



SCREEN SIREN PICTURES INC.

presents

GIRL RACERS

A 4 x 1 hour Documentary Series

PRESS KIT

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SERIES SYNOPSIS

Meet eight girls who are driving some of the hottest, fastest cars on the planet, as they navigate the highs and lows of one of the few sports where women compete right alongside of men ... and win.

A tight pack of race cars screams past the grandstand. Suddenly, a lipstick pink Formula Ford cuts quickly out of the pack, speeding effortlessly out of the corner into the backstretch. The crowd goes wild. With a final burst, the pink car streaks across the finish line, the black and white checkered flag fluttering in its dust. Necks crane as the driver exits—in a race suit splashed with the bright pink Barbie logo. Pulling off her helmet and shaking her curly mane of blonde hair, Ashley Taws waves to adoring fans.

Narrated by racing fan and driver **Jason Priestley**, **GIRL RACERS** is a four-part documentary series that follows some of North America's leading female race car drivers over the course of the 2004 racing season. Going behind-the-scenes in one of the most highly watched sports on North American television today, we capture for the first time the volatile world of female race car drivers, as they navigate one of the few sports in which women compete directly with men...and win.

Danica Patrick and Milka Duno are making history as two of the few women competing and winning at the highest levels of auto racing. Backed by legendary Indy 500 winner Bobby Rahal and talk-show host David Letterman, Danica stunned the racing world by placing 2nd in a major European championship when she was only 17. She's now 22, and this season is "make it or break it." Danica has no patience for weakness or mistakes—especially her own. Her sponsors expect her to step up to the elite class of open wheel racing next year, Champ Cars or Indy. And to do it, the only female in a field of 21 drivers must place in one of the top three spots at the Toyota Atlantic Championship series.

Glamorous Milka Duno, a Naval Engineer by training who holds four masters' degrees, is what's known in the industry as "the complete package." This gorgeous sex symbol of auto racing would seem to have it all. She started racing sports cars just 6 years ago in her native Venezuela and quickly attracted high-level sponsorship, which funds her multi-million dollar team in the Grand American Rolex Championship series—the top-level endurance series in America. But now she has to follow that up with performance. Her sponsor expects her to get in the drivers seat, and to win; and Milka is struggling to keep up to drivers with more than 10 years experience on her.

Hot on their heels are six Canadian stars-in-the-making. Open-wheel racers Annette Blenkarn, Valerie Limoges, and Ashley Taws struggle to get and hold the sponsorship that keeps them in the driver's seat, one battling a near-fatal car crash that may be a career-ender. Endurance sports car racer Melanie Paterson is one of the best and smartest drivers in the business. But without the sex appeal that helped vault Danica and Milka to the top, she has to fight a lot harder to get to the racetrack. Drag racers Ashley Ziarko and Natasha Cherchuk are so addicted to the thrill of speed that they log days and weeks of

preparation for seconds of euphoria and “the thrill of going up against guys that are almost double your age...and then beating them.”

From frenetic pit activity to in-car footage and truly exciting racing coverage, you'll experience the ups and downs of race weekends, through near crashes and podium finishes as these women follow their passion for speed. Away from the track, catch a rare glimpse of the huge amount of work and personal heartbreak any driver undergoes to either “get a ride” or hang on to it. It's the sponsors who fuel the car in this expensive sport. Once the coveted contract is signed, the obligatory media appearances mean a day-in-the-life becomes exhausting both on and off-track.

With historical insights from pioneers Janet Guthrie, whose race suit hangs in the Smithsonian Institute, Shirley Muldowney, the legendary drag racer, and Lyn St. James, the first woman to be selected Indy 500 Rookie of the Year, we learn what it's like to achieve racing greatness and the many obstacles that must be overcome on the way.

GIRL RACERS is a story of hopes and dreams, heartbreak and victory. And of eight women who were born for speed.

When you're on top – don't stop – shut up ... and drive.

EPISODE SYNOPSES

EPISODE 1 – Start Your Engines

Let the racing season begin...

It's a sunny weekend in Long Beach, California ... but 22-year-old Danica Patrick is all business. It's the first race of her season in the Toyota Atlantic Championship, on one of the toughest courses in North America. And she has her eyes firmly on the prize. Danica exploded onto the North American racing world with high-level backing from the legendary Bobby Rahal and talk show host David Letterman. Along with sponsors Argent Mortgage they are determined to drive her to the top. Along the way, there's a controversial FHM photo spread and a win that allows Danica to lead four-time champion Tommy Kendall around the pits on a dog leash. Now she needs to prove that a woman can keep on winning. We follow her through this crucial season starter with unprecedented behind-the-scenes access and camera angles that literally put you in the driver's seat, to see whether her racing performance lives up to her preparation.

At the second race of the Grand Am Rolex Championship series, auto racing's sex symbol, Milka Duno, also needs to prove that she's more than just a pretty face. At Homestead, Florida, she and her co-driver, veteran Andy Wallace, battle through an exciting finish to an historic result: she's the first woman in history to win a major North American sports car race.

Like Danica, 20-year-old Ashley Taws is an open-wheel racer who has attracted a fair amount of media attention and the hero worship of a whole league of young new racing fans in the hot pink Barbie car. She's taking over management of her racing program from her Dad this year. Can she keep enough funding to keep racing? It's a question that haunts 21-year-old Valerie Limoges, the only professional female race car driver in Quebec, and Melanie Paterson, a sports car racer who has the ability to be one of the top drivers in North America—but not the sex appeal to attract the dollars to get her there. Dragster Ashley Ziarko thrills to the addiction of speed and of beating guys at their own game, while racing helps thirteen year old Natasha Cherchuk overcome a girlhood weight problem transforming her into a self-confident teenage “nitro rat.”

