

All kinds of cinematic journeys

SBIFF films explore veterans' issues, restorative justice and unconventional romance



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"Show Me What You Got" will screen Friday and Sunday during the Santa Barbara International Film Festival.

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Jon Hancock went the distance to reach out to his fellow veterans of the war in Iraq.

Literally. He walked 6,000 miles around the U.S.

Mr. Hancock's story is told in "Bastards' Road," which is among the movies screening at the Santa Barbara International Film Festival. The title is a reference to The Magnificent Bastards, the nickname for Mr. Hancock's unit in Iraq: the 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines.

The film festival, which starts today, also has movies varying from an unconventional love story, "Show Me What You Got," to a documentary on restorative justice, "The Prison Within."

"Bastards' Road" will screen during its world premiere at 11 a.m. Sunday at Metro 4, 618 State St. A second screening will be at 5 p.m. Monday at the same theater.

Director Brian Morrison created the documentary after learning about Mr. Hancock, a combat veteran who dealt with internal struggles during his transition back to civilian life.

"There are so many issues that those guys faced coming home," Mr. Morrison told the News-Press by phone from his home in Crofton, Maryland. "A lot of them came home with PTSD."

"He (Mr. Hancock) was looking for some relief in some way to fight his inner demons," Mr. Morrison said.

He found that relief during his 6,000-mile journey around the U.S., from Maryland to the ultimate destination of Camp Pendleton.

Mr. Morrison watched as Mr. Hancock met veterans from his Marines unit along the way.

"Sometimes he hadn't seen the guys for 10 years since they got out of the Marines," Mr. Morrison said. "That was really striking to me, just how much they lifted each other up in each other's presence."

Another kind of healing occurs in "The Prison Within." The documentary about restorative justice will screen during its world premiere at 10:20 a.m. Thursday at Fiesta 5, 916 State St. Another screening will be at 5 p.m. Saturday at Metro 4.

The film was made by former Los Angeles County public defender Katherin Hervey.

Her documentary explores the destructive impact of untreated trauma through the stories of survivors of violent crimes and prisoners incarcerated for murder in San Quentin State Prison.

The prisoners and survivors come together and participate in the Victim Offender Education Group, a restorative justice program helping prisoners to discover how trauma they experienced contributed to their criminality. The program also assists the criminals in understanding the impact of their crimes on victims and their families.

"The survivors are the facilitators of the program," Ms. Hervey told the News-Press by phone from her Seattle home.

Ms. Hervey said she chose men incarcerated for murder as her documentary's subjects to explore this question: "Can we forgive what we consider to be unforgivable?"

She said the inmates in the

restorative justice program are both digging deep in themselves and taking full responsibility for their actions.

Another kind of story, this one about an unconventional romance, is told in the feature film "Show Me What You Got."

It will screen at 5:20 p.m. Friday and 3 p.m. Sunday. Both showings are at Metro 4.

The movie stars Cristina Rambaldi as Christine, Mattia Minasi as Marcello and Neyssan Falahi as Nassim. The woman and two men are friends who enter into a three-person romantic relationship, and the movie was filmed on location in Italy, France and California.

"It is a film about love, friendship, the sexuality among three people and those three people breaking the traditional rules in our society," director Svetlana Cvetko told the News-Press by phone from her Los Angeles home.

Ms. Cvetko said she made Christine an empowered character.

She noted she made the feature film in the style of *cinéma vérité*. It's the French style of documentaries that became popular in the 1960s.

Ms. Cvetko directed the actors with the camera on her shoulder, which she noted *was difficult* at times. But she added, "I was really happy with the decision that this is how I wanted to tell this particular story."

For more about the Santa Barbara International Film Festival, go to sbiff.org.

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At left, veteran Jon Hancock walks 6,000 miles around the U.S., as shown in "Bastards' Road," which screens Sunday and Monday at the festival. The title refers to Mr. Hancock's Marines unit, nicknamed The Magnificent Bastards. At right, emotions are part of the story in "The Prison Within," a documentary about restorative justice. It will screen Thursday and Saturday at the festival.