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# Dark and Thought-Provoking Film ‘The Verdict’ Opens Feb. 27 in Orinda

By Sophie Braccini



Photo provided

This month in Orinda, the International Film Showcase presents “The Verdict” – a courtroom drama from Belgium not for the faint of heart. The film deftly raises issues about the legislative system, the power of individuals and of grief.

Luc Segers is a successful executive, happy husband and father. But an evening stop at a gas station abruptly shatters his life. His wife is attacked and killed by Kenny De Groot, who beats Segers unconscious. Segers’ young daughter also dies at the scene. The murderer is quickly found and incarcerated, but due to a procedural mistake the charges are dismissed and the man is released. After awaking from a coma, Segers takes justice into his own hands and is now the guilty party, on trial for murder.

the book and who collapses when justice eludes him. His lawyer, a veteran, is tough, but his heart is in the right place. De Groot’s young female lawyer is also interesting, ambitious and sharp.

When the trial begins, the focus is not about whether vigilantism is right or wrong, but is about what to do with a justice system designed in such a way that terrible individuals can fall through the legal cracks.

The tone of the movie is measured and precise, without caricature; the heartfelt performance by Koen De Bouw as Segers has a lot to do with it. The actor carries the despair and tension of the broken man with depth, but without excessive pathos. As he confronts the judicial system, the audience understands his motivations, but the movie still presents a balanced perspective about justice in a civilized world where the law must prevail over one’s desire for revenge.

The senseless acts of violence at the beginning of the film may be difficult to watch, but the brutality is a necessary dynamic of the story and does not continue for the remainder of the film.

The movie will open Feb. 27 at the Orinda Theatre and will run for a full week. The International Film Showcase movies are often presented in the venue’s smaller theater and can quickly sell out, so arrive early. For information, visit <http://international-showcase.org>.

The bulk of the movie centers on the trial. Writer/director Jan Verheyen takes his time developing the characters before reaching the courthouse. Segers is a good man who played by

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# Local Hyperrealist Photographer Presents ‘California Oaks’ at the Moraga Library



Photo provided

Renowned Lafayette photographer Dave Dondero’s exhibit, “California Oaks,” showcasing the many oak varieties in Northern California and the plight of the imperiled trees will be on display at the Moraga Library through the end of the month. Dondero’s unique imagery is created by taking multiple images of the exact same scene at different light exposures and later rendering them to-

gether – a photographic sandwich of sorts, to create a photograph that sees more than what can be seen by the naked eye. The technique reveals a hyperrealistic image, full of detail and luminescence that is largely new in the 150-year history of photography. The work is not digitally enhanced. Other works can be viewed at [davedonderophotography.com](http://davedonderophotography.com). S. Braccini

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