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Asian American International Film Festival

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"THE FALL OF THE I-HOTEL" TO PREMIERE
AT BAY AREA FILMMAKERS' NIGHT ON OCTOBER 25TH

THE FALL OF THE I-HOTEL is the story of San Francisco's Manilatown, a community which was undermined by the expansion of the downtown business district into the adjacent neighborhoods.

Through interviews and reminiscences with elderly Filipinos (the Manongs) and Asian community people, this film reveals the Filipino community in its heyday centering around the historic International Hotel. The International Hotel provided low-cost housing for international seamen, farm workers, cannery workers, houseboys, single working men--the Filipinos who came to America to find work and a better life during the 1920's.

THE FALL OF THE I-HOTEL offers a portrait of the hotel as the center of community for over 10,000 Filipinos by the 1950's. But, within 15 years, the community declined due to the expansion of business and commercial property from the bustling San Francisco downtown area. By 1968, all that remained of Manilatown was the block which housed the International Hotel.

That same year, the hotel's owner wanted to demolish the structure to make way for a parking garage. These plans prompted the formation of a coalition of community activists, community workers, organized labor, senior citizens groups, churches, and ethnic peoples to preserve the International Hotel as low cost housing for the elderly and as a community center for Filipinos and other Asians.

THE FALL OF THE I-HOTEL brings audiences into the eye of the storm by interviewing residents, community workers, and politicians and showing the battle lines drawn between housing activists and real estate interests.

Despite the political machinations at City Hall and the widespread support garnered for the International Hotel residents, the law made eviction eminent.

MORE

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THE FALL OF THE I-HOTEL, Continued....

On August 4, 1977, the 50 elderly Manongs and others were forcibly removed in a controversial and emotional pre-dawn operation by over 300 law officers. THE FALL OF THE I-HOTEL's cameras were rolling throughout that fateful night and its aftermath where thousands of people gathered to protest the eviction. The film concludes with the ultimate demolition of the building thus effectively writing the final chapter to San Francisco's Manilatown.

This social documentary uses poetry, animation, and rare newsreel footage to reveal the plight of the elderly and displaced and unfolds their stories like a family album.

THE FALL OF THE I-HOTEL was written and produced by Curtis Choy. Choy's Chonk Moonhunter Productions has produced several films including DUPONT GUY: THE SCHIZ OF GRANT AVENUE. Choy has been the Sound Mixer on films such as CHAN IS MISSING and director Wayne Wang's new film DIM SUM.

THE FALL OF THE I-HOTEL will premiere on opening night of the ASIAN AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL on Tuesday, October 25, at the Kokusai Theater in San Francisco. The Festival will continue through October 28. Films will be shown at the Kokusai Theater on October 25 & 26; at Wheeler Auditorium, U.C. Berkeley, on October 27; and the Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley, on October 28. For more information, reservations, and film schedules, please call 863-0814.
