

New film by acclaimed Bay Area  
playwright/performer **Lane Nishikawa**  
to screen at San Francisco Asian American  
Film Festival

**“ONLY THE BRAVE” called a “powerful,  
haunting feature” by the *Honolulu Star Bulletin***



SAN FRANCISCO – March 2, 2006 – The film that the *Honolulu Star Bulletin* recently called “long overdue” and a “powerful, haunting feature” will screen in competition at the 24<sup>th</sup> San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival on March 21<sup>st</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>.

“ONLY THE BRAVE” stars **Jason Scott Lee, Mark Dacascos, Tamilyn Tomita** and the late **Pat Morita** in a searing portrait of war and prejudice that takes viewers on a haunting journey into the hearts and minds of the forgotten heroes of World War II – the all-volunteer, Japanese American 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team.

**The film marks the feature film directorial debut of renowned Bay Area playwright and performer Lane Nishikawa, who will be present at both festival**

**screenings – scheduled for Tuesday, March 21 at 6:30 pm at the Kabuki 8 Theaters and Saturday, March 25 at 6:45 pm at the San Jose Camera 12.**

For ticket information, please go to [www.asianamericanfilmfestival.org](http://www.asianamericanfilmfestival.org) or call 800-225-2277. Information about the film is available at [www.OnlyTheBraveMovie.com](http://www.OnlyTheBraveMovie.com).

Lane Nishikawa has been called “one of Asian America’s most compelling voices” by Academy Award-winning filmmaker Steven Okazaki. He has toured the country extensively with his trilogy of critically-acclaimed one-man shows (“Life in the Fast Lane,” “I’m on a Mission from Buddha,” and “Mifune and Me”) and other plays, including “The Gate of Heaven.” For ten seasons, beginning in 1986, Nishikawa served as the Artistic Director of the Bay Area’s Asian American Theater Company. He has also been a Resident Director at the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival and a Co-Artistic Director for the Eureka Theater. “I’m on a Mission From Buddha” was produced by KQED-TV in 1991, and subsequently broadcast on public television stations around the country.

In 1999, Nishikawa moved into filmmaking with a screen adaptation of “The Gate of Heaven,” followed by “Forgotten Valor,” which won the Best Short Feature in the Hawaiian International Film Festival. In 2002, he received a grant from the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program to develop “ONLY THE BRAVE,” which was recently completed and has been shown to standing-room audiences at numerous film festivals.

“ONLY THE BRAVE” is the first motion picture about the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> as seen through the eyes of the men who lived it. The story was based on the actual experiences of Nishikawa’s three Nisei uncles who served in the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> – as well as other veterans who shared their memories with him over the years.

Nishikawa captures the personal tragedies and sacrifices of the soldiers – portrayed by Jason Scott Lee, Mark Dacascos, Yuji Okumoto, Greg Watanabe and Ken Narasaki – during the final days of their rescue of the Texas “Lost Battalion” (represented by Jeff Fahey and Guy Ecker). Nishikawa also stars as the platoon leader who is haunted by the death of his father (Pat Morita) and the hardships on the wives and girlfriends left behind (Tamlyn Tomita and Emily Liu).

In 1941, when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, there were 5,000 Japanese Americans serving in the U.S. Armed Forces. Overnight, these second-generation citizens were stripped of their official duties – simply because they looked like the enemy. On the mainland, 120,000 innocent men, women and children were rounded up and swept into remote internment camps, where they would remain behind barbed wire for the duration of the war.

Determined to prove their loyalty, the discharged Hawaiian Territorial Guardsmen of Japanese descent successfully petitioned the U.S. government to allow them to serve. These 1400 Hawaiian Nisei (second-generation Japanese Americans) became the 100<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion. In July 1943, after rigorous training, they were sent to North Africa, then Italy. Fiercely courageous, they suffered so many casualties the 100<sup>th</sup> was soon dubbed the “Purple Heart Battalion.”

In June 1944, they were joined by the 442<sup>nd</sup> – comprised of Nisei volunteers from the internment camps and Hawaii – and proceeded to liberate five towns in Northern Italy. That September, they were shipped to Southern France and freed three more towns, before being recruited for what would become one of the top ten most important battles of World War II – the impossibly-dangerous rescue of the Texas “Lost Battalion.”

Two hundred and seventy-five men of the Texas' 36th Division had been trapped for more than a week on a high plateau in France's Vosges Mountains, surrounded by thousands of experienced German soldiers. Allied planes tried dropping them food and ammo, but the supplies kept rolling out of reach down the ridge. When attempts by much larger regular-Army units failed to break through, the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> was ordered to finish the job. Though their ranks were already decimated and the Nisei were unimaginably exhausted, they spent four days and nights in brutal uphill hand-to-hand combat – while suffering frostbite and trench foot so severe they could hardly walk.

The Nisei saved 211 out of the 275 Texans, but suffered more than 800 casualties of their own. During two years of combat, their extraordinary valor resulted in an unparalleled 21 Medals of Honor, 9486 Purple Hearts, eight Presidential Citations, 53 Distinguished Service Crosses, 588 Silver Stars and 5200 Bronze Star Medals – making them the most decorated unit of their size and length of service in American military history.

A Mission From Buddha Production, "ONLY THE BRAVE" was produced by Karen Criswell, Eric Hayashi, and Jay Koiwai and funded in part by grants from the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program and donations from families of veterans who served in the 100<sup>th</sup> Battalion/442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team and the Military Intelligence Service – spearheaded by the National Japanese American Historical Society.

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**MEDIA**

**A press kit and gallery of available JPEGs available at <http://www.onlythebravemovie.com/presskit.php>**

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