With historical insights from pioneers Janet Guthrie, whose race suit hangs in the Smithsonian Institute, Shirley Muldowney, the legendary drag racer, and Lyn St. James, the first woman to be selected Indy 500 Rookie of the Year, we learn what it's like to achieve racing greatness and the many obstacles that must be overcome on the way.

With an action packed finish at Long Beach, Danica Patrick has an exciting first race and ends up placing fifth. Not good enough for Danica, she laughs at herself in front of fans for “breaking early...like a girl.”

EPISODE 2 – Sponsorship: What Really Fuels the Car!

There's more to racing than just driving fast...

Riding high from their historic win at Homestead, Florida, Milka and co-driver Andy Wallace are up against it in Mont Tremblant, Quebec—the 4th race of the Grand Am Rolex series. While setting up the car, Andy discovers car trouble—and it's serious. The crew have to completely rebuild the clutch and brakes. Milka's desperately-needed practice time is cut. Under tremendous pressure from sponsors to keep up to her teammates on one of the most difficult tracks in the circuit, she tries to stay calm and prepare for the race any way she can. Their 5th place result is disappointment—and even greater pressure to make up the points loss on their return to Homestead. The result is an incredible second win—Milka just keeps on making history.

Real disaster strikes for Ashley Taws. A near-fatal off-track car crash means weeks of painful rehab. But after suffering injuries that most people would be lucky to escape from alive, she's determined to get back on the track and on the podium. – even in the face of frustrating physical setbacks and confrontations with irate competitors.

Danica has worked her way up to second overall in the Toyota Atlantic Championship series. It's her 4th race in Portland, Oregon; she's got to keep up her points lead and place high. She comes through with a milestone achievement — the first woman to place 2nd in the series.

After losing the Pantene sponsorship, Valerie's not racing. She keeps up her training the same way all top-level drivers do—in ultra-fast shifter karts. But it's touch-and-go whether she'll get a sponsor in time to jump back into the season. Melanie's obsession with racing makes itself felt as she does driver training and auto show presentations to make a living while she puts together a sponsorship package. Annette meets with a marketing guru to improve her own chances of landing a backer. The worst summer storm in 50 years forces dragsters Ashley Ziarko and Natasha to slog through two days ankle-deep in mud. For Natasha, waiting for the pros to race is no fun especially when the number one in her division coming in to the race.

EPISODE 3 – Shifting Into Overdrive

The Highest of Highs, and the Lowest of Lows

Mid-point in the racing season, and the girls either make history or suffer crushing defeat. Melanie's persistence pays off—she finally gets sponsorship to compete. She and Milka go head-to-head in North America's premiere endurance race, the ten hour Petit LeMans: they're the only two women on the track. After Melanie's team owner and co-driver totals the car, her dreams of pro racing for the year are destroyed along with it. Milka and her team scoop the trophy, her third in the season and her second victory in a week. Danica becomes the first woman ever to win a pole position in the Toyota Atlantic series, simultaneously snagging the points lead. Though she starts the race at the front of the

pack, she gets hit from behind and her fortunes reverse in a split second. But Danica shows her grit and determination, clawing her way out of a deadstick situation.

Fighting to come back after her life-threatening crash that broke her back and rearranged her internal organs, Ashley Taws deals with another serious setback—she loses her Barbie sponsorship. She enrolls in college to study marketing in the hopes it helps her search for sponsorship, and tries to keep racing at a closed wheel Honda Michelin event. But physical setbacks make the going rough—and her career may be at an end. Valerie's also still struggling to get a sponsor. But determined to race, she talks her parents into funding a test run to prep for the next Formula Renault race in Trois Rivières.

Annette gets a boost when she gets invited to Lyn St. James' high-profile event to gain industry and sponsor support for young drivers. And Ashley Ziarko has a good run in Mission—but Natasha sucks up another disappointment.

EPISODE 4 – Shut Up & Drive

When the smoke clears, there's only one thing to do – shut up & drive.

Danica is holding at third place in the Toyota Atlantic series—a precarious position, which she needs to maintain to place in one of the top three spots overall. She gets her chance at the Vancouver Molson Indy. She qualifies 5th, with her season-long rivals in the top spots. And dislodging them is proving to be difficult, especially when she ends up finishing a disappointing 4th. With her sponsors expecting a finish in one of the top three spots, so Danica can step up to top-level series next year, it puts tremendous pressure on her remaining races. Can she pull it off?

Valerie manages to land a new sponsor just in time to get her to Formula Renault race in Trois Rivières. But her late-season start makes itself felt. She qualifies 16th out of 18 cars. A disappointing result, but she holds her sponsors for another year.

With Milka's groundbreaking wins all season long, sponsors are falling over themselves to associate their brand with her—and she snags a \$10 million ad campaign with Pontiac, shooting a glamorous new commercial aimed for the Latin American market. After Melanie's disaster at the Petit Le Mans, she does a race for pure pleasure—an 8-hour endurance event, where she dominates the field. Natasha gets the thrill of a lifetime when she meets her idol Shirley Muldowney and wins her division trophy, and Ashley Ziarko shows off her Wally. Though Annette has made progress, she fails to secure the sponsorship that would allow her to turn pro. And after additional emergency operations and an extended stay in hospital, it seems like Ashley Taws' unquenchable determination to come back might have finally met an impossible obstacle.

After capturing the points lead earlier in the season, Danica has to settle for third place overall in the series. Good enough though to move up to the big leagues. At a large press conference, Bobby Rahal announces that she's moving to IRL, the Indy Racing League, next season. She'll never look back.

DRIVER BIOS

Annette Blenkarn

24 years old; Aldergrove, British Columbia

“What I love the most is just going into this ultra world that’s separate from anywhere else...that’s why I love to race...I’m a race car driver”.

