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Army Archerd



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Here's the straight story



Senator Daniel K. Akaka (D., HI) was calling from a phone in the Cloak Room of the Senate during a break Thursday night during the "Vote-A-Rama" on the Budget Bill. It was 8 p.m. and he'd been there since 6 a.m. and was pressing for time on the floor. But he was anxious to answer my query about a movie in which he appears.

It's "The Hawaiians--Reflecting Spirit" by award-winning documentarian Edgy Lee which has its premiere March 21 at the Walter Reade Theater in Lincoln Center, and is followed by preems in Chicago, Las Vegas, Nashville and Phoenix. It airs on PBS in May.

He said he'd been trying for six years to get his bill (U.S. Senate-S.147, the Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Act of 2005) activated "to bring recognition to indigenous Hawaiians and to give the same priorities as given to native Alaskans and American Indians -- a bill in which Hawaiians can come together."

In "The Hawaiians," archival footage of Martin Luther King points up the birth of the civil rights movement. Thus Atlanta was the site on March 16 for a screening and Q&A at the Rialto Center for the Performing Arts at Georgia State University.

Senator Akaka, a native Hawaiian, reveals in the (80 mins.) film, "My mother and father -- who spoke Hawaiian -- prohibited us (children) from speaking anything but English."

Fifth generation-Hawaiian-born Edgy Lee paints the spirit of Hawaii with footage recreating its past but most importantly points to the revival of spirit of a native people and their commitment to reviving their heritage.

Akaka told me, "She really portrays the true spirit of Hawaiians."