

# ‘Conviction’ – an intense French court drama now available online



By Sophie Braccini

Ten years ago, Jacques Viguier was judged for the second time for the murder of his wife because the prosecutor had filed an appeal after his first acquittal. This movie, although fictionalized, is based on that true story. Fascinated by the trial where he sat as a spectator at the time, film director Antoine Rimbault decided to explore the French judicial system in the film “Conviction” that is now being offered online by the Orinda-based International Film Showcase. This detailed exploration of a system and the passionate quest for truth by Viguier’s lawyer and a regular woman is a brilliant cine-

matographic coup. During an interview at a European film festival Rimbault explained that he stayed as close as possible to the real proceedings of the trial, using verbatim the transcripts for all the debates. He created one fiction character, Nora, who becomes obsessed with the fight. All the other characters are real, and their real names have been used in the movie. Filming the debates in court and outside for the counter-inquiry, Rimbault, a young director, has been able to construct a riveting thriller. As a spectator at Jacques Viguier’s trial, accused of murdering his wife, Nora is sure he is innocent. There is no material proof, and the wife’s body was never found.

She reaches out to Eric Dupont-Moretti, a very well known French criminal defense lawyer. Together they lead a fierce fight against injustice.

Dupont-Moretti is well known in France for his tireless fight to protect the presumption of innocence and the benefit of the doubt. Here, he works to debunk manufactured proofs and demonstrate that the only elements against Viguier are the police and other stakeholders’ convictions. One of the last scenes of the movie is the lawyer’s final address, an eloquent piece of rhetoric where Dupont-Moretti addresses each of the jurors in the eye and asks them to decide for themselves what is justice.

It is chilling to see the judicial system ready to crush a man with no hint of material proof.

Actor Olivier Gourmet worked with Dupont-Moretti to get as close as possible to the lawyer’s state of mind during the trial. As an interesting aside, this famous defense lawyer was appointed French Minister of Justice in July of this year.

Gourmet is a subtle and powerful actor and forms a great duo with Marina Fois, who plays Nora. Fois has had a very unique career in France, where she was able to portray a wide array of characters from the most truculent to the most dramatic. Here, her own obsession to prove Viguier innocent can prove just as insane as the passion of those accusing him.

The film is available to be rented online on the IFS website. Details can be found at <http://internationalshowcase.org/> (IFS founder Efi Lubliner recommends to use a Chrome browser to access the site more easily.)

## Local cyclists participate in Cycle for Hope event during pandemic



Bob Frick at an earlier event.

Photo provided

Since receiving “a dare” from one of his MBA students at Saint Mary’s Graduate School of Business in 2007 to ride 540 miles across Minnesota for Habitat for Humanity, Lafayette resident Bob Frick, 83, has participated in cycling to support this cause, raising \$627,602 during three cross-country rides in 2008, 2012 and 2015, with his wife as SAG and fellow Lafayette resident Len Holmes in 2012 and 2015.

This year, due to the pandemic, the Cycle for Hope event will be done differently – on a curated Cycle of Hope course, or a cyclist’s own path to their goal. Participants might organize a socially distant ride with friends, ride on their own or establish their own team to ride.

According to Cycle of Hope organizers, “However you ride, you ride with us. Plus, you can still expect a premier ride experience with stacked swag bags, opportunities to (safely) connect with our cycling community, and access to our official ride app – RaceJoy – for Cycle of Hope official courses, progress tracking, results submission, and your very own virtual cheer squad to keep you riding!”

There are eight designed rides in the East Bay, and four in Silicon Valley – or on courses created by riders anywhere they like – of 11, 32, 62 and 100 miles each, plus children’s rides of shorter distances. Frick and his long-

time friend, Len Holmes, will be participating Oct. 1-25, with a total of 16 possible days to ride, assuming the terrible smoke and “dirty air” goes away. Frick says he is sensitive to “dirty air.”

Frick says he may ride his own route, which he has done many times in training to Suisun on the river – about 35 miles one way. “I’ll leave from my house and ride to Martinez, over the Benicia Bridge, and then roughly parallel to Highway 80, back across Highway 80 to Suisun and the River/Marina.”

The purpose of the fundraiser is “to build and preserve homes for low/moderate income families,” said Frick. “Home ownership can provide an opportunity for LMI families to transform their lives – pride of ownership, build equity, stability of home ownership, self reliance, and a total better living environment.” He added that “housing is a critical issue, and having an impact on the housing crisis can be as simple as riding a bike for a cause.”

For information about the fundraising event, visit [www.HabitatCycleOfHope.org](http://www.HabitatCycleOfHope.org). Also, contact Bob Frick at [kesrobrfrick@comcast.net](mailto:kesrobrfrick@comcast.net) to obtain a price discount for riding, and he will donate \$100 to Habitat. – J. Wake

## Volunteers help distribute food kits to Latinx children and their families



Photo Lauren Miltello

**Katie Pintado, building manager of the Orinda Masonic Lodge and volunteer for White Pony Express, helps assemble food kits to aid Latinx families who have recently immigrated.**

Submitted by Steve Spraitzar

White Pony Express assembled some more “food kits” for its Blessings Project, which is designed to help recently immigrated Latinx families who are particularly vulnerable at this time. One of the volunteers helping on Sept. 8 was Katie Pintado, who is the building manager of the Orinda Masonic Lodge.

WPE’s idea is to deliver food and spices that are familiar to Latinx neighbors. The food kits include fresh produce, rice, Masa flour, beans, tomato sauce, cheese, assorted peppers, an array of spices, Mexican chocolate, corn husks, and other items.

Although WPE picks up surplus food items from supermarkets and food distributors every day, it does not get everything needed for these food kits. For the Blessings Project, WPE needs the community’s participation.

If you know of an individual or group that would be interested in sponsoring this initiative, or know someone who could host drives for food items needed to complete the food kits, contact Eve Birge, Executive Director at (202) 251-4174, [evibirge@whiteponyexpress.org](mailto:evibirge@whiteponyexpress.org) for sponsorships, and Pete Olsen, WPE’s School Pantry and Food Sourcing Manager at (925) 322-0604 x 129, [petersolsen@whiteponyexpress.org](mailto:petersolsen@whiteponyexpress.org) for food drives.

**Community Service:** We are pleased to make space available whenever possible for some of Lamorinda’s dedicated community service organizations to submit news and information about their activities. Submissions may be sent to [storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com) with the subject header In Service to the Community.

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