



WESTAMAH



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ENTERTAINMENT

Movie Review:

North of Westgate

Directed by: ROSALIE BELLAFONTAINE

By DOUG S. THOMAS

A video which owes its origins to the J.J. Harper shooting made its debut in Winnipeg recently. *North of Westgate* premiered at the Broadway Optimist Community Center with some of the children who starred in the film on hand for the unveiling.

Director Rosalie Bellafontaine said the idea for the film came after Harper's death when she realized the children were afraid of the police and the justice system. She said the children felt there was no justice in the world, and such a project was needed to combat the children's fears.

The film was shot in the areas of West Broadway and Langside Street in Winnipeg. The area is one of the poorest in the city

with affluent neighbours (Westgate) only a few blocks away. The story, albeit fictional, manages to capture the elements of emotion that come from living there.

The story is about a group of kids who sees a bully beat up on a handicapped boy. They come up with a plan for justice. Dealing out justice is often the way people in poorer areas deal with crime since police often lag in answering complaints. The very idea of "North End justice" would probably shock most middle and upper income people; however, the way Bellafontaine presents this notion is something to behold on the screen.

This is one film that will definitely touch your heart, especially if you are a parent of a child living in one of the poorer areas of town. The film manages to

show that even though these children don't have things their counterparts in Westgate take for granted, they have love, camaraderie and respect for each other and are more resourceful and inventive.

One very strong point about the film is how Bellafontaine captures the uniqueness of the people who inhabit the West Broadway area. It is refreshing to see real people on screen and the characters come through clean and honest. It's amazing what can be done with raw talent when heads are not clouded by wealth or the influence of material things.

A word of warning to those of you used to big budget movies - don't expect the typical shoot 'em up or wild car chases in this film. It is as grass roots as they come and manages to do the job it was intended.

The film is being distributed locally by Video Pool. Bellafontaine said she hopes educational institutions and organizations that work with Aboriginal people will pick up a copy.

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