

CHANLIN FILMS
AMERICAN FILM FOUNDATION
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Present

G – DOG

Directed, Written and Produced by Freida Mock

Academy Award Winner

(Director of Maya Lin; Wrestling With Angels – Playwright Tony Kushner; Return with Honor)

Running Time: 92 minutes 2012

Production Contact:

Ocean Releasing/ American Film Foundation
Santa Monica, CA 90402
310-459-2116/ am.film@verizon.net

Press Contact:

ACME Public Relations
Nancy Willen
Santa Monica, CA 90405
310-363-3433
nancywillen@acmepr.net

For images please visit:
www.gdogthemovie.com

SYNOPSIS G – DOG

G-DOG is what the homies call the priest.

This is the story of a remarkable odd couple. There's Father Greg Boyle, a white Jesuit priest who's spent some 25 years in the toughest part of East LA, and then there's the tough, street-smart, and amazingly sweet young people – all former gang members – whom G-Dog loves and helps, and who love him in turn. For Father Greg's remedy for what he calls "a global sense of failure" for kids at-risk is radical and simple: boundless, restorative love. His unstoppable compassion has turned around the lives of thousands of Latino, Asian and African American gang members.

G-Dog works by a powerful idea: ***"Nothing Stops a Bullet like a Job."*** Over the years his Homeboy Industries in LA has become an international model for rebuilding and redirecting the lives of gang members. Kids come in off the street, rival gang members - 12,000 a year - looking for a way out of gang life. Homeboy, located in a gang-neutral area of downtown LA on the edge of Chinatown, takes them in, providing free job training, tattoo removal, counseling, yoga, fatherhood- and substance abuse classes. If they stick with it, the kids get jobs baking, cooking, serving, printing t-shirts and cleaning in the Homeboy businesses – a café, retail store, catering service, a silk screen shop – to learn the soft and hard skills to move on.

In 18 months the homies are ready to go into the world to make a positive difference. For Homeboy has an astonishing success rate – 70% turn their back on gang life, compared to a recidivism rate of 70% of other such programs. Homeboy is the one place in the 'hood that turns lives around: swapping violence for community and building for the first time a sense of the future. We see it happen in **G-DOG**.

"Jobs not jail"

The film is often hilarious and astonishing but it is not just a poem of sweetness and light. **G-DOG** chronicles a tough year in the life of the homies and Homeboy. 2010 is a year of tumult, change, and pain. In today's straitened financial times, Homeboy faces a bruising battle with the bottom line: one day, as we watch, the fan is hit, and Father Greg has to shut down parts of Homeboy. It's a crushing blow, and it gets worse. East LA is always East LA; death is still out there, and sure enough it comes home to roost. Two people we've seen early in the movie are dead by the time the credits roll. The question is, *Will the homies and Homeboy itself survive?*

"Homeboy is a therapeutic community – a place of hope and kinship."

Greg Boyle began with the classically humble ambition of devoting his life to the poor. Instead he became a cultural icon -- America's leading gang expert, author of a whopping bestseller, *"Tattoos on the Heart,"* celebrated guest on Dr. Phil and Tavis Smiley.

In 1986 Father G was assigned to the poorest parish in East L.A.'s Boyle Heights. The naïve young priest walked into the middle of a war zone, the gang capital of the country. Gang violence rocked the city in the 90s, dubbed the "Decade of Death," and Father G was astonished to find teenagers planning their funerals and not their future.

“I came from a middle-class Irish-American family,” recalls Greg Boyle. “As a kid, I wouldn’t have known what a gang member looked like if one hit me upside the head. I couldn’t have joined a gang if I’d wanted to. I wouldn’t have been able to find a gang if you’d sent me on a scavenger hunt.”

But what Father G lacked in experience with gangs, he made up for it in resourcefulness - he quickly partnered with the Latino and black mothers in the rough housing projects and out of the ashes of destruction rose a phoenix of hope – **Jobs For The Future** - a program that provided job training and jobs, alternative schools, social programs.

As he was launching Homeboy during the worst violence, Father G said, “If we don’t address where all this comes from – dysfunctional families, grinding poverty and joblessness – this stuff is going to repeat itself”

Says L.A. County Sheriff Lee Baca, “You cannot arrest yourself out of a gang problem. You cannot put enough people in jail or prison to solve this problem. We need more Father Boyle type organizations...”

