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STEPHEN KING DOLLAR-BABIES UNITE AND COLLABORATE ON SHORT PROJECT

Los Angeles, CA (January 22, 2002) - Director Jay Holben (*Paranoid*) has selected the material for his next short project to go into production this Spring. After a lengthy search, which included pouring through more than 50 potential scripts, Holben has teamed with fellow "Dollar-Baby" James Cole to bring Cole's semi-autobiographical short story to the screen. Cole (*The Last Rung on the Ladder*) was featured in author Stephen Spignesi's exhaustive study of King's work *The Stephen King Encyclopedia*. Shortly after completing *Paranoid*, Holben and Cole exchanged e-mails and met through the assistance of King fan site creator Hans-Åke Lilja (www.liljas-library.com). After presenting Holben with a copy of his feature script, *Stereopticon*, the director was immediately drawn to Cole's writing. Holben turned to Cole to see if he had any pre-existing short story material and the writer produced a short story based on his pre-adolescent hospital experiences. The extremely well formed characters and the deep, heartfelt truth of Cole's tale struck Holben as the perfect choice.

The second draft of the yet untitled film has been completed, and casting/pre-production has begun to move forward. Joining the production team is producer Mark Russell, who was part of the production team behind Steven Spielberg's *Minority Report, A.I.*, and the 20th anniversary re-release of *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial*. Also producing is Jacqueline Cruz, whose tenure in the film industry has included the prestigious William Morris Agency and Dreamworks SKG Television, where she worked on successful series such as *Spin City, It's Like, You Know . . .* and *Freaks and Geeks*. Ms. Cruz most recently worked as story editor with Baltimore/Spring Creek Pictures, the production company of director Barry Levinson and producer Paula Weinstein.

Stepping away from the hyphenate roll of director-cinematographer, Holben has turned to longtime friend and collaborator Christopher Probst as his director of photography for the film. Probst is the technical editor for American Cinematographer magazine and recently served as camera operator for the ASC award nominated epic mini series *Uprising*.

Principal photography is tentatively slated to begin in Los Angeles early this Spring.

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