Annette’s racing “career” started at a tender age. While her father worked on a race car crew, she was just learning how to walk – in the pits! She claims that her obsession with racing cars was ignited by all the track excitement in those early days. She finally jumped into the seat of a Quarter Midget car at nine years old... and never looked back.

Annette ran Quarter Midgets for six years and with each season she moved up in track positions and in racing classes. In 1996, her final year running in the Midget Series, she captured the Monza Championship. Annette made the transition into 1100cc Mini Sprint racing throughout the Northwest. For the next 2 years, she burned up dirt tracks in the Mini Sprint Series earning one championship after another.

The 2000 racing season found Annette forced to the sidelines with a serious neck injury deeming her unfit to compete. The next year Annette was back on the circuit with a vengeance, setting record times in almost every event. Her passion was further fueled by her participation in the celebrated Lyn St. James Driver Development Program.

In 2003 Annette moved into closed wheel racing where she earned an unprecedented six podium finishes out of nine events, taking home the Confederation of Autosport Car Clubs (CACC) “Rookie of the Year Award” and placing third in the CACC Championship.

Karting is her current addiction. With only three kart races behind her, Annette earns a podium finish at her first Snap-on Stars of Karting event in British Columbia. She is primed to run in the premier karting event, ASN-FIA Canadian Nationals.

When she’s not on the podium, Annette is searching out opportunities in stock car racing, Indy car racing and champ car racing.

Ashley Taws

20 years old; Toronto, Ontario

“If you can get in the zone where you’re pushing the car on the edge then you become one with the car. You feel what the car is doing like you’re in a cockpit of a plane. You can feel the tires, you can feel the seat ...you can feel every single vibration. I can never imagine not racing.”

Ashley Taws was first introduced to the world of racing at the age of nine, when her father Pete brought home a kart intended for her brother Doug. Not wanting to leave Ashley behind they shared the kart alternating weekends, racing at the Toronto Kart Club. But it

was the daughter, not the son who discovered the passion for speed. In her first year, Ashley placed seventh despite having to share the kart every other weekend. The next year, Ashley had her own kart placing second at the end of the season.

By the age of twelve Ashley was named Rookie of the Year when she placed second in the Toronto Kart Club's Junior Championship and third in the Ontario Trillium Series. She finished the year with a Canadian Grand National Championship.

In 1998 Ashley graduated to the faster more powerful two-cycle engine to compete in three classes at the Canadian Grand Nationals, claiming the championship in Formula 100 Junior. When she was sixteen, Ashley made her debut racing the Maximum Benefit/Norbram Group/Big Sisters Formula 1200 car. Winning two races and scoring a total of five top-three finishes, she was awarded with the Muriel B Knap Trophy (for "sportsmanship, ability and sparkle") and the BARC Bob Attrell Award (for "best new driver").

Ashley continued in the Formula 1200 competition in 2001 racing the "Be Anything With Barbie" and she became synonymous with this eye-catching hot pink car. Finishing second in the standings, she captured the Muriel B Knap Trophy for a second time.

In December 2002, Ashley was in a serious off-track accident that left her with a broken back. With her racing career in jeopardy, Ashley went through intense physiotherapy coupled with great determination and returned to competition in the 2003 season in the Formula Ford Championships. Missing the first three races of the season, she finished a remarkable seventh in the standings.

Ashley is currently attending Fanshawe College, majoring in marketing. She competed in the Honda/Michelin series in Mosport in 2004 but plans to be back in open-wheel racing, her first love, next season.

Ashley Ziarko

20 years old; Edmonton, Alberta

"The thrill of going up against guys that are almost double your age, then beating them! It's pretty cool".

When Ashley was 11 years old her parents, Ben and Donna, "dragged" her to a Junior Dragster race in Calgary. She fell in love with the speed *and* the smoky burn-outs! That same weekend, in 1995, her parents bought her a dragster.

Ashley showed enormous talent, worked hard at getting her lights and for the next two years she burned up tracks in Edmonton and Calgary. And she started to win!

In 1997, the family hit the road. On the way to the Junior National Championships in Denver, Ashley entered a pre-race in Pueblo. A first milestone, she got a perfect light (.500) and won a sparkling new paint job for her dragster. By now Ashley was creating a commotion on the junior dragster circuit and her story was featured in the National Junior

Dragster magazine. At the end of the racing season she was 6th in points in both Calgary and Edmonton.

1998 and Ashley only got hotter. She raced at the Indianapolis National Championships and came in 2nd in points for the year in Calgary. In 1999 she captured 1st place in the Junior Drag Racing series.

It was time to move on and in 2002 Ashley bought a full size gas engine dragster. The next year she had barely landed her IHRA license in Quick Rod when she won runner up in a Quick 16 race. Ashley was hot on the wheels of her competitors.

In 2004, she's unstoppable. Ashcroft, BC – Ashley smoked the track in Super Comp at the NHRA Northwest National Open capturing the coveted "Wally" trophy. Then came Prince George and another "Wally" was added to her collection.

The last race in the Northwest Series, Ashley captured 1st place running against the competitor who was #1 in points. At the end of the season she's #2 in overall points in the NHRA Northwest National Open Series.

Ashley's revved up and ready for whatever's next.

Danica Patrick

22 years old; Dublin, Ohio

"Has being a female opened some doors for me? Sure, but every driver is looking for a niche so why shouldn't I use my gender? But still, I have to perform and I'll know I've arrived when people no longer call me a female driver ... but just a racer."

Danica Patrick drives for Rahal-Letterman Racing where she is shattering records, becoming the first woman in history to win a pole position in the Toyota Atlantic Championship

At the age of ten, Danica exploded onto the karting scene, placing second in points against 20 other drivers. In her second year she began to climb, racing in the WKA Midwest Sprint Series in Yamaha Sportsman and US 820 Sportsman, placing second and breaking two track records in a single day.