In an era that emphasizes being ‘smart on crime,’ citizens and civic leaders around the country have come to better understand the complexity of gang life. Father G’s years of working on the margins have helped put a human face on gang members and the pull of gang life.

He said, “We’re going to stand with the demonized until the demonization stops. And it really has. We now get fan mail where we used to get hate mail.”

“No hopeful kid joins a gang.”

So it is that G-Dog (aka Greg Boyle, G or Greg) has created a global model for social reform - a beacon of hope for families, law enforcement, children’s advocates, and policy makers.

Greg Boyle is a charismatic visionary but he’s made the dream real: Homeboy Industries has become the largest, most successful gang intervention and rehab program in the U.S. and an inspiration for helping kids at-risk whether in Toronto, Manchester, Hamburg, Rio and more.

G – DOG is a story of second chances – for kids at risk of joining gangs and for those trying to leave gang life – in more ways than one. The powerful chronicle of how young people can redirect their lives is also the story of Father Greg’s own transformation. He tells us, “The day simply won’t come when I am more noble and have more courage than the homeboys and homegirls I have known. In Africa they say ‘ a person becomes a person through other people.’ There can be no doubt that the homies have returned me to myself.”

Director's Statement

I live in Los Angeles which has 1100 gangs and 86,000 gang members and competes, according to LA Police Chief Charlie Beck, with Chicago as the gang capital of the country. Like most people my knowledge of the gangs has come from news reports and documentaries. To quote Father Greg, "I wouldn't have been able to find a gang member if you sent me on a scavenger hunt."

This all changed two years ago when I came across a brief description of a new book ***Tattoos on the Heart***: "Father Greg, affectionately known as G-Dog has made it his mission to help at-risk youth. His remedy for what he calls a 'global sense of failure' is radical and simple: boundless restorative love. This book gives a window on gangs in the context of spirituality." I remember saying to myself, "A priest ...kids, gangs...and love? What's this all about?" So began **G – DOG**.

What I thought would be a story about how a Jesuit priest became a gang expert developed into a more complex, rich story about former gang members, abandonment, neglect and shame but also about second chances, redemption, hope, transformation and community – all embodied in the program Father G launched at Homeboy Industries.

It was an extraordinary world that the crew and I entered into for a year in 2010 - and to see through the eyes and stories of the homies, not the stigma associated with gang members but the hope, humor and future that former gang members feel given a second chance. The surprise was to discover how much hilarity and laughter, despite a past prism of sorrow, pervaded the journey of the homeboys and homegirls leaving gang life under G – Dog's guidance.

In Father G's world you meet former gang members, not gangs nor gang members. By working with gangs Father Greg feels you give them oxygen, legitimacy; instead, he asks us to give legitimacy, a helping hand, to former gang members – young people trying to re-direct their lives from violence to a positive future. **G – DOG**, I began to think, could be a "kind of a Post Modern look" at gangs - meaning a look at young men and women moving beyond the gangland world. They may still have the tatted look of the past, but surprisingly you meet some of the sweetest, funniest, hopeful homies in the film. But the dark side does not escape the drama of some lives.

Through his compassion and kinship with a formerly 'demonized' group, Father G has put a human face on gang members. It is my hope that **G-DOG** will help us develop a reverence for the complexity of the gang issue. To say 'they're hooligans or bad kids,' as politicians said when riots erupted last year in England is to oversimplify. As Father G says, "As a community we are dealing with the effects of where this (gangs) all comes from – dysfunctional families, poverty, joblessness. " Until we address those root problems, then we face the results- kids at risk.

This film has been an eye-opener to confront my own misconceptions and to realize that gangs are both a complex social and public safety issue. I vividly recall a moment while filming at Camp Scudder, one of two girl camps in LA County's 25 juvenile camps - the girls were lined up - they looked like 'babies' – 12 and 13 year olds, locked up without families. I asked myself, "Where are the grown-ups? Who let them down?" I found that close to 70% of the adults in state prisons today were once locked up in juvenile camps - it's like an internship into state prison. As a community that cares about its youth, it made me think, how can I help make a difference?

