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## **Local production firm debuts war film at Tribeca Film Festival**

The Business Journal of Phoenix – by Jonathan J. Cooper

A coveted slot at the Tribeca Film Festival and a nationally televised documentary series are bringing major attention to a local production company.

Phoenix-based True Story Films co-produced "Jerabek," a documentary that follows the emotional struggle of a Wisconsin family trying to cope after 18-year-old Ryan Jerabek dies in an ambush in Iraq.

In the company's first feature-length film, parents Rita and Ken Jerabek are torn between pride and grief as they struggle to deal with the death of one son and another son's plans to join the U.S. Marine Corps.

The film debuted April 26 at the Tribeca Film Festival in New York. It was one of 200 films selected from nearly 4,500 submissions.

Despite largely good reviews on industry Web sites and blogs, "Jerabek" is not being shown in theaters. True Story has had discussions with several distributors and a major television network regarding wide-scale distribution or broadcast of the film, said Cary Truelick, who co-owns the company with Rob Beadle. He would not give details.

True Story co-produced "Jerabek" with Tamarkin Productions. Former CNN executive producer Civia Tamarkin directed the film.

Exposure at festivals such as Tribeca, which was founded by Hollywood heavyweights Robert DeNiro and Jane Rosenthal, can be invaluable for a young production company, Truelick said.

"You instantly catch the attention of a lot of people you ordinarily wouldn't throughout the industry," he said. "Your name is on a product that's on the desks of a lot of major people in the industry."

True Story also had a hand in "The Show," a six-episode documentary that debuted nationally May 30 on the Mojo High Definition Network.

The show will air weekly on Wednesdays at 7 p.m. through July 4. The network will then rebroadcast the entire series.

The documentary follows six minor league baseball players in the Arizona Diamondbacks' farm system as they struggle to move up and play at Chase Field.

Two of the players featured, Carlos Quentin and Chris Young, now are on the Diamondbacks' active roster.

Mojo HD is available locally on Cox Communications Channel 721. The first episode also is available on the network's Web site, [www.mojohd.com](http://www.mojohd.com).

True Story is not an equity-holding production partner for "The Show," but the company was contracted for all of the location filming. Truelick was the film's director of photography.

Director and co-producer Sam Ciaramitaro, who runs Chicago-based Shoot and Move Media, said Truelick's company created top-quality work despite being based in what many view as a second-tier market for film production.

"They were hungry for it," said Ciaramitaro, who has worked with market leaders on high-profile national advertising campaigns. "When you're hungry for it and you're good, that's a really good combination."

Forming a high-quality production crew in Phoenix can be difficult, Truelick said, adding the region needs more experienced people to build a great team from the top down.

Also, the small number of major corporate headquarters in the Valley limits his client pool, he said.

Truelick is optimistic that national exposure from "The Show" and "Jerabek" will help his firm overcome some of the difficulties of being based in the Valley.

Experienced industry leaders already are moving from Southern California to Phoenix with increasing regularity, he said.

"We're trying to do big-time work in a smaller market," he said. "We've found clients who are interested in that."

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The company designed the ASU football team's game introduction, featuring a giant version of Sun Devil mascot "Sparky" and the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality's "bring back blue" commercial.

True Story spends about 80 percent of its time and resources creating client-driven content such as corporate videos and commercials.

With increased exposure, Truelick and Beadle hope to land higher-level clients for national work. They also want to develop more films for national distribution.

Since starting operations in 2003, the company's co-owners have been in expansion mode.

True Story now has nine full-time employees and is outgrowing its First Avenue office space near downtown Phoenix. Film editors and graphic designers are cramped and storage space is limited, Truelick said.

The company is considering building a new facility in the near future.

Get connected

True Story Films: [www.truestoryfilms.com](http://www.truestoryfilms.com)

Mojo HD Network: [www.mojohd.com](http://www.mojohd.com)

Tribeca Film Festival: [www.tribecafilmfestival.org](http://www.tribecafilmfestival.org)