

10 top docs

by Linda Barnard on April 21, 2011

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The Pirate Tapes: required viewing at Hot Docs.

Hot Docs director of programming Sean Farnel was reluctant to pick his favourite films at the fest, but we made him tell us. Here are 10 he'd hate you to miss, in random order:

Grinders: Toronto pro poker players lay their cards on the table.

The Pirate Tapes: A young Somali man living in Toronto risks his life for footage of pirates in his homeland.

The Edge of Russia: A Russian soldier takes over his post at a remote Arctic location, patrolling nothingness.

Hell and Back Again: The realities of war, both in Afghanistan and at home in the U.S., for a returning soldier.

The Interrupters: Steve James (Hoop Dreams) takes his camera to the streets of Chicago to follow a trio of people trying to end gang warfare in their neighbourhood.

Phnom Penh Lullaby: Farnel says this film about an Israeli man living in Cambodia with his Khmer family pushes the boundaries of a traditional doc in astounding ways.

Bury the Hatchet: The other Mardi Gras parade, the one Bourbon St. tourists don't see, and the descendants of runaway slaves who keep the tradition going, despite the ravages of Hurricane Katrina.

Knuckle: A look at the secret world of Travellers, nomads who are often victims of prejudice as they roam the U.K. and Ireland, settling scores with bare-knuckle fistfights.

The Future is Now: Gary Burns and Jim Brown, makers of Radiant City, create a doc-drama hybrid about the future.

When the Drum is Beating: A look at Haiti's Orchestre Septentrional with its rotating lineup of outstanding musical talents.