CAST G – DOG

GREG BOYLE, S.J. is the founder and executive director of Homeboy Industries and author of the New York Times best-selling book “Tattoos on the Heart,” a PEN USA Winner. Father Greg Boyle is an acknowledged expert on gangs, intervention and re-entry and today serves on the U.S. Attorney General’s Defending Children Task Force. Born in Los Angeles, one of eight children, Greg worked in the family-owned dairy, loading milk trucks to earn his high school tuition. Lessons learned from that first job apply to Homeboy where former gang member start as trainees to change and re-direct their lives. Fr. Greg entered the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) and was ordained in 1984. He received his BA in English from Gonzaga University; a MA in Literature from Loyola Marymount University; a Master of Divinity from the Weston School of Theology; and a Sacred Theology Masters from the Jesuit School of Theology. A highly sought after speaker Father Greg gives over 200 talks a year to audiences of 100 to 1000.

SHAYNA WELCHER received the 2011 Homegirl Hero Award. Shayna came to Homeboy after living in and out of jail for most of her teenage years. Her mother, who met Father Greg while she herself was in jail, brought Shayna to Homeboy where she started her journey working in the Homegirl Café. She became clean and sober and a leader. Last year Shayna was given a chance to move beyond Homeboy and was hired as a full-time employee at the Black Cat Café in the Miracle Mile of LA, where she loves to recommend food and gets positive energy from her interactions with the customers. Shayna plans to continue school to learn more about the restaurant business.

HECTOR VERDUGO is Associate Executive Director at Homeboy and Father G’s ‘right arm person.’ Hector grew up in East LA where he says, “Gang life style was in our family – all my aunts and uncles were involved. It was easy to get into the violent life style of being a gang member and looking forward to going to juvenile hall to prove yourself. You had to go to juvenile detention. When you got out, you had to go to state prison.” Hector reflects: “ It’s a horrible way of thinking, but it is what it is.” Says Father G, “The minute I met him I said he’s a leader you want to nurture.” When he no longer oversees Homeboy, Father G expects a person like Hector, not a priest, to run the place. Says Hector, “ It’s an honor to sit at his desk and to take a load off one of the greatest people on earth. I get to help...I want to help as much as I can.”

FABIAN DEBORA is an artist and the substance abuse counselor at Homeboy. Fabian was raised in Boyle Heights in East LA where he met Father G in grade school and became interested in art. He said, “Addiction was in my family. As a kid growing up I

saw my dad shooting up, my uncle snorting coke. As a kid you think that's normal, part of life." Fabian says he got involved in gangs because, "I was searching for identity, looking for someone to care for me, protect me, survive." After leaving street life and becoming clean and sober, Fabian became the head of the substance abuse program and mentor at Homeboy and works with Otis College of Design as a liaison between community artists and the classroom. Fabian began his art career in 1995 as a member of the East Los Angeles Streetscapers and was mentored by many Chicano artists and muralists. His murals can be seen throughout East LA. Fabian exhibits in solo and group shows in all media throughout the US and believes that by interpreting his personal experiences through art, he can effect positive change as Homeboy has done for him.

LOUIS PEREZ is the Manager of Homeboy Bakery and oversees a 24 hour Bakery Operation with three shifts of workers, all former rival gang members working side by side. Says Louis: "I've known Father Greg since I was 12 growing up in juvenile facilities. I kept going in and out. He'd see me and give me his card and say come see me, come to the office. You deserve more. I couldn't believe that." Louis says, "Home life was difficult. I was raised in a dysfunctional family with domestic violence, so I'd rather be on the streets or in jail than home. " At 21 he came to see Father G looking for a job. G said, "You start Monday." Louis began college and the 12-step program and his life has transformed since. He says, "Father G helped me so much in my life and now I'm able to do what he did for me for other people – that's what drives me every day to come here."

KYLE SHOAF is a Senior Navigator at Homeboy supervising new trainees and young people coming off the street looking for change. Kyle says, "My father was the person I looked up to so my entering the gang life was a given. I didn't know what else I was going to do. I had no career plans, no school – all I knew was gang-banging."

One day, after coming out of prison, Kyle was riding the Gold Line that passes over Homeboy. "Something told me to jump off the train and go in...I waited a long time to talk to G and he asked me a lot of questions - where I was from - the kind of questions gang members ask." That moment changed Kyle's life and he has been a model leader at Homeboy since.

