

For Immediate Release

OSCAR® WINNER **THE BLOOD OF YINGZHOU DISTRICT** CHRONICLES THE  
IMPACT OF AIDS ON CHILDREN IN CHINESE VILLAGES WHEN THE  
CINEMAX REEL LIFE FILM DOCUMENTARY DEBUTS JULY 26

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CINEMAX Presents All Four of This Year's Oscar®-Nominated Short  
Documentaries on Consecutive Thursdays in July and August  
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Nobody knows the age of Gao Jun. Is he four? Could he be older – or younger? Whatever his biological age, Gao Jun has none of the verbal eagerness, or ready tears, typical of a young child. This year's Academy Award® winner for Documentary Short, **THE BLOOD OF YINGZHOU DISTRICT** follows a year in the life of Gao Jun and other children who lost their parents to AIDS in the remote villages of Anhui Province, China, where traditional obligations to family and village clash with fear of the disease. The CINEMAX Reel Life presentation debuts THURSDAY, JULY 26 (7:00-7:40 p.m. ET/PT), exclusively on CINEMAX.

Other playdate: July 30 (6:35 a.m.).

CINEMAX is presenting all four of this year's Oscar® nominees for Best Documentary Short on consecutive Thursdays at the same time in July and August. In addition to **THE BLOOD OF YINGZHOU DISTRICT**, films include: "Two Hands" (Aug. 2); "Rehearsing a Dream" (Aug. 9); and "Recycled Life" (Aug. 16).

**THE BLOOD OF YINGZHOU DISTRICT** looks at the devastating impact of the AIDS epidemic on children in rural China, where 75,000 children have been orphaned by the disease. Filmmakers Thomas Lennon and Ruby Yang trace the story of several of these children over the course of a year in the Yingzhou District in Anhui, where in the past many adults contracted AIDS from selling their blood in exchange for money and food. Facing social stigma and misinformation about the disease, their children – some of whom contracted HIV from their parents – are seen in the film being shunned by neighbors, shuffled from relative to relative, or even left to survive on their own.

## THE BLOOD OF YINGZHOU DISTRICT– 2

Children profiled include:

Gao Yun, who appears to be about four years old, is taken in by his eldest uncle after his parents die. However, his uncle wrestles with a dilemma: If he allows his HIV-positive nephew live in his family's house, they will be ostracized by other residents of the village. "If my children play with him, other parents will forbid their children from playing with mine," he explains.

Xinlei, Jinhong and Zinmei, the Huang siblings, tearfully describe their ostracism at school. Jinhong says, "When I was in grade three, I shared a desk with a classmate who asked me to move away. My teacher finally put me in the last row. Even though I'm not infected, they're afraid." The children's aunt, who has AIDS, explains how she and the children's parents got the disease, recalling, "We started selling our blood 11 years ago. We'd get 53 yuan and a bag of egg cakes. Our family was so poor and I felt healthy, so I decided to sell my blood...I thought of the money, and everyone was doing this so I kept on going...and this is how I ended up."

Nan Nan, a 14-year-old girl who was shunned by her relatives after her parents' deaths, was originally looked after by Little Flower, her teenage sister, without adult supervision. Though they were very close, Nan Nan's sister ran away, leaving her alone for over a year. Nan Nan was then taken in by Zhang Ying of Fu'ai Charity, who remembers her living in a "dilapidated" house. Says Zhang Ying, "Nan Nan missed her terribly"; the girl also exhibited behavioral problems. But after Little Flower returns, the older sister's sudden decision to marry shines a light on her relationship with her younger sibling, and on the code of silence that governs village life.

## THE BLOOD OF YINGZHOU DISTRICT– 3

THE BLOOD OF YINGZHOU DISTRICT illuminates both the personal struggles of these children and the social impact of AIDS on the Anhui Province. Says Yang, "As I made my way through these remote villages in Anhui, I could feel all the traditional stigmas and silences of Chinese family life...that's what I set out to capture."

Lennon and Yang co-founded the China AIDS Media Project in 2003 to help spread AIDS information in the country. A series of public service announcements featuring basketball stars Yao Ming and Magic Johnson, which Lennon and Yang wrote and edited, was widely distributed in the Chinese media. Since 2004, the two filmmakers have produced several documentaries, and more public service announcements for broadcast in China; these have reached an estimated total of 300 million viewers. Lennon and Yang are currently planning more Chinese-language PSAs in cooperation with the NBA and China's Ministry of Health.

In addition to winning an Academy Award<sup>®</sup>, THE BLOOD OF YINGZHOU DISTRICT received the 2007 Excellence in Media Award at the Global Health Council Annual International Conference, the Chicago Doc Humanitarian Award from the 2007 Chicago International Documentary Festival, the Audience Award at the 2007 Thessaloniki International Documentary Film Festival, and a Grand Jury Award at the 2006 Silverdocs Documentary Festival.

Thomas Lennon was producer and writer of the Oscar<sup>®</sup> and Emmy<sup>®</sup> nominee "The Battle Over Citizen Kane," among many other acclaimed documentaries. Ruby Yang has received numerous honors for her work as a director and editor, exploring Chinese themes in both documentaries (*China 21*, *Citizen Hong Kong*) and feature films (*Xiu-Xiu the Sent Down Girl*).

THE BLOOD OF YINGZHOU DISTRICT is produced by Thomas Lennon; director, Ruby Yang; director of photography, Qu Jiang Tao; editors, Ruby Yang and Ma Man Chung; original music by Brian Keane. The film was produced in association with Sesame

THE BLOOD OF YINGZHOU DISTRICT– 4

Workshop, and was funded by a grant from the Starr Foundation. For CINEMAX Reel Life: supervising producer, Sara Bernstein, executive producer, Sheila Nevins.

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