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Grasshopper Film Acquires Kartemquin's *In the Game*

Documentary by Peabody award-winning director Maria Finitzo follows Chicago Latina girls' high school soccer team over multiple years as they struggle to overcome family poverty and reach higher education

***In the Game* set to screen at SXSWedu in March, Chicago Latino Film Festival in April**

Chicago, IL and New York, NY (February 29, 2015) -- Grasshopper Film has acquired the VOD and non-theatrical rights to [In the Game](#), a documentary following four years in the life of a girls' soccer team at a Chicago inner city high school, from *Hoop Dreams* producers Kartemquin Films and Peabody-award-winning director Maria Finitzo (*Mapping Stem Cell Research: Terra Incognita*).

The deal comes ahead of *In the Game* screening at SXSWedu 2016 on March 7, and in a special presentation at the 2016 Chicago Latino Film Festival on April 19.

Grasshopper Film is founded by Ryan Krivoshey, former director of distribution of New York-based distributor the Cinema Guild. His new company, just launched at Berlin's EFM mart, plans to release eight to 12 titles theatrically per year and more than 50 pics on VOD, digital and nontraditional outlets.

In 2016, Kartemquin Films celebrates its 50th year of producing documentaries that examine and critique society through the stories of ordinary people, such as *The Interrupters*, *Life Itself*, and the 2015 duPont Award-winning series *Hard Earned*, on which Finitzo was a director.

"What Maria achieves in *In The Game* is remarkable; a window through which to see, understand and appreciate some of the most pressing social issues of our time," commented Ryan Krivoshey, "I couldn't be happier to be working again with Maria and the amazing, dedicated people at Kartemquin, truly a national treasure."

In the Game received glowing reviews in a US theatrical premiere engagement at Chicago's Gene Siskel Film Center in September 2015, and also screened festivals including St. Louis and Madrid, and through several screenings arranged with public libraries and educational institutions such as the Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport.

Set in the predominantly Hispanic neighborhood of Brighton Park, Kelly High School on Chicago's south side is a public school struggling to provide the basic necessities for their students, many of whom do not

make it to college, either because they cannot compete academically or because their families do not have the financial resources to send them. 94% of Kelly High School students are categorized as “low income.” The girls of *In The Game* face an uneven playing field - Kelly High School doesn't even have a playable soccer field - little or no support, problems at home, uncertain futures, discrimination, and poverty, but remain undaunted thanks to their teammates and the dedicated mentoring of their coach, Stan Mietus.

The film follows three girls on the Trojans soccer team - Alicia, Elizabeth, and Maria - as they progress through their school years and beyond. All three seek to enter higher education after graduating high school, but must constrain their ambition due their families' lack of financial means. *In the Game* underlines that in a healthy democracy, equality is defined by who gets to play - both on the field, and off.

“I made this film because I believe deeply in the endless possibilities that come with the word ‘inclusion,’” said Director Maria Finitzo, who spent 6 years bringing this story to the screen. “Does the world really care that little about equality for girls and women, and even less so for women who are not rich and not white? In our country who gets to play and who does not is a yardstick by which we measure how close we are to achieving the goals of a democracy – a level playing field for all, or in a word: equality. I’m delighted to be working with Ryan Krivoshey and Grasshopper, who share our belief that this film can inspire an important conversation about these issues.”

The deal was negotiated by Krivoshey, Founder and President of Grasshopper Film, and Tim Horsburgh, Director of Communications and Distribution for Kartemquin.

Press resources for *In the Game*: <http://inthegamedoc.com/press/press-resources/>.

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/133053729>

About Kartemquin Films

Kartemquin is a collaborative center for documentary media makers who seek to foster a more engaged and empowered society. In 2016, Kartemquin will celebrate 50 years of sparking democracy through documentary.

Best known for producing *Hoop Dreams* and *The Interrupters* among over 50 other documentaries that examine and critique society through the lives of ordinary people, Kartemquin's most recent films include Steve James' *Life Itself*; Usama Alshaibi's *American Arab*; Bill Siegel's *The Trials of Muhammad Ali*; Aaron Wickenden and Dan Rybicky's *Almost There*; Kirsten Kelly and Anne de Mare's *The Homestretch*; Joanna Rudnick's *On Beauty*; Maria Finitzo's *In the Game*; Brent Huffman's *Saving Mes Aynak*; and *Hard Earned*, a duPont Award-winning six-hour series made for Al Jazeera America.

A revered resource on issues of ethics and storytelling, Kartemquin is internationally recognized for crafting quality documentaries backed by comprehensive audience engagement, and for its innovative programs and advocacy designed to elevate the documentary community. The organization has won every major critical and journalistic prize, including multiple Emmy, Peabody, duPont-Columbia and Robert F. Kennedy journalism awards, Independent Spirit, IDA, PGA and DGA awards, and an Oscar nomination.

Kartemquin is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization based in Chicago. www.kartemquin.com

About Grasshopper Film

Grasshopper Film is a new distribution company dedicated to the release of acclaimed and award-winning independent cinema. The company's upcoming releases include 2016 Academy Award nominee *Last Day of Freedom*, as well as Asghar Farhadi's *Fireworks Wednesday* and Hong Sangsoo's *Right Now, Wrong Then*, among others.