By Danica's third year, she had seized her first national points championship in WKA Manufacturers Cup in the Yamaha Sportsman class. By the age of thirteen, she had won the WKA Great Lakes Sprint Series title in the Yamaha Restricted Junior and US 820 Junior classes. Danica solidified her reputation the following year in the Yamaha Jr. and Yamaha Restricted Jr. classes winning a knock-out 39 of 49 feature races. In her last year of karting she won the Grand National championship in the Yamaha Lite and HPV Lite classes.

By the age of sixteen Danica was racing in the Formula Vauxhall Winter Series in England, placing in the top ten of the 14 races. 2000 was a record year for 18 year old Danica when

she finished second in the England Formula Ford Festival, the highest finishing American driver since 1998, stunning the critical British racing community. This success brought her to the attention of three-time Champ Car titleholder and 1986 Indy 500 winner Bobby Rahal, who believes that Danica is the next female sports star in North America.

Danica became a household name when she entered the Toyota Atlantic Series and became the first full-time female driver in the history of the series. 2003 has been a key year for this young and talented driver as she shows that she's got what it takes to win. With a choice of the Indy or Champ Car series next year, this could be the time that she climbs into the racing limelight.

Melanie Paterson

29 years old; Hillsburgh, Ontario

"When you're in a car it's skill, it's brain power, it's making good decisions...that's what ultimately makes a great racer".

Melanie is a self-proclaimed adrenalin junkie. A downhill racer and no stranger to high speed, she left the world of skiing for the world of auto racing in 1998. Melanie found her new "zone". She dedicated herself to her new passion even working as a mechanic in exchange for the chance to compete in her first race series in Formula 2000 cars.

In 1998 Melanie finally got the chance to compete in the Canadian Formula Ford Championship. In her rookie year she finished a formidable 16th position out of 48 competitors. Continuing in the series in 2001, Melanie had a full season competing in all 8 races.

In 2002, Melanie secured a seat in the American Le Mans Series. She went on to win big in Trois Rivieres with a third place podium finish. And it just got better in Mosport where Melanie burned up the track earning a second podium win. Road Atlanta and the Petit Le Mans Series came next. A grueling 10 hour endurance race, Melanie ran in front of the field capturing a third podium win. Running in the American Le Mans Series in 2003 brought more success with another second place podium win in Trois Rivieres.

2004 finds Melanie gearing up for the Petit Le Mans Series, a 1,000 mile enduro event held in Braselton, Georgia.

When she's not in the "zone", Melanie keeps busy as a partner in "Driving Unlimited", a national company that specializes in driver training. In perpetual motion, Melanie is a race-driving instructor, hosts women's car care clinics and does stunt driving for the motion picture industry.

Milka Duno

Caracas, Venezuela

"One reporter told me, 'Not only does the Venezuelan flag support you, all of Latin America's flags are with you.' I never forget that".

Glamorous Milka Duno, a Naval Engineer by training who holds four masters' degrees gained simultaneously — Organizational Development, Navy Architecture, Maritime Business and Marine Biology— is what's known in the industry as "the complete package." This gorgeous sex symbol of auto racing would seem to have it all. She started racing sports cars just 6 years ago in her native Venezuela. At 25, she had a new career, finishing a remarkable second in the Venezuelan GT Championship.

In 1998, her first year as a professional driver, Milka competed in the Venezuelan Porsche Supercup Championship, with two podium finishes finishing fourth overall. She went on to compete in the Barber Dodge series in the United States simultaneously competing in the Women's Global GT Series Championship where she placed third overall.

In 2000, Milka captured the Panoz GT Series Championship. She moved up from the Barber Dodge series to the Barber Dodge Pro, and made her debut in the American Le Mans series where she placed third in the season finale in Australia. In addition, Milka celebrated becoming the first woman in the United States and second in the world to ever win the Ferrari Challenge race at Road Atlanta, along with being named the "Venezuelan Auto Racing Driver of the Year". As the only woman running a regular schedule in the American Le Mans series in 2001, Milka achieved four wins including the 1000 Miles of Petit Le Mans at Road Atlanta, and was named "American Le Mans Series 2001 Vice Champion Driver". Milka competed in the renowned Rolex 24 Hours of Daytona and the most famous race in the world- the 24 hours of Le Mans in France. This led to invitations to vie in the Open Telefonica series in Europe with the Vergani Racing Team where she became the first woman ever to score points in the most important single seat racing series in Europe aside from Formula One.

Milka's talent and presence has attracted high-level sponsorship, which funds her multi-million dollar team in the Grand American Rolex Championship series—the top-level endurance series in America. In 2004, Milka captured a first place finish with teammate, Andy Wallace, becoming the first woman in history to achieve an overall win in the Grand American Road Racing Series, and then in Ohio stood on the podium again with a second place finish. From road courses to ovals, from open cockpit cars to closed cockpit cars, Milka continues to distinguish herself on a variety of tracks – and in a variety of cars. An icon in her native Venezuela, Milka is well on her way to becoming one of the most skilled multi-disciplined drivers in the world. All of this without even breaking a nail.

Natasha Cherchuk

13 years old; Edmonton, Alberta

"The first time down the track I was yelling 'Yay!! Go me!!'."

At 13 Natasha is a veteran on the National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) drag racing circuit. She competes under the nickname “Cha Cha” a tribute to her idol, Shirley Muldowney, one of the greatest drivers in drag racing history.

First introduced to the sport at the age of four by her father Lance, a champion dragster himself, Natasha competed in her first race on her 8th birthday. She tore down the track running 14:32 at 42 mph. Later that year, she entered her first final round of eliminations and placed runner up.

In 2000 Natasha earned 2 final round appearances running a close second to achieve runner up in both races.

July 2001 marks Natasha’s first big win. She rounded out the year a point leader winning the 2001 Season Point Championship Runner Up.

At the Calgary National Open in 2002, Natasha comes in right behind the winner securing runner up position. In September of that same year, she burned up the strip and captured Winner of NitroRatz All-Junior Shoot Out, Lightning Class.

In the 2003 season Natasha earned 2 wins and 3 runners up. She raced to victory becoming the Junior Eliminator Winner at the Super Chevy Shoot Out. By the end of the year she led the pack in the NitroRatz Jr. Dragsters by winning the 2003 Season Points Championship.

Half way through the 2004 season Natasha has already captured 2 track wins, 2 track runners up, a Gold Crown Series win and her first NHRA “Wally” trophy. She ends the season a runner up in the NHRA Division 6 National Open Series.

And don’t make fun of her pink dragster. “Pink is a cool colour. I like it. Since I’m going really fast, people say, “wow!, that is one powerful car”.

Valerie Limoges

21 years old; Longueuil, Quebec

At a young age Valerie was already beating the boys at extreme sports. Her first time out on a race track in 1996 at 13 years old steered her in a new direction. When she came out the winner of that race, beating her friends *and* her Dad, Valerie’s dream to race one day in the Formula 1 Series was born. Her parents fueled her excitement and bought Valerie her first racing kart.

In 2001 Daniello Rossi, a five-time CRG shifter kart champion, recognized Valerie’s extraordinary talent and gave her her first big opportunity. She traveled to Italy to test and run in a CRG shifter kart series, racing against 122 international competitors. Back on home turf with European karting experience under her belt, she went on to make history by being the first girl to clinch the Quebec 125cc Shifter Cup Championship. This experience propelled Valerie forward into another class of racing.

In 2002 Valerie found herself competing in Formula Ford 1600. Key Motorsport crewed Valerie and partner Chris Green to create Team Quebécoise. Valerie continued to improve her racing technique in her rookie season, finishing 24th overall.

Sponsored by Proctor and Gamble in 2003, Valerie secured a place with AIM Autosport to compete in the Fran Am 2000 North American Pro Championship where she placed 26th out of a field of 41 competitors.

As the only woman in Quebec in professional racing, Val is a magnet for sponsors and fans alike. With newfound sponsorship in 2004, Valerie is competing in the Formula Renault 2000 Series in North America. Her prospects for a successful 2005 run with FR2000 is at an all time high.

PRODUCER'S NOTES

I was in my local supermarket a couple of years ago now, waiting at the checkout line, when I picked up a magazine and started half-heartedly flicking through its pages. I got to the end, and staring out at me was a young woman, not unusual, but hang on a minute – she's posing next to a lipstick pink race car?! Turns out that Ashley Taws was the driver of the pink Barbie car, and not only did she race in the Canadian Formula Ford Championship, she was the top-ranked rookie in 2002 despite suffering an off-track car accident that required several life-saving surgeries, and took her out of the series part way through. Well, this piqued my interest and I looked her up on the Internet to find a slick website and a lot of press coverage, both Canadian and American. Ashley is a talented racer and a rising star in this highly male-dominated sport. She had recently gotten back into the drivers seat and was already causing a commotion in the Formula Ford Series. So I'm thinking, surely there must be other women drivers out there?

My research led me to only two other women on the Canadian scene – Melanie Paterson and French Canadian Valerie Limoges - who were sponsored and driving full-time in auto-racing series. Further research into racing in Canada reveals an unrivalled passion for the sport from Quebec, resulting in the fierce pride that French Canadian girls have in Valerie, their female racing role-model. Not surprising given that this race-crazy province produced Canada's top international competitors in Gilles Villeneuve then son Jacques, and now Alex Tagliani and Patrick Carpentier.

This documentary series is the result of discovering that although women are still an anomaly in auto-racing both in Canada and the rest of the world, they're starting to have a significant impact on the sport internationally. There are several women currently at the upper echelons of the sport, most notably Danica Patrick and Milka Duno and no examination of women in auto-racing would be complete without them. They're beautiful, they're bright and they have an intense passion for speed. Our Canadian racers are in good company, and only time will tell how far they can go on the international circuit.

Girl Racers is the latest documentary from Screen Siren Pictures that goes inside the lives of girls and women in unusual situations. It explores the fascinating racing sub-culture that these women have made their milieu, and examines what it's like to continually strive for top ranking and the opportunity to race faster cars as the "odd woman out" in this high-octane international sport.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Let's put it this way. I don't even know how to drive – let alone have the aspirations of driving 350 mph in less than four and a half seconds, or to be part of a pack of Indy cars that scream around the track averaging 200 mph knowing that one split second can mean tragedy or even death. And yet that's what the cast of *Girl Racers* does or will do, and nothing on earth will stop them until they make it to the top. Each one of our characters represents a phase of the journey that every driver must make and we were along for the ride. We were humbled, had our hearts in our mouths or our hearts broken as this amazing group of young women pursued their dreams with a ferocity that few of us understand. **Girl Racers** was never meant to be simply a story of cars going around the tracks fast. We were as much interested in what drives the girls as the cars that they drive. Having said that, there is as much racing shown from a completely unique perspective that will satisfy even the most hardcore race fan. I may not know how to drive but this comes awfully close for me.

As a director, it's not unusual to fall in love with the subject matter. After nearly a year of experiencing the highs and lows of both burgeoning and peaking racing careers, I have gained a deep insight into a magnificent sport that we hope to share with the viewer. These girls are tough, beautiful, and comparable to top athletes anywhere. All we had to do was to follow along for a season using anywhere from two to twenty cameras to make it happen. They have to dream it, and then go out and make it happen, and they take us all along for the ride.

