

Why Canada Has Its Best Chance to Break Its Film and TV Awards Curse

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FX

With the winners of the inaugural Canadian Screen Awards to be handed out Sunday night, "Sons of Anarchy's" Kim Coates says the country is finally making crowd-pleasers.

TORONTO - When it came to finding the bull's-eye in Canadian primetime, the country's former Gemini and Genies TV award shows mostly shot blanks.

But *Sons of Anarchy's* **Kim Coates**, in Toronto Sunday night to present at the inaugural Canadian Screen Awards, insists an increasingly smart and creative Canadian film industry could change all that.

STORY: Wes Bentley, Kim Coates Urge Saskatchewan to Keep Film Tax Credit ^[5]

He says the decision to combine the former Genies and Geminis into a single annual broadcast and Canadian films with commercial potential bursting on the scene bodes well for the refreshed awards show.

You get the sense Coates, who's nominated in the best supporting actor category along with **Jay Baruchel** for their star-turn in **Michael Dowse's** *Goon*, had a pucking blast filming the hockey comedy.

"It's a hockey movie. And I'm from Saskatchewan. I played hockey my entire life. And I'm too old to be a player," he added, as Coates got the role of a hockey coach in the Canadian indie released stateside by Magnolia Pictures' Magnet genre division.

Goon didn't make it into the Screenies' six-strong best picture competition, which includes **Kim Nguyen's** *Rebelle*, **Xavier Dolan's** *Laurence Anyways* and **Deepa Mehta's** *Midnight's Children*.

STORY: Jay Baruchel's Lewd Tongue-and-Finger Gesture Provokes 'Goon' Movie Poster Ban ^[6]

But Coates says *Goon*, which has **Seann William Scott** playing a bouncer who uses his right hook and skates to help a downtrodden hockey team to new heights, is part of a new breed of movie crowd-pleasers coming out of Canada.

"Back in the 1980s, you could make a movie about salmon cooking in the wilds on hot coals and sell it to Norway, Sweden and France," he recalled.

An increasingly tough indie film market means Canadian filmmakers today need to be far more creative just to survive.

"There's no more selling movies right away. There's no more people getting together and making \$500,000 on a European sale. Those days are almost over," Coates argued.

Canadian filmmakers in recent years have also found success making international co-productions with American and other international stars like **David Cronenberg's** *A Dangerous Method*, **Vincenzo Natali's** *Splice* and **Atom Egoyan's** *Chloe*.

Besides *Goon*, Los Angeles-based Coates also co-stars in *Ferocious*, the **Robert Cuffley** thriller shot in Saskatchewan that has **Amanda Crew** playing a successful actress confronting her unsavory past on a trip home to visit her small town roots.

"It has the thriller in it. It has some deviant, weird situations. It has some monologues like Shakespeare," Coates said of the Alberta-Saskatchewan co-production by producers **Carolyn McMaster** and **Anand Ramayya**.

After his Canadian Screen Awards duties are over, Coates and other *Ferocious* cast members will be on hand to help release the picture from next weekend at the multiplex countrywide.

The Canadian awards show organizers concede the rebrand of the former Geminis and Genies is a work in progress.

But they'll find out soon enough whether they can reach the bull's eye when the Canadian Screen Awards are handed out during a two-hour gala Sunday night in Toronto to air on the

CBC.

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