

GREG IN HOLLYWOOD

Outfest Fusion: Pedro Zamora film to close film fest

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By Greg Hernandez



For a few weeks every summer, my life becomes utterly consumed by the Outfest Film Festival. I see at least two-dozen films during this time and pop in on as many parties and panels discussions as time allows. It is one of my favorite times of the year because you are not only around all of these remarkable filmmakers, but you are in sort of an alternate universe surrounded by gays and lesbians day in and day out. It takes a day or so to adjust to the outside world again once Outfest ends!

Since the festival is only once a year, it's so cool that the long wait is mitigated a bit by Outfest Fusion - The Los Angeles LGBT People of Color Film Festival. The annual event kicks off tomorrow night (Friday, March 5). Click on the [OUTFEST](#) site for a schedule and ticketing info. It's a bargain I can tell you that!

The Friday night program is a far cry from *Paul Blart: Mall Cop!* (Thank God!) It's a lineup of humorous, moving and sometimes disturbing short films, a young man pursues a harrowing obsession, a family struggles with gender identity and women in prison battle for the ultimate crown.

The screening is followed by an opening night gala which should be a lot of fun.

Then Saturday, after a full day of films and programs, is the screening of Pedro, a biographical film that tells the moving true story of **Pedro Zamora**, the openly gay and HIV-positive Cuban-American who captured the hearts of MTV viewers in the San Francisco edition of *The Real World* in 1994. The 93-minute film, which premieres next month on MTV, is directed by past Fusion filmmaker **Nick Oceano** (*El Primo*) with screenplay by **Dustin Lance Black** (story by **Paris Barclay & Black**).



I saw each and every episode of *The Real World* that season and was riveted by Pedro who decided to use what time he had left to teach about HIV prevention. He died the day after the final episode of that season aired and it was absolutely heartbreaking. But his spirit lives on.

I recently spoke with Barclay about the film.

"I always thought it would be great to do a movie that told Pedro's story, including his story in Cuba and his family coming from in the Mariel boat lift," Paris said. "It's a fantastic story. Why he chose *'The Real World'* to be sort of his soapbox which people aren't doing anymore. They aren't going on *'American Idol'* to talk about AIDS the way Pedro did."

"There's the tragic ending where he's near death and **Bill Clinton** calls him on the telephone and says, 'Anything that you want, I'll do' and helps get his family out of Cuba and then he dies," Paris added. "It has all those great story elements and by telling it again, I think we're going to remind people that AIDS isn't over. AIDS in the minority community has always been overlooked and in a very emotional compelling way. I'm really proud of it."

On a lighter note, other cast members from *"Real World: San Francisco"* will be represented in the movie: "An actor will play Puck but the real Puck will not be seen," Paris said. "(The real) Judd and Pam will appear in one shot in the movie...(Pedro) and Sean, his partner at the time, get married not once, not twice but three times."

Instead of a clip of the film, which I will post tomorrow, I want to post a clip of the real Pedro from the *Real World* episode where he married Sean: