



BERMUDA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

2005 Film reviews

THE BERMUDA International Film Festival will kick off this Friday night with a total of 70 films from 20 countries, including award winners from the Cannes,

Sundance, Rotterdam, Berlin, Venice, and Amsterdam documentary festivals. The festival will open with *The Upside of Anger*, and will close with *Mad Hot Ball-*

room. Prolific English director Michael Winterbottom will bring four films as the Filmmaker in Focus, while four films feature in the Focus on Modern Iranian Cin-

ema section of the festival. BIFF Kids presents two films – while night owls will enjoy our Midnight Madness section. Short film aficionados can choose from two

series of short films. Here Bermuda Sun reviewers give you a taste of what's to come with reviews of a number of the featured films and shorts.

BEST OF WORLD CINEMA REVIEW ■ *Shake Hands with the Devil*

Troubling questions posed in 'Devil'

By JAMES WHITTAKER

"ARE ALL humans, human? Are some more human than others?"

Shake Hands with the Devil poses some troubling questions. The western world may not like some of the answers.

Almost one million people perished in the Rwandan genocide little over a decade ago. The world's superpowers knew it was going to happen and did nothing to intervene because they saw African lives as somehow less valuable or less important than western lives.

That's the frightening conclusion of this compelling narrative about one of the unlikely victims of the genocide — UN peacekeeper Romeo Dallaire.

Dallaire ventured into 'paradise' with noble ambitions and watched helplessly as one of the worst human disasters in the history of mankind unfolded around him.



UN peacekeeper Romeo Dallaire in *Shake Hands with the Devil*

■ Photo supplied by BIFF

It was a journey that saw the Canadian deteriorate from a commander of fierce integrity to a drunken wreck, passed out under a park bench — his faith in humanity shattered.

The filmmakers follow his cathartic return to Rwanda, ten years on.

And as he tells the story of his own mental decline in the years that have passed we see it not as the naïve reac-

tion of a man unprepared for the horrors of war but as the only legitimate response to what transpired.

It is clear that Dallaire is still haunted by the ghosts of the genocide.

To him, it was a com-

pletely preventable disaster. If the UN had provided him with the troops and the mandate to keep the peace he would have been able to do just that.

Instead the security council voted to withdraw all but a skeleton force from the country leaving Dallaire, as he puts it, cut off at the knees.

He still blames himself that he was unable to do more to convince the west to come to the aid of Rwanda.

But Peter Raymont's film leaves little doubt where the blame lies — not only for the 900,000 plus lives lost in Rwanda in 1996 but for the mental decline of Romeo Dallaire.

As one observer puts it: "Most people in most of the world were absolutely fascinated by OJ Simpson's gloves. But they couldn't give a tinker's dam about what happened in Rwanda."