

N.J. indie flick puts focus on racial profiling

BY CLAUDIA PERRY
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"4Chosen," a 48-minute documentary about the 1998 Turnpike shootings that led to a national examination of racial profiling, opened this year's Garden State Film Festival, which continues through tomorrow in Asbury Park.

The screening was held Thursday at the Paramount Theater on the boardwalk, complete with celebrity sightings. Randy Jones, the original cowboy in the Village People; Danny Aiello and his actor-son, Ricky; "Sopranos" cast members Vincent Pastore and Artie Pasquale; plus talk show host Montel Williams were among the notables snapped on the red carpet.

The premiere was a benefit for the Montel Williams MS Foundation. Williams, who is battling the disease, spoke from the audience. His production company, Letnom, has teamed up with New Jersey's Starline Films in hopes of making a feature film based on the events surrounding the incident.

On April 23, 1998, Keshon Moore was driving three friends — Danny Reyes, Rayshawn Brown and Leroy Jarmaine Grant, to North Carolina for a basketball tryout. Their van was pulled over near Exit 7A on the Turnpike by State Troopers James Kenna and John Hogan. After

the van bumped one of the troopers (Moore shifted into reverse and it rolled), the troopers fired 11 shots into the vehicle, wounding all except Moore.

Williams urged the audience to have conversations with friends after seeing the film.

"Talk about 'driving while black,'" Williams said, using a well-known expression to describe racial profiling. "Some of us are thinking about voting a black man into the White House. This is an issue that is still timely."

The screening followed other Starline film promos and a short concert by Danny Aiello. Reyes, one of the four men wounded in the encounter, co-produced and co-wrote the film.

The documentary makes liberal use of news footage from the original coverage, including interviews with friends and family of Reyes, Moore, Brown and Grant. Activist Al Sharpton and jazzman Wynton Marsalis are also featured.

The troopers pleaded guilty to official misconduct and making false statements. The four received \$12.9 million from the state.

Jon Doscher, the director of "4Chosen," began Starline Films about four years ago with the proceeds from the sale of his power washing business. Doscher, who lives in Woodcliff Lake, met Danny Aiello when his company worked at

Aiello's Bergen County home. Doscher, who studied acting at the Lee Strasberg Institute in Manhattan, performed a monologue for Aiello, who helped him get small roles in some independent films.

"Our company has gone from nothing to being worth \$5 million," Doscher said. "I'm very proud of that."

Doscher said there was little interest in the documentary from film studios. He made it to bring attention to the feature he hopes to make someday. "What gravitated me to it was that it was certainly timely with the 10th anniversary coming up and all," Doscher said. "I was anticipating it being revisited by the press. Their basketball careers may have ended, but they took the settlement money and made some good come of it."

"4Chosen" will also be screened at 4 p.m. today at the Fifth Avenue Pavilion as part of the festival. A discussion will follow the screening. Admission is \$10. DVDs are available at the festival for \$20, and for \$24.99, which includes shipping and handling, at starlinefilms.com. Five dollars from every DVD sale goes to Williams' MS Foundation.

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