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## Filmmaker with "Invisible Illness" Sheds Light on Invisible Diseases and Personal Struggles

Los Angeles, CA – September 3, 2024 – Indie filmmaker Matthew Michael Ross announces **Awareness Festival** Los Angeles screening of his latest feature film, "INVISIBLE," a poignant and powerful narrative that delves into the often-misunderstood world of invisible diseases, addiction, and mental illness.

"INVISIBLE" follows CB, a young man searching for his friend who disappeared after succumbing to drugs and alcohol. On his quest, CB encounters Heather, a vibrant young woman battling CRPS (Complex Regional Pain Syndrome), regrettably labeled "the suicide disease." A connection is forged from their shared pain and loss and the two decide to investigate the disappearance together.

Ross, the writer/director also suffers from an invisible disease, CMT, a neurological disorder. He channels his experiences into the story while basing the CRPS character Heather on Katie Oleary, a friend, who had planned to produce the film with Matthew until she fell ill. This personal connection gives the film an authenticity and depth that will resonate deeply with audiences.

In the News: The \$260M settlement for Maya Kowalski, a young woman suffering with CRPS, is a referendum on chronic pain. The verdict was against Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital and a 2023 Netflix documentary "TAKE CARE OF MAYA" revealed the tragic story.

Said Ross in a recent interview, "During Covid, I lost my dear friend to drugs and alcohol. I experienced severe guilt and shame, thinking maybe there was something I could've done to save him. Dealing with my pain, I had to write this film. The aim was to raise awareness and foster empathy for those living with invisible diseases and illnesses, not just CRPS, but depression, addiction, and homelessness."

"INVISIBLE" boasts a talented cast including Zebedee Row (HBO's VINYL) as CB and Rachel Alig (OMAHA) as Heather. The film also features superb cinematography by Rob Sweeney (ENTOURAGE, BLACKISH).

This feature just won the Grand Prize **Best Feature** at the Marina Del Rey Film Festival. Now being shown in LA again at the 15<sup>th</sup> annual Awareness Festival Regal LA Live Oct. 5<sup>th</sup> 9PM.

About Matthew Michael Ross:

Ross is a passionate filmmaker who loves telling stories. Known for his Cannes nominated short, "FOOD FOR THOUGHT" and his indie feature, "DESPERATION HIGHWAY," his work often explores themes of individual pain, and "INVISIBLE" marks his most personal project to date, inspired by his own experiences with an invisible disease.

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Note to Editors: High-resolution images and press materials are available upon request. Interviews with Matthew Michael Ross or cast can be arranged through the media contact provided.