SCREEN SIREN PICTURES COMPANY PROFILE

Incorporated in 1997, Screen Siren Pictures is an active, growing independent film and television production company based in Vancouver, Canada that creates high-quality, award-winning, innovative documentaries and dramatic film and television. With a focus on international co-productions and partnerships, we bring energy, creativity and established local and international industry and financial relationships to all our projects.

In the course of our seven years in business, Screen Siren has produced for broadcasters such as the BBC, CBC, CTV, Bravo!, Corus, Movie Central, TMN, TVO, W, the Discovery Channel, Vision TV, Knowledge Network and SCN and has partnered with distributors such as the NFB, Moving Images, Odeon Films and Alliance Atlantis. Screen Siren's debut feature film ***Flower & Garnet*** has played in film festivals around the world including Berlin and Toronto. Odeon Films theatrically released the film in Canada in March 2003 when it enjoyed an eleven-week run in Vancouver while playing in theatres across the country. The film has won many awards including the Telefilm Canada Award for Best Emerging Director from Western Canada (2002 Vancouver Film Festival); Claude Jutra Award for Best Direction of a First Feature Film (2003 Genie Awards); Best Film, Writer, Director, Lead Actor and Actress, Supporting Actor and Actress, and Music (2003 Leo Awards); Best Film, Director and Lead Actor (2003 Vancouver Film Critics' Circle Awards) and Grand Jury Prize for Narrative Feature (2004 Independent Film Festival of Boston). ***Flower & Garnet*** was released on DVD in November 2003.

Completed Screen Siren documentaries include: ***Ice Girls*** (Nominee, Rockie Award for Best Sports Program at Banff Television Festival; Best Sports Film, Director and Editor, 2003 Leo Awards); ***Britannia Beach*** (Nominee: Best Social/Political Documentary, 2002 Yorkton Film and Video Festival) and the feature length Bravo! documentary ***Drawing out the Demons***, about controversial Canadian artist Attila Richard Lukacs that had it's world premiere at the 2004 Hot Docs Canadian International Film Festival. Currently Screen Siren is in post-production on ***Girl Racers***, a 4 x 1 hour series for Global Television about North America's top female race car drivers and ***The Score***, a musical adaptation of the award winning play by Vancouver's Electric Company Theatre, for CBC's Opening Night. Projects in development include: ***Paul Watson: Eco Pirate***, about Greenpeace co-founder Paul Watson (in development with the Documentary Channel); ***Campus Spies*** (in development with History Television); ***The Jizz Biz*** (in development with CTV); ***Breaking Ranks*** (in development with NFB), ***Luna*** (MOW in development with CTV, BC Film and Telefilm). It also has a full slate of feature films in development: Keith Behrman's second feature film, ***Guided By Wire*** (in development with CBC, BC Film, Telefilm and Movie Central); ***Price of Voice***, a Canada-UK co-production with Aria Films, ***Every Fifth House*** by JC Chandor, (in development with Telefilm Canada) and ***Year of the Carnivore*** by Sook-Yin Lee (in development with Movie Central and BC Film).

Screen Siren is managed by a partnership of three women. President and founder, Trish Dolman has been working in film and television for twelve years as an award-winning producer and documentary director. Following a career in corporate management within the industrial and telecommunication sectors in New Zealand, Australia and London, Stephanie Symns immigrated to Canada and put her business experience to work as a producer at Screen Siren in 2001. Having attended the acclaimed Canadian Film Centre and NYU, Producer Leah Mallen also joined the company in 2001 with a background in casting, production management and as the producer of several award-winning short films.

As Screen Siren Pictures expands its operations and strengthens its reputation, we are committed to becoming a leader in the production of Canadian film and television.

KEY CREW

Jason Priestley: Narrator

Jason Priestley is one of the most versatile talents in Hollywood and was a successful professional race car driver. Priestley began racing in 1991 in the California Rally Series and won his first race at the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course in 1998. He was a broadcast analyst for the IRL series and in 2002 joined the Kelley Racing team in the new Infiniti Pro Series, a developmental circuit with open-wheel cars that are similar but smaller and less powerful than the IRL cars. His 2002 final practice crash at the Kentucky 100, an Infiniti Pro Series race, left him with serious injuries and resulted in his decision to quit the racing scene.

Priestley continues to work as a professional actor, starring in several upcoming projects, as well as continues his successful career as a director and producer. He is set to begin shooting the CBS romantic drama pilot "Love Monkey," which revolves around the relationships of employees at a record label and is based on a novel by Kyle Smith. Priestley recently starred as Jack Harper, a forensic attendant harboring a dark secret, on the FOX sci-fi drama "Tru Calling" opposite Eliza Dushku. He also filmed the UK miniseries, "Colditz," which premieres in March.

In his native Canada, Priestley can be seen in the CTV drama "Sleep Murder," the Much Music comedy "Going the Distance" and "Chicks with Sticks," which takes the battle of the sexes to the hockey arena. Last year, Priestley appeared in the ABC Family Channel's romantic comedy "I Want to Marry Ryan Banks." The film, directed by Sheldon Larry and scripted by Chad Lodge, co-starred Emma Caulfield and Bradley Cooper.

Priestley most recently appeared on the big-screen in "Die, Mommie, Die!" which premiered to great acclaim at this year's Sundance Film Festival and won the Special Jury Prize Award. The film, from first time director Mark Rucker and writer Charles Busch, also stars Frances Conroy, Philip Baker Hall and Natasha Lyonne, and was released through the Sundance Film Series, a new division of the Sundance Channel.

