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'Teachers' gets apple at NYTVF

Fest celebrates independent TV programming

By Paul J. Gough

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NEW YORK -- Several comedy pilots were among the big winners Wednesday at the fourth annual New York Television Festival, which celebrates independent TV programming.

"Teachers," a sitcom about a teacher at a suburban public school, received the 2008 NYTVF People's Choice Award. The pilot from Jim Garvey starred "American Idol" finalist Constantine Maroulis along with Katherine Holland, Sarah Litzinger and Noah Starr. It was voted upon by festival attendees.

Winning the Fox-NYTVF Comedy Script Contest was "Selling Hell," Mike Maloney's creation about a divorced couple who has to work in marketing in Hell. Maloney will receive \$25,000 and a Fox development deal.

"Below the Law," about two brothers who have to wait to get into the police academy, won for best comedy pilot. It was created by Dan Levy and Steve Basilone of Los Angeles. "Hit Factor," about three actors who moonlight as hit men in Hollywood, won for best drama pilot. It was created by Jamie Rosenblatt and Neil Hopkins of L.A.

The winners were picked among 36 pilots.

Other honors included:

Best family pilot: "The Kitty Landers Show," created by Chris Potocki, Regina Taufen and Anna Christopher (Venice, Calif.); best nonscripted pilot: "The Road," created by Frank Mosca and Mike DeStefano (Bronx, N.Y.); best animation pilot: "Tickle Me Silly," created by Miguel Martinez-Joffe (Jersey City, N.J.); best Web series pilot: "The Prisoner," created by Karin Williams (New York).

Also winning awards were Nick Offerman, best actor for "The Department"; Taufen, best actress for "Kitty Landers"; Timothy Nash, Hayden Grubb and Lucas Crandles, best writing for "Wentworth and Buxbury"; Jon Pivko, best directing for "Triboro"; and Bill Rampley, best nonscripted host/star for "Bill Rampley's Southern Comfort."

The Outside the Box Award went to "Food Party," a cooking show.

The Hollywood Reporter was among the festival sponsors.

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