Amanda Shell followed Dr. Angel Yanagihara into the pitch-black waters off Waikīkī at three in the morning, and her effort paid off. She has been named one of 12 semi-finalists in the Second LabTV Tribeca National Video Awards Contest, winning a $500 cash award.

Shell’s achievement is akin to a rookie baseball player knocking the ball out of the park on her first time at bat. Shell, a senior in Journalism at the University of Hawai‘i Mānoa, works through the Student Employment and Cooperative Education (SECE) service in the John A. Burns School of Medicine’s Communications Department. There, she helps produce news stories and video reports for both the medical school’s website and for occasional distribution to local television news programs. But this was Shell’s first entry into the scientific journalism competition, which — unlike the first contest that included only student filmmakers — this time also included entries from professional videographers. LabTV requested short videos about researchers and what motivates them, and received entries from colleges throughout the country.

Shell chose to profile Dr. Angel Yanagihara, whose expertise in box jellyfish has become famous through several network television documentaries, and whose work already has created one product, a “sting stopper” ointment to combat the painful stings from box jellies. In 2013, while
serving on an escort boat, Dr. Yanagihara used her “sting stopper” to help 64 year-old swimmer Diana Nyad make history. Nyad was able to swim solo across the channel from Cuba to Florida, partly due to Yanagihara’s help. The gel allowed Nyad to escape much of the pain which had crippled her previous effort to cross the channel. Like Hawai‘i, that part of the ocean is filled with stinging box jellies. Yanagihara’s science also helps warn Hawai‘i swimmers every month of impending jelly “invasions”.

LabTV is an innovative, web-based video platform that showcases short, engaging videos of young medical scientists in labs across America. The mission of LabTV is to inspire today’s high school and college students to become “tomorrow’s heroes of medical science.”

In announcing the awards, LabTV’s founder Jay Walker noted: “It is an honor to share the work and passion of young scientists who have dedicated their lives to searching for the breakthroughs that will give all of us a better future. And we are equally excited to recognize the amazing work being done by young filmmakers on university campuses around the country who are on their way to celebrating hidden stories that the world needs to hear.”

LabTV’s Executive Producer David Hoffman was also overjoyed by the quality of submissions in this contest, saying, “We were very excited that this time around, talented student filmmakers were joined by both professional videographers and forward-thinking university media departments in creating videos that will inspire tomorrow’s heroes of medical research.”

Mr. Hoffman added: “The growing popularity of LabTV videos being made by hundreds of student filmmakers on dozens of campuses around the country is a testament to the excitement people have for the hope created by medical research. The level of work many of the students submitted was at a professional level, and we are excited to reward them for their talents and time as they create work that is worthy of the medical scientists and labs they profile.”

Over $18,000 of prizes and awards has been awarded to the winning filmmakers, courtesy of LabTV.

Shell’s video can be viewed at [https://vimeo.com/108609462](https://vimeo.com/108609462)