Priestley directed and produced the critically acclaimed documentary for the Canadian rock band, The Barenaked Ladies, titled "Barenaked in America." The documentary, which premiered at the 2000 Toronto Film Festival and The Slamdance Film Festival, was released by The Shooting Gallery in 2000. Priestley's additional directing credits include an episode of "The Outer Limits" for Showtime and a music video for The Barenaked Ladies. The video, "The Old Apartment," garnered a Best Director nomination for Priestley at the 1996 Canadian Music Video Awards. He also directed and co-starred in the Fox Television thriller "Kiss Tomorrow Goodbye," and an episode of the WB comedy "Grosse Pointe."

Priestley received critical acclaim in the independent feature film "Love and Death on Long Island" starring opposite John Hurt. The film, a co-production of Imagex (Canada) and Skyline Films (UK), was presented at the 1997 Cannes Film Festival in the "Un Certain Regard" Section. The film's director, Richard Kwietniowski, received a Pierrot award, the European's critics' prize given out for the first time at Cannes and the 1998 New York Film Critics Circle Award for Best First Film.

Priestley made an indelible mark with his portrayal of 'Brandon Walsh' on Fox Television's hit series "Beverly Hills 90210" for eight seasons, a role for which he earned two Golden Globe nominations. He made his directorial debut on the show in 1993 and produced and directed numerous episodes. His other recent television credits include guest appearances on ABC's "8 Simple Rules for Dating My Teenage Daughter" with Katey Sagal and the late John Ritter and "Spin City."

A native of Vancouver, British Columbia, Priestley appeared in Canadian television commercials and starred in his first film by the age of eight. He currently resides in Los Angeles.

Stephanie Symns: Producer

Stephanie Symns is a Producer at Screen Siren Pictures. She recently completed Director David Vaisbord's documentary *Drawing Out The Demons* about the infamous painter Attila Richard Lukacs, with licenses from Bravo! and TVOntario which has its world premiere at Hot Docs on April 30th, 2004 at the Royal Cinema. She was Associate Producer of Keith Behrman's award-winning debut feature *Flower & Garnet* in 2002 and she also produced *Unravel*, a five-minute short directed by Claudia Molina with Bravo!Fact and NFB funding, which was subsequently acquired by the CBC for ZeD and screened at numerous international festivals. In 2001, she co-produced Claudia Morgado's 35mm short film *Bitten*. She is currently in development on a number of projects including *Reservation Soldiers*, a one-hour documentary taking an inside look at the boot-camp clash between native and military cultures, and has completed production on *Girl Racers*, a 4 x 1 hour documentary series on North America's leading female racecar drivers for Global Television.

Following a career in corporate management within the industrial and telecommunications sectors in New Zealand, Australia and London, Stephanie immigrated to Canada and put her business experience to work on a variety of projects at Screen Siren in 2000. She became a producer with Screen Siren Pictures in 2002.

Stephanie earned her Bachelor of Management Studies (Hons) at the University of Waikato, New Zealand in 1992. She is a member of Women in Film and Video Vancouver and has previously served on the Board of the BC Chapter of the Documentary Organization of Canada (DOC). She is also a member of the Cineworks Independent Filmmakers Co-operative and the Canadian Film and Television Producers Association.

Trish Dolman: Executive Producer

Producer/Director Trish Dolman is the founder of Screen Siren Pictures Inc. and has been working in film and television in Canada for twelve years. In 2001/2002 Trish produced the award-winning feature film **Flower & Garnet**, directed by Keith Behrman for CBC, TMN, Movie Central, Odeon Films and Alliance Atlantis. **Flower & Garnet** has screened at numerous international film festivals including Berlin, Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal, Karlovy Vary, Pusan, and MOMA: Canadian Front. **Flower & Garnet** was released by Odeon films in Canada in 2003 and ran in Vancouver theatres for over eleven weeks. The film has won several awards including: the Claude Jutra Award for Best Direction of a First Feature Film at the 2003 Genie Awards, Grand Jury Prize for Narrative Feature at the Independent Film Festival of Boston, Best Canadian Feature Film at the Victoria Independent Film & Video Festival and Vancouver Critics' Circle Awards for Best Canadian Picture, Director and Actor, as well as seven British Columbia Film Industry Leo Awards.

She has produced and/or directed productions for the BBC, CBC, CTV, TVO, Movie Central, TMN, W, the Discovery Channel, Vision TV, Knowledge Network, SCN, Odeon Films, Alliance Atlantis and the National Film Board of Canada. Prior to **Flower & Garnet**, Trish produced, wrote and directed the documentary **Ice Girls**, a feature-length Canada-UK co-production for the BBC and CTV that was nominated for Best Sports Program at the Banff TV Festival and received 3 Leo awards. She also just completed directing the BC Film / NFB "Picture This" documentary short **Exit Kingsway**. Her television producing credits include: **Britannia Beach** for the NFB, TVO, SCN and

the Knowledge Network, **The Friendship Village** for Vision and History (Executive Producer) and **Drawing Out the Demons: A film about the Artist Attila Richard Lukacs** for Bravo! and TVO, and Keith Behrman's half hour drama **White Cloud Blue Mountain** for CBC. Currently she is developing several documentaries including **Paul Watson: EcoPirate** for The Documentary Channel, **Campus Spies** for History Television, **The Jizz Biz** for CTV, Telefilm, and BC Film, and **Breaking Ranks** with the NFB. Production has completed on **Girl Racers** (4x 1hrs) for Global Television. On the dramatic side, she is in post-production on the feature-length adaptation of a play entitled **The Score** for CBC and several feature films including Keith Behrman's next feature, **Guided By Wire** in development with CBC, BC Film, Telefilm and Movie Central; JC Chandor's **Every Fifth House** in development with Telefilm Canada; Sook-Yin Lee's **Year of the Carnivore** in development with Movie Central, Telefilm and BC Film; and **Price of Voice** a United Kingdom and Canada co-production with Aria Films.

