. PEDRO PORTAL PPORTAL@ELNUEVOHERALD.COM

The [2019 Miami Film Festival](#) celebrated excellence in filmmaking this week, with a special emphasis on made-in-Miami success stories, culminating in Saturday night's announcement of winners.

The festival, presented by Miami Dade College and running March 1-10, featured [171 feature-length films, documentaries and shorts](#). Nearly a fourth of the movies were made in Miami and by Miami filmmakers.

“Screwball,” a documentary about the 2013 Major League Baseball doping scandal, won the Audience Award for Best Feature. The documentary, which employed child actors to chronicle the infamous [Biogenesis](#) scandal that roped 14 MLB players and shuttered a Coral Gables anti-aging clinic, was directed by Billy Corben and produced by Alfred Spellman of the Miami-based Rakontour

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production company. It will be released by Greenwich Entertainment and make its premiere in Miami theaters on March 29.

Rakontur's "Magic City Hustle," a documentary about former University of Miami athletes searching for a second chance at a sports career through Jai Alai, is leading the race for the \$10,000 Documentary Achievement Award to be presented at the end of the festival.

"Birds of Passage," an epic tale about the origins of the Colombian narcotics trade seen through the eyes of an indigenous family, won the \$40,000 Knight Marimbas Award. The cash prize will be split by Ciudad Lunar Productions, of Colombia, and the U.S. distributor The Orchid, who are releasing the movie in select markets, including in Miami beginning March 15.

The film was directed by Cristina Gallego and Ciro Guerra. The award, sponsored by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, is given to the film that "best exemplifies richness and resonance for cinema's future."

"Pahokee," a documentary about high-school seniors living in a small agricultural town at the edge of the Everglades, won the \$30,000 Best Feature category of the Made in MIA Award. The film was directed by Ivette Lucas and Patrick Bresnan.

The Best Short category of the Made in MIA Award was split between "Liberty," by Faren Humes, and "Six Degrees of Immigration," by Jayme Gershen.

The Rene Rodriguez Critics Award, presented by Miami Herald reporter Rene Rodriguez, was presented to Jennifer Kent's "The Nightingale."

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<https://www.miamiherald.com/entertainment/movies-news-reviews/miami-international-film-festival/article227365509.html>