

Media Release
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PRODUCER FOR THE UNKNOWNNS – TALENT IS COLOR BLIND
ANNOUNCES THE OFFICIAL HOME OF THE HIGHWAYMEN GALLERY™
TO OPEN IN FORT LAUDERDALE
FEATURING THE WORLD’S LARGEST HIGHWAYMEN MURAL

FORT LAUDERDALE, Florida/January 20, 2017 – Top Cat II Productions, Producer of The Unknownns – Talent is Colorblind, the feature film about the internationally acclaimed landscape artists, The Highwaymen, is pleased to announce the opening of the official Florida Home of the Highwaymen Gallery™ in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

“We are very pleased to have played a major role in getting the official Home of the Highwaymen Gallery™ in Fort Lauderdale,” said Walter T. Shaw - Producer, Top Cat II Productions, LLC. The Home of the Highwaymen Gallery™ will be located at 601 South Federal Highway, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301. The gallery is expected to be fully opened by the end of February, 2017.

The Home of the Highwaymen Gallery™ will also be home to the world’s largest Highwaymen mural. The mural, to be painted by 1st and 2nd generation Highwaymen artists will be crafted February 9-12 on a specially prepared area of the outside of the gallery. The huge mural will be painted on a material like the Upson Board which was used by the original artists in lieu of more expensive canvas.

“As one of the original Highwaymen artists, we are pleased to finally have an official gallery dedicated to our work,” said Al Black, one of the 1st generation Highwaymen artists inducted into Florida’s Artist Hall of Fame. “There will be no other mural like this, in size and in its visibility to the public in the entire world,” added Black.

Black will be joined in painting the immense Florida landscape mural by Kelvin Hair and A.J. Brown, and possibly other Highwaymen artists. Paint materials for the mural have been donated by **Blick Art Supplies**, a name synonymous with quality materials in the world of art.

“At Blick Art Materials, we are happy to support the Highwaymen Gallery. Our family owners and dedicated staff support the Visual Art Community by providing the widest selection of art supplies at the lowest prices. With extraordinary service and integrity, we strive to provide artists, educators, students, and our employees with the tools, assistance, and training they need to grow, innovate, and reach their creative potential,” said Nancy Desouza, General Manager, Blick of Fort Lauderdale.

Also, as part of the line up to the Home of the Highwaymen Gallery™ opening, Frame ‘n Art Gallery and the City of Lauderdale by the Sea, will host a special four-day promotional event for the Highwaymen artists at the Frame ‘n Art Gallery located at 229 Commercial Boulevard, Lauderdale by the Sea each day, from 4:00 pm until 7:00 pm. The Highwaymen artists and their unique works of art will be on display at the **Frame ‘n Art Gallery** for residents to view and purchase. Sponsorships for the Lauderdale by the Sea event and for the Highwaymen mural are available on a limited basis.

“We are all fortunate to have these very talented and world renowned artists to share their remarkable talents with us. Plan to join us and Lauderdale by the Sea city and community leaders to learn more about the artists, as well as have an opportunity to see a new Trailer of the movie, The Unknowns - Talent is Color Blind, which is being produced to showcase the story of the Highwaymen,” said Teresa Mangini, owners of Frame ‘n Art. “History is being made with the

painting of the world's largest Highwaymen mural and the opening of the Home of the Highwaymen Gallery™. This is everyone's opportunity to be part of that history," she added.

Florida is the setting for the feature film about Florida's legendary black artists The Highwaymen. The story of self-taught landscape artists who ushered in a new age of art during the racially turbulent 1950's and 60's is captured in *The Unknowns – Talent is Color Blind*.

Their story is even more relevant today as young black men and women struggle in towns with names like Ferguson and on college campuses like the University of Missouri. The Highwaymen's struggle to overcome white on black violence and racism through art is reflected in real time race relations today.

The Unknowns tells the emotional story of The Highwaymen, also referred to as the Florida Highwaymen, a group of 26 African American landscape artists who, with the guidance, tutoring and emotional support from acclaimed white artist A.E. "Bean" Backus and his companion-friend and author Zora Neal Hurston (themselves the focus of racist scorn and anger), the eager students became self-taught and self-mentoring among themselves. Together, they created a body of work consisting of more than 200,000 paintings, using "fast painting" techniques. They painted colorful Florida landscapes and made a living selling them door-to-door to businesses and individuals throughout Florida from the mid-1950s through the 1980s. Some of the Highwaymen continue to paint today. While their artwork is renowned throughout Florida and their paintings even hang in the White House, they remain "Unknown" throughout most of America.

"The story of Florida's Highwaymen should be a film to rally those who oppose discrimination and racism to bring about more change and equality through art. Their paintings should hang in every home or business in America. If you have never seen a Highwaymen

painting or want to be part of this exciting film and associated art projects, we invite to you come to our events and begin to become more engaged,” concluded Shaw.

About Top Cat II Productions LLC

Top Cat II Productions, LLC is an award-winning film production company based in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The company works with top talent in all areas of production throughout the United States and abroad to produce films highly acclaimed for their attention to detail and exceptional production qualities. For information about Top Cat II Productions, LLC, contact Sam Yates, 772.528.5185.

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Media Note: For interview opportunities contact Sam Yates, film publicist, 772.528.5185 Cell.