BRIAN MOON received the 2012 Homeboy Hero Award. He first heard about Homebody from an inmate in prison. After his release Brian one day was looking at the Homeboy website with his sister when his mom, looking over his shoulder said, "They look like you (i.e. tattoos, bald head). Why don't you go there?" In 2009 Brian went to Homeboy because he said, "I wanted something else. It wasn't what I learned or gained from gangbanging. It was what I lost from it – family, faith, hope." He found that at

Homeboy and became a staff assistant, a tour guide and a public speaker. A year ago he was given an opportunity to work for the Iron Workers Union Local 416. Says Brian: "I was very scared to leave because Homeboy was my home, but one of things I've learned here is faith, so I took a leap of faith and have been in the union since." He says he misses the work at Homeboy but "I love the work I do now and look forward to what local 416 has in store for me. Thanks to Homeboy!"

VERONICA VARGAS since day one of meeting Father G she said they connected and continue to share a special bond 7 years later. As Chief Operating Officer and now Director of Operations for Homeboy Industries, Veronica oversees 7 departments including Tattoo Removal and Mental Health, new program development and grant implementation and is a key liaison for governmental agencies.

Veronica's interests in at-risk programs and minority advancement stem from her being raised in a single-parent, but loving, immigrant home in Commerce, just outside of downtown LA. Veronica witnessed first hand the impact of gangs on families and communities. Her three-year volunteer work at Los Padrinos Juvenile Detention Center allowed her to see the shortcomings of our juvenile rehabilitation system and the need for positive interventions. She received a B.A. in Spanish and an M.A. in Hispanic Literature from the University of New Mexico and attended the Facultad de Filología y Letras, Granada, Spain. In graduate school she was a Josefina Fellow, Coordinator for the Heritage Language Department, fluent in English and Spanish, with a working knowledge of Portuguese.



HOMEBOY INDUSTRIES believes that "Nothing Stops a Bullet Like a Job and offers hope to high-risk, recently incarcerated, and formerly gang involved youth looking to change their lives. Founded as a youth program in 1992 by Father Greg Boyle, S.J., it is home to social enterprises that provide job training and comprehensive free services for those seeking employment and a path out of gang life. It is now the nation's largest and most successful gang intervention and rehab program, and an international model, with a 70% success rate in turning kids away from gang life and

toward a productive future.

At its heart the true business of Homeboy Industries is not business at all. It is to infuse hope for whom hope is foreign. It is the fostering of a community of kinship, a "gang rehab" and a therapeutic environment where those who have been cast aside are given what they need to return to society as whole, healed...and hopeful...young men and women. <http://homeboy-industries.org/index.php/history>

FILMMAKERS G – DOG

FREIDA MOCK is an Academy Award and Emmy Award - winning filmmaker, a director, writer and producer of feature length and short form theatrical documentary films. These include the Oscar winner **Maya Lin: A Strong Vision**, a feature film about the designer of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. Mock's other Oscar nominated films include: **Rose Kennedy, a Life to Remember**; **SING!** about one of the best U.S. children's chorus; **Never Give UP**, about the holocaust survivor and conductor Dr. Herbert Zipper; and **To Live or Let Die**, a story that explores the ethics in neonatal intensive care.

Her recent films are: **Wrestling With Angels: Playwright Tony Kushner**; **Return with Honor**, presented by Tom Hanks and Playtone, the feature documentary **Sing China!** featuring the world-renowned LA Children's Chorus, and **Lt. Watada**, short-listed for the 2010 Oscar, about the first military officer to refuse to deploy to Iraq and to speak out about the war's illegality. Mock is currently in production on a feature documentary film **Anita – Speaking Truth to Power**, about the life and times of Anita Hill.

Mock was the first Governor elected to the new Documentary Branch of the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences and served as Chair for five years. She is presently co-chair of the DGA Awards Documentary selection Committee. Mock received a B.A. from UC Berkeley where she did graduate work in history and law. She is a partner in the Los Angeles - based Sanders & Mock Productions and co-founder of the nonprofit American Film Foundation that specializes in producing films on the arts, sciences and the humanities. www.americanfilmfoundation.com

ERIK DAARSTAD, Director of Cinematography, has photographed hundreds of films over his long distinguished award-winning career, from feature films to TV commercials with the majority of his work in documentaries. Seven of these have been nominated for an Academy Award and one, **Why Man Creates** directed by the graphic designer Saul Bass received an Oscar for Best Documentary Short. Several have won Emmys. His work has covered a broad range of stories with his favorites focusing on biographies and personal stories of individuals. **G-DOG** is among his favorites.

