

# NATIONAL POST

## Toronto director Peter Raymont wins award for Rwanda documentary at Sundance

Jim Holt

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PARK CITY, Utah (CP) - Canadian filmmaker Peter Raymont has won the Audience Award for Best Documentary at the Sundance Film Festival for his film *Shake Hands With The Devil: The Journey of Romeo Dallaire*.

In an awards ceremony Saturday night, capping 10 days showcasing more than 200 films from around the world, Raymont's film documenting the Rwandan genocide was chosen the best in its class this year.

It was the second consecutive year a Canadian film has claimed the top documentary prize, succeeding last year's winner *The Corporation*.

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

"It's not about another plaque on the wall," he said. "Hopefully this will attract some major distribution deal in the States."

Raymont's film was the only full-length Canadian film selected to show at Sundance this year. It was one of 38 documentaries selected from more than 1,000 submitted from around the world for consideration.

The Toronto-based director said he felt particularly flattered when Sundance creator, actor Robert Redford, introduced his film last week as the festival got underway.

Redford is not in the habit of singling films out at the festival.

"He came partly because I think he admires Gen. Dallaire. He came to our event Saturday."

"He met the general and I beforehand for a few minutes. They sort of expressed their admiration for each other."

"Then he got up in front of the crowd, Redford did, and said this is the type of film why we created Sundance and why Sundance was created in the first place - that it's an independent film, its about an important human rights justice issue, then he welcomed the general as a great humanitarian."

Raymont said Redford stayed for the question-answer period following the movie.

"There was a lot of applause. I was still on cloud nine just being in the presence of Redford," he said, adding the audience was enthusiastic about questioning Dallaire.

In the documentary, Canadian Forces Lt.-Gen. Romeo Dallaire

narrates his return to Rwanda where tens of thousands of Tutsis were

slaughtered in 1994 during his posting there as head of the United Nations peacekeeping forces.

"There's no narration," Raymont said.

"It's one of the few films I've made - and I've made 130 films - where there's no narration, there's no voice of the filmmaker," he said of his 91-minute film.

"It is more complex but it is more rewarding."

The film is the general's emotional descent into the hell of atrocities he witnessed a decade earlier and a return to the source of immense pain that has followed him since.

"I was worried about him," Raymont said about documenting the general's return.

More than 36,000 filmgoers attended the Sundance festival this year.

Those who stayed after the screening of Shake Hands With The Devil were moved, Raymont said.

Concerns raised after the screenings regularly turned to questions about aid reaching current areas of need such as Sudan.

"What is it about Africa? Why is it still a dark continent?"

"Until we realize we are our brother's keeper, until we act on that, there's going to be other genocides."