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## Sundance 2014 Introduction

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# Sundance 2014 Introduction

## **Abstract**

Introduction to the Sundance Film Festival 2014

## **Author Notes**

William Blizek is the Founding Editor of the Journal of Religion and Film, and is Professor of Philosophy and Religion at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. He is also the editor of the Continuum Companion to Religion and Film (2009).



## Report from Sundance

This year the Sundance Film Festival celebrated its 30th anniversary.

Thirty years is a long time and the Festival has a long list of now famous movies that got their start at this mecca for independent film. *Reservoir Dogs*, *Sex, Lies, and Videotape*, *Little Miss Sunshine*, *Beasts of the Southern Wild*, *Fruitvale Station*, *An Inconvenient Truth*, *Precious*, and *Napoleon Dynamite* are among some of the best known. But, in its 30 years, the Festival has turned out hundreds of excellent films that have not become famous in addition to those that have.

This year's Festival featured 121 feature-length films, selected from 4,057 submissions. These films represent 37 different countries and include 54 first-time filmmakers. The success of the Sundance Film Festival can be measured as easily by the number of submissions as it can by the number of famous films that it has spawned. In addition to its feature-length films, the Festival received 8,161 short film submissions. Some of the best films we see each year are from the shorts programs.

As we do each year, we want to thank the Sundance Press Office. They do a fantastic job. Without their help we would miss out on many of the films and activities that we are able to cover during the Festival.



Bill Blizek with Elizabeth "Lizzie" Latenser, manager of the Sundance Press Office. Lizzie is from Omaha and a graduate of Creighton University.

While the Press Office is crucial to our successful coverage of the Festival, the other group that we couldn't live without is the volunteers. There are hundreds of them braving the cold and snow and wind, to help us get to the right theater at the right time. They deserve a big round of applause.

As our way of thanking the volunteers, each year we feature three volunteers as representing all of the volunteers.



The first volunteer is Chuck Grosvenor (left). He is from Canada. He just received his 5-year volunteer pin. Jodi McDavid is shown with him.

The second featured volunteer for 2014 is Jennifer Strachan who is from Park City. She has volunteered for five years and attended Sundance for 18 years. Ruby Ramji (right) is with her.





Kirsten Kohlwey is the final featured volunteer. Kirsten is from Park City, Utah. This is her third year as a volunteer. Bill Blizek is shown with Kirsten.

In addition to our serious academic reviews, the Journal of Religion & Film catches a red carpet now and again. Here are some of the red carpet photos.

### ***Cold in July Stars on the Red Carpet***



Don Johnson



Vanessa Shaw



Michael C. Hall



Wyatt Russell

### The One I Love Stars on the Red Carpet



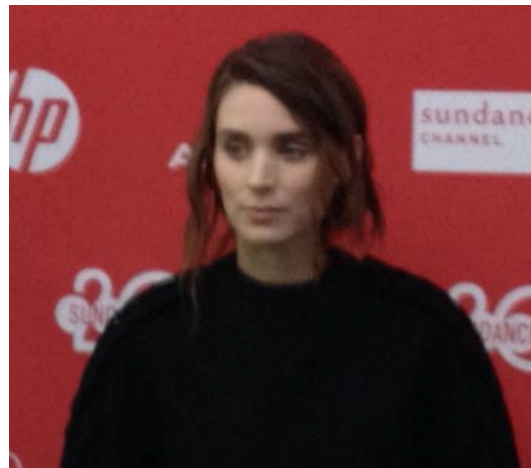
Elizabeth Moss



Mark DePlass



Mel Elsyn



Rooney Mara



Mary Steenburgen, Charlie McDowell, Ted Danson



**Life After Beth Stars  
on the Red Carpet**



Aubrey Plaza



Cheryl Hines



Dane DeHaan



John C. Reilly



Matthew Gray Gubler



Molly Shannon



Paul Reiser

## Skeleton Twins Stars on the Red Carpet



Boyd Holbrook

Luke Owens



Given our hectic schedule this year, we did not get to see several movies that we thought would be related to religion in one way or another, including *Camp X-Ray*, *DiFret*, *I Origins*, and *The Skeleton Twins*.

## Fun Stuff from Sundance 2014



Jodi McDavid and Ruby Ramji stop at the Sundance Timetable board to check out the schedule.



Lee Ann Womack sang at the ASCAP Music Café on Main Street at Sundance. (above).

Bilal Yorulmaz and one of the street performers in Park City during Sundance.(right)





Ruby Ramji posed for a photo with the Jamacian bobsled team at Sundance.