HIROKI MIYANO, Director of Cinematography, followed his passion for photographing all kinds of motion pictures, from feature movies, television specials and cable shows and documentaries, after receiving his masters in cinematography from AFI. Hiroki photographed the award winning Japanese feature films **Kana-kana, Summer That Never Was** (Montreal Film Festival, Berlin Film Festival), **Just Another Day** (Bronze medal- Pusan Film Festival, Stockholm Film Festival, Prague Japan Film Festival), **Milk** (Vienna Film Festival, Rotterdam Film Festival, Berlin Film Festival).

Miyano has worked on numerous documentaries in the United States and collaborated with director Mock on the **Sing!** trilogy and others. He is the principal DP on **Laura McKenzie's Traveler**, one of the first travel shows shot on High Definition. He is the director of photography on **Hollywood Chinese** that won the prestigious Golden Horse Award at Taipei Film Festival. <http://hirokimiyano.com/> <http://dphiroki.com>

GREG BYERS, Associate Producer and Editor, is an Emmy-nominated Director and Producer who has been editing feature documentaries for almost 20 years. Greg has been a collaborator with director Freida Mock on projects ranging from the Sundance feature documentary **Return With Honor**, a presentation of Tom Hanks and Playtone to the Japan Project series and **G-DOG**. Along with editing a network television series, **The Bachelor**, Greg is in development on a variety of projects, including **RECOIL**, a science fiction television series and a feature documentary about a man's life long passion of redefining the traditional way music theory is taught in schools.

PEDRO BROMFMAN, Composer, born and raised in Rio de Janeiro has been writing playing and producing music professionally for over a decade. He graduated Cum Laude from Berklee School of Music, majoring in performance and composition, and went on to study film scoring at UCLA. A multi-faceted musician, Pedro has worked as a session musician, a record producer and an arranger, before his passion for film scores brought him to Los Angeles. Pedro's scores include music for the films **Elite Squad** and **Elite Square: The Enemy Within**, **They Killed Sister Dorothy**, **March of the Living**, **Riding High**, the romantic comedy **Qualquer Gato Viralata** and music for the video game **Max Payne 3**. For **G-DOG** Pedro wrote the original music and also played the guitar, charango, bass, hang and synthesizers. <http://www.pedrobromfman.com/bio.html>

CREDITS G – DOG

Director Writer Producer **FREIDA MOCK**

Associate Producer and Editor **GREG BYERS**

Cinematographer **ERIK DAARSTAD**

Composer **PEDRO BROMFMAN**

Cinematographer **HIROKI MIYANO**

Additional Cinematography **HUY MOELLER ANDREA HSIESH PEDRO KOS**

Sound Recordist **BOB SCHUCK BRUCE NOLTE**

Production Associate **PEDRO KOS HUY MOELLER**

Musicians

PEDRO BROMFMAN on Guitars, Charango, Bass, Hang, Synths, Programming

LUI COIMBRO on Cello

CASIO DUARTE on Percussion

RAPHAEL MIRANDA on Drums

Song

The Storm is Passing Over

Performed by LA County High School for the Arts

Designer

KAREN YUNG

CHRIS KOMURA

Post Production Sound **WARNER BROS.**

Supervising Sound Editor **AARON GLASCOCK**

Re-Recording Mixer **SKIP LIEVSAY**

Effects Editor **ALBERT GASSER**

Assistant Sound Editor **JOHNNA CHISM**

Special Thanks to **KIM WAUGH** and **BOB BERESH**

Motion Picture Imaging **WARNER BROS.**

Colorist **MARLENE GERVAIS**

DI Producer **ADAM OHL**

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Irma Montes

Assistant Editor
Enrique Sanchez
Avi Horn

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**The United States has 5 % of the world's population
but 25% of the world's prisoners.**

**Close to 70% of the adults in prison today were
incarcerated as youth in juvenile detention facilities.**

**Annual cost per year is close to \$125,000,
more than twice that Harvard's tuition.**

To assist at-risk youth and reform juvenile justice you can:

Support the Youth Promise Act in Congress

**Volunteer in your community with programs similar to
Girls and Gangs, A Second Chance, Homeboy Industries**

We especially thank the staff of Homeboy Industries
and the Homegirls and Homeboys whose courage and transformation inspire us

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