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## Director to offer free screening of 'Hand of God' in McAllen on Feb. 18

By BRUCE LEE SMITH  
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HARLINGEN — In a special appearance, "Hand of God" will finally reach the Rio Grande Valley in February.

Director Joe Cultrera will bring his award-winning film, "Hand of God," to McAllen for a free screening Feb. 18 at the Cine El Rey.

The documentary on the child molestation scandal in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston caused local controversy when KMBH, the local Public Broadcasting System affiliate, refused to air it at in the usual "Frontline" prime-time slot on Jan. 16.

The film is based on the abuse Cultrera's brother, Paul Cultrera, suffered at the hands of a Catholic priest in the 1960s and how it still affects the family to this day. "Hand of God" also chronicles how the Archdiocese of Boston tried to sweep this and similar cases under the rug.

"I think it's important to see that these things can be survived," Cultrera said.

Cultrera will be available for questions following the 4:30 p.m. showing.

The event is being sponsored by Call to Action-Rio Grande Valley, the local chapter of a national organization seeking accountability, financial and otherwise, in the Roman Catholic Church.

Gerald Brazier, a member of CTAnRGV, said it's important to present "Hand of God" in such a predominantly Catholic area.

"Stories of clergy sex abuse are very important to be told," Brazier said. "That story needs to get out so that the church can face up to their responsibilities in trying to help the victims."

Brazier said documentaries such as "Hand of God" help others understand what happened to victims of such abuse and also may help those victims find some sort of closure.

"Since the Valley didn't get a chance to see this film when it first aired, we thought we would provide this opportunity," Brazier said.

Only 450 seats will be available at the free screening, Brazier said.

Speaking from his office in New York City, Cultrera said he would

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Should Iraqis get political asylum in the U.S.?

- Yes, anyone who wants to.
- Yes, including war refugees.
- Only true political refugees.
- Only Shiites.
- Only Sunnis.
- Only Chaldean Christians.
- How would we know who they really are?
- No.

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show the version of "Hand of God" that was screened at more than a dozen film festivals in 2006. It won awards at four of those festivals.

The festival cut of "Hand of God" is 12 minutes longer than the version shown Jan. 16 by "Frontline" on almost all the other PBS affiliates nationwide. Cultrera said the movie had to be cut to fit within the TV series' time constraints.

KMBH chose on Jan. 16 to air an old "Frontline" episode about the Taliban during the series' usual prime time slot.

KMBH, owned and operated by the non-profit RGV Educational Broadcasting, Inc., was founded under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brownsville and receives a major portion of its funding from the diocese. Bishop Raymundo Peña appointed the station's president and CEO, Monsignor Pedro Briseño, as well as its board of directors.

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