



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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HOME-GROWN FILMMAKER RETURNS TO HAWAII WITH POLITICALLY-CHARGED DOCUMENTARY

Award Winning Film Examines Immigration Culture War in Virginia

Honolulu, HI (Oct. 19, 2009) -- Moanalua High School graduate Eric Byler returns to the Hawai'i International Film Festival (HIFF) tomorrow with his fourth feature film, 9500 LIBERTY <<http://www.9500Liberty.com>> . The highly anticipated documentary examines the political and socio-economic impact an infamous culture war focusing on immigration in Prince William County, Virginia.

"The overt racism in this film might seem like another world to folks in Hawai'i," Byler said. "But this is your country too, and racial anxiety on the mainland is one of the biggest forces shaping political discourse right now. People in Hawai'i have a lot of positive insights to contribute, that's why I'm so excited to bring this film here."

9500 LIBERTY at the Hawai'i International
Film Festival

Tuesday, October 20, 2009

6:30 PM

and



Friday, October 23, 2009

12:15 PM

Dole Cannery F

135 Iwilei Rd., Honolulu, HI

500 LIBERTY is based on the world's first interactive documentary, " which Byler and co-director Annabel Park debuted on YouTube in October of 2007. The on-line version of the film invited viewers to provide feedback and become part of the unfolding story. The popularity and impact of their videos landed the Byler and Park on CNN <http://www.cnn.com/2008/SHOWBIZ/05/01/immigration.lens/index.html> , local and international news telecasts, and the front page of the Washington Post <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/11/02/AR2007110201158.html?sid%20=ST2007110202179&sid=ST2007110202179> . Byler was subsequently invited to testify before the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, one of the more dramatic scenes in the film.

500 LIBERTY sold out its Washington DC premiere on October 1. Lawmakers in Washington from both political parties see the film as instructive and insightful when approaching issues like immigration. A screening on Capitol Hill is being planned before the end of the year.

500 LIBERTY, winner of the Jury Award for Best Documentary at the Charlotte Film Festival last month, is Byler's 5th film to screen at HIFF. His debut feature "Charlotte Sometimes" was discovered at HIFF by film critic Roger Ebert in 2002. Ebert's glowing review published in the Chicago Sun-Times the following day led to theatrical distribution, and two Independent Spirit Award nominations, launching Byler's career.



I owe a lot to my roots in Hawai'i," Byler said. "So much of who I am, my voice as a filmmaker and as an activist, comes from my upbringing here."

Festival information

Established in 1981, the Hawaii International Film Festival is dedicated to the advancement of understanding and cultural exchange among the peoples of Asia, the Pacific and North America through the medium of film. HIFF is the premier international film event in the Pacific and has won the praise of governments, filmmakers, scholars, educators, programmers and film industry leaders throughout the world. For the discovery and exhibition of Asian and Pacific feature films, documentaries and short films in the nation, it is a primary source. The festival has premiered such movies as ONCE WERE WARRIORS, THE PIANO, SHINE, SHALL WE DANCE, MAMA TANGIEN and CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON. Plus, DEPARTURE, a Japanese film, had its U.S. premiere at HIFF in 2008, won the HIFF Audience Award and then went on to win the 2009 Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film.

HIFF's major sponsors include: Regal Entertainment Group, Starwood Hotels & Resorts Hawaii, Halekulani, Hawaii Tourism Authority and The VILCEK Foundation.

The 2009 Hawaii International Film Festival will be held October 15-25 at the Regal Dole Cannery Stadium 18 Cinemas. Images of the films can be downloaded at <http://picasaweb.google.com/hiff2009images/2009FallFilmImages?authkey=Gv1sRgCOjStb2iwE&feat=directlink>. For more information please visit our website at www.hiff.org.

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