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UT-related films invited to screen at SXSW

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The spotlight will shine on two University of Texas professors at this year's South by Southwest Film Festival in Austin.

A documentary film about a community in Houston's Third Ward, and a feature film about a security guard seeking to settle an old score -- both from professors in UT's Department of Radio-Television-Film -- have been invited to screen in the Lone Star States category at the festival next month.

"Third Ward, TX," directed by Associate Professor Andrew Garrison, is about the economic and creative redemption of a traditionally African-American neighborhood in decline, through the efforts of a group of local artists, residents and volunteers. The film aired on PBS last year and will screen at the festival once on March 9 and again on March 15.

Garrison is an independent filmmaker with experience in documentary and dramatic film production. His films have been broadcast on PBS and screened in international festivals such as Sundance, the New York Film Festival and Rotterdam.

He is the founder of the East Austin Stories documentary project, a collaboration between UT student filmmakers and the residents and businesses in East Austin.

"Forfeit," directed by Assistant Professor Andrew Shea, tells the story of an armored car guard whose plan for revenge is threatened by his relationship with an unpredictable TV preacher.

Making its world premiere at SXSW on March 13 and again on March 16, "Forfeit" was written by John Rafter Lee and features Billy Burke of the TV show "24;" Sherry Stringfield of "ER," and "NYPD Blue;" Gregory Itzin of "24;" and Wayne Knight of "Seinfeld," and "Jurassic Park."

This is Shea's third feature film. His previous features, "The Corndog Man" and "Santa Fe," premiered at the Sundance Film Festival and were broadcast on HBO and The Sundance Channel. Additionally, his short film, "Take My Breath Away," premiered at the Cannes Film Festival.

"Weaving Worlds," a documentary exploring the personal stories of Navajo weavers and their relationship with reservation traders, was directed by RTF alumnus Bennie Klain, and RTF Associate Professor Nancy Schiesari served as cinematographer. The film makes its world premiere in the Lone Star States category on March 14 and again on March 16.

"Bella," which was written and directed by RTF alumnus Alejandro Gomez Monteverde, will make its regional premiere in the SXSW Spotlight Premiere category on March 15.

The film is an English-language drama about an international soccer star and a waitress whose lives converge and turn upside down on a single day in New York City.

"Bella" won the People's Choice award at the Toronto International Film Festival last year.

Also appearing at SXSW this year is "Elvis and Anabelle," a feature film from the University of Texas Film Institute and its for-profit production company Burnt Orange Productions.

The film will make its world premiere in the Spotlight Premiere category at the Paramount Theatre on March 10 and again on March 15.

The South by Southwest Film Festival runs March 9 through March 17 in Austin.

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