

Dallaire documentary takes Sundance prize

Last Updated Mon, 31 Jan 2005 10:02:18 EST

CBC Arts

PARK CITY, UTAH - For the second year in a row, a Canadian film has won a major documentary honour at the Sundance Film Festival.

Toronto-based filmmaker Peter Raymont's *Shake Hands With The Devil: The Journey of Romeo Dallaire* won the World Cinema Documentary Audience Award at a Saturday evening gala recognizing the best of this year's offerings.

- **RELATED FEATURE: [2004: The Year in Canadian Film](#)**

Last year, the prize – considered one of the festival's top documentary honours – went to *The Corporation*, by Canadian filmmakers Mark Achbar, Jennifer Abbott and Joel Bakan.

"It's fantastic and it's a great honour," Raymont told the Canadian Press. "It's important in that this will help bring the film to more people, to help keep the [issue of] genocide alive and to keep it from happening again.

Shake Hands With The Devil follows retired Canadian Forces general Romeo Dallaire's emotional return to Rwanda, where in 1994, he had served as head of the United Nations peacekeeping forces and witnessed the slaughter of almost a million Tutsis.

- **IN DEPTH: [Romeo Dallaire](#)**

The 91-minute film, the only full-length Canadian movie selected for Sundance this year, beat about three dozen other documentaries that screened at the festival for the



Romeo Dallaire is the subject of the documentary 'Shake Hands with the Devil,' which follows the retired general as he returns to Rwanda a decade after the genocide.

prize. In total, more than 1,000 documentaries from around the world had vied for entry into the annual celebration of independent film.

Redford's stamp of approval

One highlight of Raymont's Sundance experience was a personal visit from actor and director Robert Redford, whose Sundance Institute took over the former Utah/United States Film Festival in the mid-1980s.

Redford, who doesn't usually single out festival entries, came to an early screening of *Shake Hands With The Devil*, introduced the film and even stayed for a question-and-answer period afterward.

According to Raymont, the veteran actor told the audience that this type of film is "why Sundance was created in the first place. ... It's an independent film. It's about an important human rights justice issue."

Raymont said Redford then welcomed Dallaire as "a great humanitarian."

"[Redford] came partly because I think he admires Gen. Dallaire," Raymont said. "They sort of expressed their admiration for each other."

Though the incestuous love story *Forty Shades of Blue* won the festival's top dramatic award – the American Dramatic Grand Jury Prize – the theme of war and political strife dominated. *Why We Fight*, a look into the history of American war-making, won the American Documentary Grand Jury Prize. *Brothers*, a drama about two brothers sent to war in Afghanistan, won the World Cinema Dramatic Audience Award. *Wall*, a documentary about Israel's controversial security wall won a special jury prize from the festival's World Cinema Documentary Jury.

A shortened version of *Shake Hands With The Devil: The Journey of Romeo Dallaire* will air Monday at 9pm on CBC-TV and Wednesday at 10pm on CBC Newsworld.

Copyright ©2005 Canadian Broadcasting Corporation - All Rights Reserved