In 2003, Trish was the youngest ever winner of the Woman of the Year award from Women in Film and Video Vancouver. She was also honored as Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin La Grand Dame 2003 Woman of Distinction. She is on the board of the Canadian Film and Television Producer's Association (CFTPA). She is an active member of Women in Film and Video Vancouver (WIFVV), and she volunteers for Lion's Bay Search and Rescue.

Barry Gray: Director

Barry Gray is an experienced producer, director and writer who began his career with the CBC in Toronto and has been in the business for close to thirty years producing countless hours of television. Most recently, Barry has produced, directed and written *Raven in the Sun: The Life and Art of Bill Reid* a one-hour documentary for APTN and the CBC. It was honored with two Leo Awards for Best Documentary and Best Cinematography as well as being nominated for a Best Screenwriter award. It has now been picked up as a CBC Life and Times. Barry worked as the Series Producer for three seasons on *Animal Miracles* for the Life Network, Pax TV and international distribution. *Storm Warning!* a 39 episode one hour series for Discovery Channel International and Discovery Canada in which Barry worked as the producer, director and writer, earned a 2001 Leo Award for Best Series. Barry has been recognized for much of his work including *Moving On* for CBC Toronto, which won the 1998 Gemini for Best Lifestyle/Information Series, *Beyond Golden Mountain* for CBC Vancouver which was nominated for 2 Geminis and four Leo Awards and *The Twice Promised Land* for CTV which earned two Gemini Award nominations.

Bonny Lou Wagner: Field Director

After five successful years producing documentary projects in Montreal, Bonny relocated to Vancouver in 1996 and has spent the last seven years producing, directing and writing for television. Her work on the documentary series, *Storm Warning*, *Spilled Milk*, *Without Warning*, *Weird Homes*, *You... Me and the Kids*, *Animal Miracles*, *Weird Weddings* have been broadcast on Life Network, the CBC, Discovery Canada, Discovery USA, Women's Entertainment, PAX Net and The Learning Channel. Her directing and writing on the series *You... Me and the Kids* earned her a Leo award nomination for best educational episode as well as a Galaxy 2000, Cable in the Classroom Award. Recently Bonny directed the pilot for *Snapshot, 48 Hour Fashion Challenge*, a new reality-based series slated for broadcast. During the last three years, she has been traveling widely in the U.S. and Canada directing for the series, *Animal Miracles*, produced for Life Network in Canada and PAX Net in the U.S. From 1992 through 1996, Bonny directed nearly one hundred corporate documentaries and industrials across Canada and the U.S. Prior to this she worked as the European-based Production Manager on the acclaimed feature film documentary, *Stolen Moments*, produced by the National Film Board of Canada.

Bonny received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Literature and Women's Studies from Montreal's Concordia University. She is fluently bilingual in French and English and holds dual citizenship with Canada and the U.S. Currently Bonny is expanding her creative talents into the realm of dramatic writing and directing.

Todd Craddock: Director of Photography

Todd Craddock is one of the busiest cinematographers in Canada. He recently won a Leo award for Best Cinematography for his work *Raven in the Sun – The Life and Art of Bill Reid* for Corbeau Productions which aired on APTN and later on CBC. He recently completed an eight-hour documentary series for Mystique Films entitled *Future Factor* aired on Discovery Channel. In the last 5 years Todd was Director of Photography on nearly one hundred hours of broadcast television, including *Animal Miracles* for Life Network and Animal Planet, *Storm Warning!* for Discovery Channel (winning the 2000 Leo Award for Best Cinematography), *No Boundaries* for Global Television, *Weird Homes*, *Weird Wheels* and *Weird Weddings* for Life Network as well as international distribution. He has also managed to find the time to shoot many international documentaries like *The Friendship Village* for Vision, *Artificial Eye* for Discovery Health, *Assignment Palau: with Art Brewer* for NHK and Life Network, *Fall Out!*, *Innocent Tricks The Life and Times of Tony and Phil Esposito*, *The Life and Times of Terry Fox*, all for CBC, and *Sharks of the Golden Triangle* for Discovery USA. He is currently shooting *Ancient Clues* for History Channel and Discovery Civilization, and recently completed *Girl Racers* to be aired on Global Television.

Todd is a graduate of Humber College's film course in Toronto. From there he went directly to work for CBC in Ottawa, Toronto and Vancouver. In addition to his hectic freelance schedule, Todd continues to work with the CBC as often as he can because of his love of investigative journalism.

Deane Bennett: Editor

Deane Bennett works as an editor in a wide variety of film, television and commercial projects. Deane graduated in 1980 from Western Washington University in Bellingham before beginning his career as an Editor at Post Haste Video in Vancouver. By 1992, Deane was working as a Supervising Editor at Force Four Productions. Since leaving Force Four in 1995, Deane has worked on many successful shows including *Storm Warning!* for Discovery USA, *Animal Miracles* for the Life Network, *The Spirit Wrestles* for the History Channel, and the 2004 Best Documentary Leo Award winner *Rites of Passage* and *Radical Attitudes – The Architecture of Douglas Cardinal* for Bravo!. Deane recently completed *Crash Test Mommy* for the Life Network.

Phillip Western: Composer

Phillip Western has worked as a freelance music producer, engineer and programmer for the past ten years both in Vancouver and abroad. Phil's success and fan base has resulted from releasing his music into the techno underground, which has gained him higher profile work. His background includes working in audio composition at Electronic Arts, the international video game company as well as teaching sound design at the Vancouver Film School. Phil has also worked with Bryan Adams producing his demos as well as producing the song *If I Had You* from the album *On A Day Like Today*. Phil has also worked with a significant number of bands including Skinny Puppy and Nine Inch Nails. Besides creating his own music, Phil's experience working at record stores inspired him to open his own four years ago. He continues his role as the owner and operator of Odyssey Imports, an import record store located in Vancouver, BC.