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BANANAS!* IS SET FOR SPECIAL SCREENING AT 2009 LOS ANGELES FILM FESTIVAL THIS WEEKEND

FILMMAKER FREDRIK GERTTEN ANSWERS HIS CRITICS AFTER FILM IS ATTACKED BY DOLE FOOD and THE LOS ANGELES BUSINESS JOURNAL

June 17, 2009 – “BANANAS!*,” filmmaker Fredrik Gertten’s suspenseful, controversial, non-fiction chronicle on the global politics of food and First vs. Third world dynamics, will be presented in special screenings as a Case Study at the 2009 Los Angeles Film Festival on June 20 and June 23, 2009 in Westwood.

Directed by Gertten, one of Sweden’s preeminent documentarians and investigative journalists, “BANANAS!*” focuses on a slippery fact trail and a landmark legal case pitting a dozen Nicaraguan plantation workers against Dole Food Co., Inc. and its alleged usage of a deadly banned pesticide and its probable link to generations of sterilized workers.

The film has been recently attacked by Dole Food Co., Inc. and the Los Angeles Business Journal as not being fact based. To date, neither Dole, its legal counsel nor the Los Angeles Business Journal have seen the film. In addition, Dole and its attorneys from Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher have sought to stop the film from being screened at the Festival. On May 8, the attorneys went to court seeking stoppage Judge Victoria Chaney.

Judge Chaney responded to the request in court on that day by stating: “Just so we are clear, I am not in any way going to make, and I will not consider, any request for prior restraint on free speech. Okay? So, don’t ask me to go try and contact the film company. I don’t have jurisdiction over them. But even if I did, don’t ask me for it.”

Even after receiving this response from the court, Dole and its attorneys began attacking the film through “cease and desist” threatening letters sent to WG Films and ITVS – the US production company. In addition, they sent letters directly to the Swedish Ambassador to the United States in DC and the Consul General of Sweden in Los Angeles seeking assistance to prevent the film from screening.

As the attacks escalated on the film, “BANANAS!*” was moved out of competition and now will screen in a special Case Study screening slot where the film will be presented together with a special post-screening discussion with the filmmaker. The discussion will center on the documentary filmmaking theme of what happens when a film is finished and new developments come to light, along with what then, are the rights and responsibilities of filmmakers?

Filmmaker Fredrik Gertten responds to the film’s critics stating: “My film, BANANAS!* follows this first historic court case in Los Angeles Superior Court. The film ends with a

verdict from the jury. And now, that verdict is under appeal. The recent hearing of April 21 and 23, 2009 happened at a moment after the film was delivered to all broadcasters and to the festival. Because of this new development, we did make a change in the end title cards which updated the audiences as to Judge Chaney's new rulings."

"This film is still valid and is still the truth about what happened," adds Gertten. "I think Dole Foods will be surprised after watching it. They are probably expecting a hard-hitting activist film. It's not that film. We follow a court drama - an important historic case. If the workers win, it will mean a lot for other workers in the world who claim that they have been abused. Dole and other big corporations have all the best reasons to fight that. But, I think they should do that in an open debate, not by threatening a film or a film festival and a filmmaker."

Gertten also adds: "In answer to the question of whether my film is fraudulent, I cannot see that it is. Everything I filmed is the truth and how this all played out during this trial. The most important evidence in the case is a letter between Standard Fruit Company (now DOLE) and Dow Chemicals. This is hard evidence and was not something that I made up."

With regard to one of the film's lead characters, Juan Dominguez, - the Los Angeles based attorney who brought the trial to Los Angeles and who is now accused of fraud in the trial, Gertten says: "The accusations against Juan Dominguez are serious and I understand that. I look forward to following this case as it develops. Thus far, though, he has only been accused."

"As a journalist and a filmmaker, I only want to bring the truth to the surface so that the public can know and can dialogue about events that impact them, " comments Gertten. "Having Bananas!* now in the public and being able to discuss and to defend my film will be a great thing for all of us involved. No more threats. No more name calling or accusations - but actually discussing. I am proud that my film will be screening at the Los Angeles Film Festival and I look forward to these discussions."

BANANAS!* will be screened at the Los Angeles Film Festival as follows: Saturday, June 20, 2009 at 7:30 PM at the UCLA James Bridges Theatre and Tuesday, June 23, 2009 at 9:15 PM at The Landmark at the Westside Pavillion. Fredrik Gertten will also be the featured filmmaker at the Filmmaker Lunch Talks on Monday, June 22 at 12:30 PM at the Zone Perfect live.create.lounge. For updated screening times and ticket information, please visit www.lafilmfest.com/2009/. For additional information about the film and production, go to www.bananasthemovie.com.

BANANAS!* is produced by Malmö Sweden-based WG Film and producer Margarete Jangård in co-production with Magic Hour Films (Denmark), ITVS International; Film i Skåne, SVT and Swedish Television(Sweden); with support from The Sundance Documentary Fund, The Swedish Film Institute; Danish Film Institute, Nordisk Film and TV Fond, ZDF/ARTE (Germany/France), YLE (Finland), NRK (Norway), TSR (Switzerland), VPRO (The Netherlands) and Odisea (Spain/Portugal).