

SECTION E

THE ARTS	E2
BOOKS & AUTHORS	E3
CELEBRATIONS	E5
TELEVISION	E6

Cliff Bellamy,  
assistant features editor  
919-474-6144; cbellamy@heraldsun.com

# SUNDAY LIFE

**INSIDE**  
**Love & the undead**  
Novelist's first published book  
fuses romance with vampiric  
slaying saga | E3

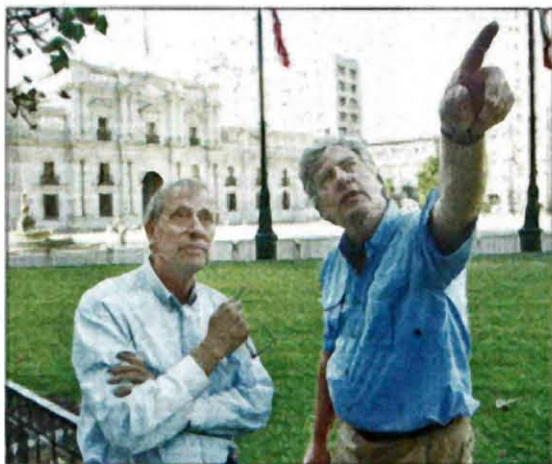
WWW.HERALDSUN.COM



Ariel Dorfman pauses at the Plaza Italia, Santiago, Chile, in a scene from "A Promise to the Dead: The Exile Journey of Ariel Dorfman."

## THE JOURNEY HOME

**Full Frame to show in-progress documentary about Ariel Dorfman's return to Chile**



In this scene from the film, Dorfman and producer-director Peter Raymont are shown at La Moneda, which houses Chilean government offices, in Santiago.

BY SUSAN BROILI

sbroili@heraldsun.com; 435-6632

Writer Ariel Dorfman headed south once again to Chile last December, but this journey differed from all the other trips he's made since the 1973 coup forced him into exile. This time, a film crew accompanied the Durham resident for what documentary filmmaker Peter Raymont called an "intense" two weeks.

Audiences here can see the results when Raymont's work-in-progress documentary, "A Promise to the Dead: The Exile Journey of Ariel Dorfman," is shown today at the Full Frame Documentary Film Festival.

Dorfman, who teaches at Duke University, will also appear at another program today when he introduces Abbas Kiarostami's "ABC Africa," the film Dorfman chose for The Power of Ten series that celebrates Full Frame's 10th anniversary.

In a recent interview, Dorfman speaks about the documentary.

Raymont takes the title, and much of his material, from Dorfman's memoir, "Heading South, Looking North."

In it, Dorfman details the fortuitous set of circumstances that had kept him from being in the Presidential Palace in Santiago on Sept. 11, 1973, when the U.S.-backed military coup of Gen. Augusto Pino-

**INSIDE | E4**

■ Today, Ariel Dorfman will introduce his film of choice for the Power of Ten series that celebrates the Full Frame Documentary Film Festival's 10th anniversary

■ Dorfman's schedule of appearances

chet toppled the democratically elected Salvador Allende government. At the time, Dorfman served as cultural adviser to Allende's chief of staff, Fernando Flores. Some years later, Flores told Dorfman he had crossed the writer's name

see JOURNEY | page E4

## SUNDAY LIFE

## JOURNEY

FROM PAGE E1

off a list of people to be called to the palace in an emergency because "somebody had to live to tell the story," Dorfman said.

## Losing lives, and deaths

That experience has had a profound affect on Dorfman's personal and professional life.

"If it is not true that this was why I was saved, I have tried to make it true," Dorfman writes in his memoir. "In every story I tell. Haunted by the certainty that I have been keeping a promise to the dead."

Making the documentary also served as a catalyst. "It forces you to do things you wouldn't otherwise. I think it was very liberating for me," Dorfman said.

Going back to Chile and Buenos Aires, Argentina, to make the documentary has also helped him prepare to write a second memoir he plans to begin next year, the writer said.

He had resisted going in search of his grandmother's grave in Buenos Aires, but his son Rodrigo, the film's associate producer, had convinced him to do it, Dorfman said.

