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Coverage from the Toronto International Film Festival

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From Brian DePalma's 'Redacted' to Nick Broomfield's 'Body of War', there is no shortage of war-themed films at this year's Toronto International Film Festival.

Canadian-born, Academy Award winning director Paul ('Crash') Haggis wishes there were more.

"Artists have a responsibility to speak out," he told a press conference today for his own contribution to the upcoming crop of films dealing in one way or another with the war in Iraq, 'In the Valley of Elah'.

In also writing the screenplay, Haggis combined a number of true stories. 'In the Valley of Elah' follows a career military officer played by Tommy Lee Jones as he tries to uncover the terrible truth behind his son's disappearance after he returns from a tour of duty in Iraq. Jones is joined in his search by police detective, Emily Sanders (Charlize Theron).

Tommy Lee Jones is comforted by Susan Sarandon in 'In the Valley of Elah'.

truth compelling."

"The story deeply troubled me," said Haggis "I found his search for the

In casting the film, Haggis deliberately sought out actors who had fought in the Iraq war as he wanted to bring some semblance of authenticity to the project.

"We all still have friends over there," said Wes Chatham, who served in the U.S. Navy and portrays Sergeant Penning in the film. "We are honoured to ask questions that need to be answered."

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"I said this is a piece of passion and there is not a lot of money in it but you should do it any way," laughed Haggis.

"This movie has a considerable amount of originality to it. It raises questions that weigh on the shoulders of every American. I think this is an important movie," said Tommy Lee Jones echoing Haggis' sentiments.

Having already screened the film with veterans and their families in attendance, Haggis said he is touched by all of the support he has received but is saddened by the agonizing tales related to him by spouses and mothers of soldiers who became inconsolably depressed or committed suicide after returning from Iraq.

"This is an endemic problem. Far too many soldiers are coming back with scars they don't even know they have. They are tough sons of bitches who are not used to reaching out for help," said Haggis.

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