



SHAQUILLE O’NEAL SIGNED AS EXECUTIVE PRODUCER AND PRESENTS FOSTER CARE LEGAL THRILLER ‘FOSTER BOY’

Hoops Legend’s Partner Michael Parris and RKO Pictures’ Mary Beth O’Connor Also Join as Executive Producers

Los Angeles – April 11, 2019 – All-time basketball great Shaquille O’Neal, known by such nicknames as “The Big Aristotle” and “The Big Shamrock” during his Hall of Fame career, can now add another: “The Big Advocate,” after signing on as an executive producer for **Foster Boy**, a new legal thriller examining the abuses of the for-profit foster care placement system. O’Neal also receives a “Presented By” credit on the film.

RKO Pictures Vice Chair Mary Beth O’Connor and O’Neal’s partner Michael Parris have also joined **Foster Boy** as executive producers. O’Neal and Parris’ Jersey Legends Productions and RKO Pictures receive “in association with” credits on the film.

“Uncle Mike was my friend and role model growing up, teaching me the value of mentorship and, together, we’ve worked on projects over the years devoted to helping young people,” O’Neal says, citing collaborative efforts with the City of Newark, as among youth-focused charitable work he, Parris and O’Connor have been involved with previously as well as The Boys and Girls Clubs of America. “When Mary Beth introduced us to **Foster Boy**, we knew we had to get behind it. The system is not working for too many kids. It’s about time that the foster care system was the focus of a major feature film.”

Foster Boy was written by attorney/screenwriter-and-producer Jay Paul Deratany, based on his experiences as a top litigator in Chicago. Matthew Modine and newcomer Shane Paul McGhie star in this truth-based legal drama about a high-powered litigator who takes on the case of an African-American young man who suffered in the foster care system. Overcoming their differences and mutual distrust, Modine’s Michael Trainer and McGhie’s Jamal Randolph uncover the abuses of the for-profit foster care system, a real-world reality that inspired the film.

“For years, Shaquille, Mike and I have worked together in partnership with numerous organizations in an effort to create brighter futures for the children of New York and New

Jersey, including the Boys and Girls Club of Newark” O’Connor says. “Many of the young people we have met and worked with are in foster care. They are all our children and our responsibility. This powerful and important film has resonated with us profoundly. We are convinced it will move viewers too – and encourage a call to action.”

“We are so honored to have the active support of Shaquille, Michael and Mary Beth,” Deratany says. “We want **Foster Boy** to reach and engage as large an audience as possible, and our new executive producers’ support for this film will make a huge difference.”

Foster Boy is directed by Youssef Delara (*Filly Brown, The Bounce Back, English as a Second Language*) and is produced by Deratany, Peter Samuelson (*Arlington Road, Wilde, Revenge of the Nerds*), Anne-Marie Mackay (*The Last Word, The Girl from Nagasaki, Always Outnumbered*) and Andrew Sugerman (*Conviction, Shop Girl, Premonition*). John Schimmel, Thom and Matt Lipari, Max Adler and Danny Mooney are also Executive Producers.

NOTE: Artwork available upon request

About “Foster Boy”:

An original, fact-based dramatic thriller, **Foster Boy** was entirely financed by equity investment. It explores the plight of the more than 440,000 foster children in the U.S., many of whom live in states where foster care is handled by private, for-profit companies that may not have the children’s best interest as their first priority. **Foster Boy** partnered with nationally recognized charities Children’s Rights of New York, the Children’s Advocacy Institute at the University of San Diego, and First Star of Los Angeles, as expert advisers on the story. For more information on **Foster Boy** the trailer and on the foster care system, please visit fosterboy.com.

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