DOCUMENTARY - MEXICO - De Nadie - Film Review & Interview with the Director

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Wednesday 2 August 2006, posted by Dial

1.- Film Review by Dr. Steeve Coupeau, NYIHA MEDIA

DE NADIE

– 82 MIN/ COLOR/ DIGITAL
– Director: Tim Dirdamal
– Producer: Tim Dirdamal, Jose Torres

In its coverage of the 2006 New York Latino International Film Festival, NYIHA MEDIA discovered a documentary that is thematically compelling: *De Nadie*. The title of the documentary refers of the millions of poor migrants from the South seeking entry, often illegally, to the United States as a means to escape poverty. While the anti-immigration movement in the United States focuses on preventing Mexican migration to America, limited attention is paid to the thousands of Central Americans who first have to cross Mexico before attempting to enter the United States. This documentary seeks to fill this gap.

On a backdrop of pro-worker poems by Eduardo Galeano and progressive Mexican folk songs, the movie captures the heart-wrenching experience of a handful of Central American migrants. The most unforgettable story was that of Honduran migrant Maria, whose life was forever changed by the migration process. The migrants found unexpected kindness in the Madres de la Patrona, a group of Mexican mothers who conducted raffles to raise money to give food to the illegal migrants seeking to enter the United States on fast-moving cargo trains traversing the Mexican territory. Many migrants, including women and children die or are amputated when falling off or pushed off the fast-moving trains.

In spite of minor mistakes in the English subtitles, the documentary is a vivid example of cinema verité. While it did not win any award from the Jury of the New York Latino International Film Festival, the film will resonate strongly with immigrant communities in urban America.

2.- Interview the director by indieWIRE

PARK CITY ’06: Tin Dirdamal: "I became a filmmaker by accident."

January 21, 2006 - Every day through the end of the Sundance Film Festival, including weekends, indieWIRE will be publishing two interviews with Sundance ’06 competition filmmakers. Sixty filmmakers were given the opportunity to participate in an e-mail interview, and each was sent the same questions.

First-time filmmaker Tin Dirdamal directed "DeNADIE," which is screening in the World Cinema Competition: Documentary section. The film follows Mexican immigrants as they search for liberties that are denied in their own countries, and yet it doesn’t have a political agenda. As described by Sundance, Dirdamal is more concerned with personal stories that "force deeper understanding of the United States’ border crisis" while also exposing the "hypocrises [and]...uncomfortable intolerance" of Mexican culture

by making sure the voices of those affected are heard loud and clear.

– *Please tell us about yourself. Where were you born? Where did you go to school? Where do you live now?*

– I'm Tin Dirdamal. I was born in November 1982 in Monterrey Mexico. I grew up in Monterrey. I am still studying industrial engineering. I am currently living in Cochabamba, Bolivia, doing a documentary on the War on Water.

– *What were the circumstances that lead you to become a filmmaker? What other creative outlets do you explore?*

– I became a filmmaker by accident. I worked at an immigrant project as a volunteer in the south of Mexico. I started hearing and seeing terrible injustices committed to Central American immigrants in Mexico, in their attempt to get into the United States. It was then that for the first time in my life I took a camera in my hands and did this movie. I played the piano for 10 years and the violin for 3 years.

– *Did you go to film school? Or how did you learn about filmmaking? How did you finance your own film? And any other insights you think might be interesting…*

– I did not go to film school. As I was doing this documentary I got into photography classes to learn how to make decent frames. And as I was doing it, read some books about filmmaking. A bishop that has an immigrant shelter wanted to make a video on Central American immigration. So what was supposed to be a video turned out to be this feature film with the help of the 7,000 dollars Raul Vera, the bishop, gave me.

– *Where did the initial idea for your film come from?*

– As I was working as a volunteer in an immigrant project, there was an urgent need to tell others about these terrible deaths and injustices, in an attempt for them to end.

– *What are your biggest creative influences (this could include other filmmakers or films)?*

– La Pasion de Maria Elena (Mercedes Moncada)

– *What were some of the biggest challenges you faced in either developing the project or making the movie?*

– Probably not having a clue on how to make it. I had no previous script, so at the end I had many hours and no idea how to edit them. The editing was very tiring, I had to see the whole material again, and start making several rough cuts to see which seemed the best.

– *Tell us about the moment you found out that you were accepted into Sundance. Where were you?*

– I was in a cabin booth in Cochabamba Bolivia, and had just started to work on our next documentary.

– *What do you hope to get out of the festival, what are your own goals for the experience?*

– Meet interesting people and share ideas.

– *What is your definition of "independent film"?*

– My definition would be a film in which you have all the creative freedom to do it as you please.

– *What are a few other films you're hoping to see at Sundance and why?*

– I don't know which other films are going to be at Sundance. There is one I want to see called "In The Pit" by Juan Carlos Rulfo. He is an extraordinary Mexican filmmaker.

– *Who are a few people that you would you most like to meet at Sundance?*

– Juan Carlos Rulfo

– *If you were given $10 million to be used for moviemaking, how would you spend it?*

– There is this idea that with video format, films are now democratized. That practically anyone can grab their camera and tell what they want. I believe this is not so. Immigrants do not have access to making their own movies, indigenous people don't either. So media and films are still controlled by the ones who have the money. With $10 million dollars I would buy cameras and give free workshops to several marginal groups in order for them to tell their own stories, in order to try to revert who gets to tell the stories.

– *What are some of your favorite films, and why? What is your top ten list for 2005?*

– I enjoy Herzog's "Grizzly Man" tremendously. "Batalla en el Cielo" by Carlos Reygadas, "Everything is Illuminated" by Live Schreiber, "1973" by Antonino Isordia, and "Svyato" by Victor Kossakovsky.

– *What are one or two of your New Years resolutions?*

– Be more humane.

– *If you took President Bush's job, who would you hire/fire and why?*

– Myself...I would fire myself. I don't like power.

Source :

http://www.indiewire.com/people/2006/01/park_city_06_ti.html

See also:

http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0451698/

http://cinemexicano.mty.itesm.mx/peliculas/denadie.html