



9TH UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION FILM FESTIVAL
OCTOBER 25-29, STANFORD UNIVERSITY
WWW.UNAFF.ORG
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*Ingrained Violence in the Prison System, the Death Penalty, Children's
Mental Health Services, Victims of Genocide, Humanitarian Cowboys,
Anti-Immigration Policies and the Refugee Musicians
are some topics Closing the Festival*

9th Annual United Nations Association Film Festival (UNAFF)
SPARKS OF HUMANITY

Sunday, October 29, 2006

Stanford University (Cubberley Auditorium/School of Education)

With a weekend of penetrating films coming to a close, the UNAFF continues on Sunday, October 29 with films looking at security practices that have seriously weakened civil liberties. The Festival wraps with the screening of **Sierra Leone's Refugee All Stars**, the remarkable story of a group of musicians who bring hope and happiness to their fellow refugees, followed by a Closing Night Party.

America's Brutal Prisons uncovers the penal systems at correctional institutions in Brazoria/Texas, Phoenix/Arizona and Sacramento/California. The American public was shocked by the recent Abu Ghraib prison torture, even more stunning is the violence that occurs inside prisons throughout the US. **America's Brutal Prisons**, directed by Nick London and reported by Deborah Davies, includes videos from the prison surveillance cameras along with interviews with former prisoners, a warden, a prison doctor, inmates' relatives, attorneys, and footage from a California Senate inquiry and a murder trial of four guards. Although many prisons denied permission to film inside their facilities, a rare glimpse behind the walls of the prisons is offered by interviews with former correctional officers who have broken the "green wall" code of silence and become whistleblowers. (Screening at 1:00 pm)

In **Interview With an Executioner**, directed by Ken Russell and Bay Area filmmaker Nancy Brown, Mississippi Penitentiary Superintendent Don Cabana gives Amnesty International's Terry McCaffrey his surprising take on the Death Penalty. Cabana recounts the chilling experience of the execution of Edward Earl Johnson, who maintained his innocence until the end. This documentary gives a behind the scenes look at the Mississippi Penitentiary in the fourteen days leading up to the execution of Edward

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Earl Johnson. (Screening at 2:05 pm)

In **Are the Kids Alright?**, the filmmakers follow several families to document the results of a decline in the availability of appropriate mental health services for young people. Cesar is severely depressed and has threatened to kill himself, Antonia tried to cut her wrist and has attempted to overdose on Zoloft, and Jeremy has threatened his stepmother and injured his younger brother. The video documents not only the families who have a loved one suffering from mental illness, but also the daily struggles of mental health advocates, service providers, and policymakers in trying to help these youths get appropriate treatment. Filmmakers Karen Bernstein and Ellen Spiro (*Troop 1500: Girl Scouts Beyond Bars*), formed Mobilus Media in 1999 to initiate groundbreaking documentary projects. (Screening at 2:30 pm)

In the Tall Grass tells the story of Rwanda's search for redemption as the country sits down to reckon with the genocide using a network of traditional community courts called gacaca. The film follows a genocide survivor named Joanita Mukarusanga through this historic process as she confronts the neighbor she says killed her family, and the community that sanctioned their murders. The neighbor, Anastase Butera, admits to witnessing the murders, but denies any further participation. In *In the Tall Grass*, by documentary filmmaker John Coll Metcalfe, explores universal themes of justice in post-conflict societies and the challenges countries like Rwanda face in attempting the transition from violence to peace. Through the experiences of Joanita and Anastase, the film illustrates how the genocide and the ideology it propelled continue to play a dangerous and destabilizing role in Rwanda. (Screening at 3:40 pm)

Bay Area filmmaker Adrian Belic (*Genghis Blues*) began making films in elementary school. In **Beyond the Call**, he follows three middle-aged men who are former soldiers, traveling the world delivering life saving humanitarian aid directly into the hands of civilians and doctors in some of the most dangerous places on Earth. Ed Artis, Jim Laws and Walt Ratterman are self-styled Knights of Malta who in 1995 formed Knightsbridge International, a unique humanitarian aid organization whose motto is "High Adventure and Service to Humanity." Their specialty is going where death from landmines, bullets or bombs is as frequent as death from hunger, disease or the elements. Their personal convictions and courage drive them to places such as Afghanistan, Albania, Chechnya, Cambodia, Burma, Thailand, Rwanda and the southern Philippines, often when few other humanitarian aid organizations are around. (Screening at 4:40 pm)

Rights on the Line: Vigilantes at the Border exposes the ugly anti-immigrant politics that lurk behind the Minuteman Project and shows the continuum between official border militarization and vigilante action. This video was shot by human rights activists and residents of border communities. It tells the story of border tensions from the point of view of those affected and reveals the underlying motivations of the vigilantes through interviews and disturbing footage of their nighttime patrols. (Screening at 6:10 pm)

In **Sierra Leone's Refugee All Stars**, documentary filmmakers Zach Niles and Banker

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White show how musicians from Sierra Leone keep culture alive and in the process begin to heal their own wounds as bring joy to their fellow refugees. Thousands of refugees from war torn Sierra Leone fled to Guinea in the nineties as a result of the brutal civil war. Many of their family and friends were murdered leaving them with physical and emotional scars. We meet six diverse musicians during the course of the film, who decide to form a band and sing songs of their plight. They range in age and style, from young Black Nature, an orphan with a talent for rapping in different languages, Franco, the oldest member who plays a guitar, to Reuben, the band leader and Grace, the spiritual mother of the band. Their music is a blend of the traditional, mixed with reggae and R&B, with lyrics that speak out against injustice. They return home to the Sierra Leone to perform with the help of United Nations High Commission for Refugees and return to their camp rejuvenated. (Screening at 6:40 pm)

The United Nations Association Film Festival (UNAFF) was conceived in 1998, the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, at Stanford University by film critic and educator Jasmina Bojic. UNAFF screens documentaries by international filmmakers dealing with topics such as human rights, environmental survival, women's issues, children, refugee protection, homelessness, racism, disease control, universal education, war and peace.

Information about the festival is available on our website at www.unaff.org or by phone at 650-724-5544. For press materials, interviews with filmmakers or festival Founder and Director Jasmina Bojic, **please contact Seema Arora by e-mail at seemaarora@sbcglobal.net or by phone at 510-482-4350.** The main sponsors of the 9th annual UNAFF are the Stanford Film Society and the UNA Midpeninsula Chapter.