Dorfman and his wife had been in exile in Holland at the time of his favorite grandmother's death. She had written short stories and translated into Spanish Tolstoy's "Anna Karenina," he said.

"Exile not only takes people's lives from you, it takes their deaths as well," Dorfman said. "Exile is losing everything, so you're very vulnerable and wounded."

That's why he had not wanted to look for his grandmother's burial place, he said. "We went there ... It was a very emotional moment," Dorfman said.

## Out from a shadow

Raymont said in a phone interview from Toronto, Canada, where he lives, that he did not want to divulge the outcome of Dorfman's search before people saw the film.

"I learned so much about Chile," Raymont said. "It's such a complex and fascinating people and country. It's an extraordinary and very optimistic and wonderful place to



Ariel Dorfman said that going back to Chile and Argentina to make a documentary has helped him prepare to write a second memoir he plans to begin next year.

## APPEARANCES

Durham writer and Chilean expatriate Ariel Dorfman figures in two programs today at the Full Frame Documentary Film Festival.

Dorfman introduces the documentary he chose for The Power of Ten series, "ABC Africa," directed by Abbas Kiarostami, at 9 a.m. in Cinema I of the Carolina Theatre.

There will also be a screening of Peter Raymont's documentary work-in-progress "A Promise to the Dead: The Exile Journey of Ariel Dorfman," followed by a discussion with the filmmaker and Dorfman, at 12:15 p.m. in Fletcher Hall at the Carolina Theatre.

A limited number of single tickets at \$10 each are available today at the Full Frame Box Office at the Carolina Theatre.

For more information, visit [www.fullframefest.org](http://www.fullframefest.org).

be now, especially if you're traveling with Ariel Dorfman."

They happened to be in Chile when Pinochet had a heart attack on Dec. 3, and Dorfman and his son were still there on Dec. 10 when Pinochet died at age 91.

"It was just extraordinary," Dorfman said of being in Chile when Pinochet died.

"On a personal level, for the first time in many years, I didn't know what to say ... I spent three hours blankly looking at the TV screen," he said.

Later that night, he found his voice and wrote an essay in both Spanish and English that ran in The New York Times on Dec. 12. In it, he wrote of those who felt

that Pinochet's shadow no longer darkened their lives, and of the persistence of Pinochet's hold, even after death.

Even before Pinochet's death, Dorfman had seen how the former dictator continued to terrorize some people long after his rule ended in 1990. A commission determined that his military and government had been responsible for human rights violations, including more than 3,000 deaths and untold numbers of disappearances. Because of his poor health, Pinochet never faced trial.

In making the documentary, Dorfman managed to track down the woman who had saved him after the coup by taking him to a

safe house. She spoke off-camera because she was still afraid, Dorfman said.

"It's a fitting ending for the film," Dorfman said of Pinochet's death.

The documentary was a collaboration, and both had agreed that an important theme would be that, after the coup and ensuing exile, Dorfman had felt like a ghost in the world, Dorfman said.

"During the Allende years, I felt very much alive. Afterwards, I felt like I was living on borrowed time," Dorfman said.

The writer said he had never wanted to have a documentary made about him — until he and Raymont met two years ago at Full Frame. Raymont had been there to introduce his documentary, "Shake Hands With the Devil: The Journey of Romeo Dallaire," the story of the Canadian who commanded the U.N. peacekeeping mission to Rwanda in 1994 and had to deal with witnessing a genocide he was powerless to stop.

Raymont is the producer and director of more than 100 documentary films during his 34-year career.

Dorfman is the author of numerous works of fiction, plays and essays in Spanish and English, including the award-winning play "Death and the Maiden," which was made into a film.

"I just fell in love with the guy. He's such an extraordinary human being, such a humanitarian," Raymont said of Dorfman.

"I met Peter and I thought this was a guy I could work with," Dorfman said.

They began talking and, over a year's time, the plan for the documentary evolved. Raymont included archival material.

"It's a crazy thing to do to show a film in such a rough stage," Raymont said of the Full Frame screening that will run about 90 minutes.

No one, not even Dorfman, has seen it, the filmmaker said. But he had wanted to do it at the festival where he and Dorfman met, he said. Raymont will be at the screening and will field questions afterward.

"It's useful to me as a filmmaker to see the response," Raymont said.