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| **"Mentors - Tony & Santi" Set for Santa Barbara World Premiere** |  |

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If it is possible to fall in love with a motion picture, this may very well be the case with Andrew Davis's warm and wonderful *Mentors - Tony & Santi,*a feature documentary having its world premiere at the Santa Barbara International Film Festival on Tuesday, January 21st.

From the film's opening moments, I fell in love with its subjects, renowned photographers Tony Vaccaro and Santi Visalli, whose longtime personal and professional relationship is borne out of deep respect for one another and genuine affection that comes alive in virtually every moment they share the screen in this remarkably winning documentary from the director of the Academy Award-winning *The Fugitive*and who is likely still known better for his intelligent thrillers like *The Fugitive, A Perfect Murder,*and others.

With *Mentors - Tony & Santi,*the thrill lies in Davis's ability to capture the essence of a nearly lifelong relationship between two of the world's most glorious photographers, one, Vaccaro, who started out as a mentor to the young but promising Visalli.

The wonder here is that Davis sublimely balances reverence for Vaccaro and Visalli's life work with equal reverence for the multitude of ways in which the two men have so obviously influenced one another's personal and professional lives. *Mentors - Tony & Santi*begins with a reunion of sorts between the two men, moments captured so honestly that I dare you to not have a tear form in your eye, but then weaves its way through their early years. For Vaccaro, this means bringing to life his capturing some of World War II's most emotionally resonant images as a combat photographer under General Patton in the 83rd Infantry Division. For Visalli, it's a gloriously awesome journey through his Goodyear sponsored two-year journey around the globe in a jeep.

The film also beautifully captures Vaccaro's remarkable career with Look and Life magazines photographing the likes of JFK, Pablo Picasso, Sophia Loren, Enzo Ferrari, and countless others, while Visalli photographed five U.S. presidents along with the likes of Federico Fellini, Louis Armstrong, Andy Warhol, Muhammad Ali, Sophia Loren, and covers for over 50 magazines and newspapers.

Yet, time and time and time again it seems it always would come back to this extraordinary relationship between these extraordinary men.

There isn't a moment of *Mentors - Tony & Santi*that is wasted. At a little over 51 minutes in length, Davis immerses us in the worlds of Tony and Santi and by the time the closing credits are rolling it's a world we never want to leave. Davis perfectly weaves together seemingly countless photographs from both photographers with some of the most delightful and insightful interviews you'll hear in a doc this year. Quotes will stick in your mind as much as Evan Goldman's lush, enveloping original music along with additional music by Randy Tico.

Davis and Ethan Boehme edit the film, unafraid to allow the camera to linger on the faces of these two warm, quietly funny men whom you can simply tell loved being in each other's company as much as we love watching them be in each other's company.

Truly, *Mentors - Tony & Santi*is a gorgeous delight.

If there's a masterstroke that wraps this cinematic present with the perfect bow, it's in *Tony & Santi's*passionate embrace of the importance of both having a mentor and being a mentor. It's a role both have clearly embraced - being both students and teachers to each other and countless others throughout their careers.

There is so much to love about *Mentors - Tony & Santi,*but it is a film that deserves to be experienced rather than simply described in a film review that may try but simply can't do this work of wonder the justice it deserves. See it for yourself. Truly, see it for yourself either at the Santa Barbara world premiere or when it arrives at a festival near you.

**Written by Richard Propes
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