

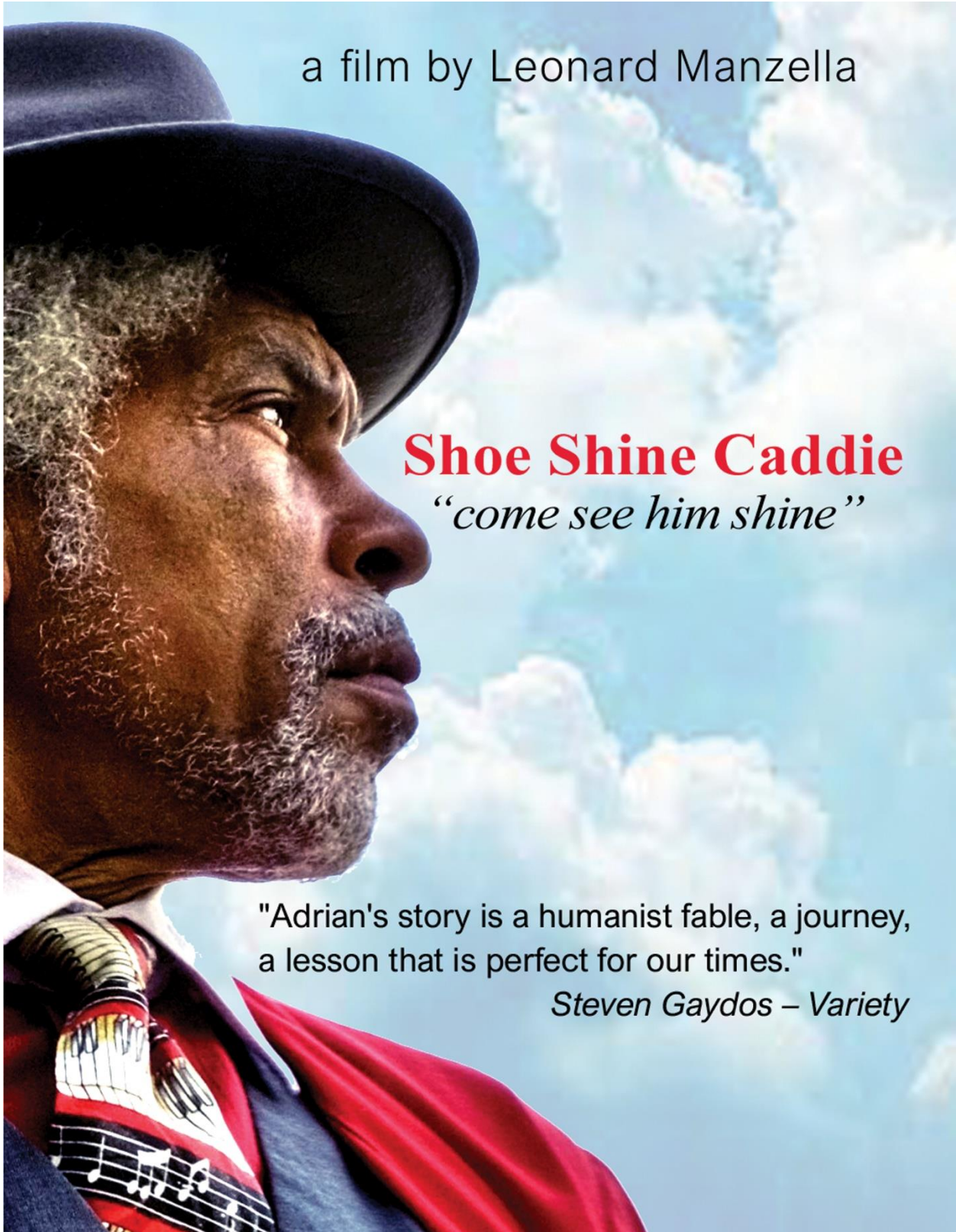
Press Kit

a film by Leonard Manzella

Shoe Shine Caddie
“come see him shine”

"Adrian's story is a humanist fable, a journey,
a lesson that is perfect for our times."

Steven Gaydos – Variety



Synopsis:

Shoe Shine Caddie documents 14 months of Adrian’s journey, a 61 year old African American man, who after decades of being incarcerated is free and living on the streets. Because of his criminal record, and lack of skills and education, gainful employment has proven next to impossible. Unwilling to beg for a living, he discovers the art of shoe shining that he claims, “most probably saved my life.” One morning, while shining shoes on a street corner, he receives a call from the Los Angeles Department of Social Services informing him he is the father of a three year old child. Stunned by the news, he reflects on his previous failures as a father for his other three children who are now grown. He decides this time he'll do the right thing. The battle to gain custody of his young daughter changes his life forever.

Log Line:

After decades of being incarcerated, Adrian is free, 61 years old, and homeless, struggling to gain custody of his three year old daughter and stay alive on the streets.



Questions & Answers About The Film:

What Drew You To The Subject Matter?

Curiosity, pure and simple. Over the years I've worked with the homeless population, but never once came close to walking in their shoes. This was a chance to get a realistic picture of what it might be like, day to day. And maybe to answer the question many of us have asked ourselves, "could I ever handle being homeless?" That was my inspiration. What's it like? How does one survive?

How Did You Meet Up With Adrian?

Walking to my office one morning, I spotted him set up on a sidewalk in front of the courthouse. His bright red apron caught my eye, and the brown bowler hat resting atop his head brought a smile. He wasn't a tall man, but his lean, muscular build made him look bigger. He was dressed to the nines as he swayed to a Count Basie tune floating from his boom box, while skillfully buffing a man's boot pulled tightly over his left arm, and managing to the smile at each passersby. He had it down. After several weeks I finally stopped for a shine. He was friendly, but professional. He shined with pride, never once asking or sharing too much. He was a class act. A month passed before I scavenged my closet and brought him five more pairs of shoes that he promised ready that afternoon. They were. I paid him and asked him where he lived. He told me he was homeless. That was it.



When Did You Decide To Make A Documentary About Adrian?

I have to admit, the moment I laid eyes on him it crossed my mind he would make a great subject for a documentary. But the more I thought about it, shining shoes on a street corner wasn't enough of a story to support a film. So I dropped the idea for almost half a year. Then one afternoon while I was passing by, I noticed he looked a little down. I stopped and asked if everything was okay. He told me he was in a legal battle with the Department of Social Services in Los Angeles over trying to gain custody of his young daughter. Instantly, my mind flashed. That was the thread I needed to tell a story. I considered the idea for a couple of weeks before asking him if he'd be interested in making a documentary with me. He thought about it, and said yes. That night I called my friend, Simo Nylander, who I had already spoken to about my idea. He was interested, but I knew we needed someone who the camera loved in order to pull it off. So several days later we arranged to meet Adrian on his corner and film him at work. When Simo and I got back to his place and watched the footage we knew immediately Adrian was a star.



What Was It Like Working With Adrian?

From the get go, he was a natural. It was as if the camera didn't exist. He has to be one of the least affected people I've ever met. And he was a real trooper, too. Never once did he complain during the fourteen months we shot. Looking back, the film could have been a real disaster if he hadn't been so committed.

What Do You Want People To Take Away From The Film?

To be honest, I have strong feelings about the political and social circumstances that have led to the homeless crisis our country is facing. But I didn't want to preach or make any statements with the film, though it was tempting. Instead, I wanted tell the story of one man who is homeless. I hope people can hear his story, witness his struggle, and experience him as an individual trying to survive like all of us. I want people to watch the film and make up their own minds on what to take away.

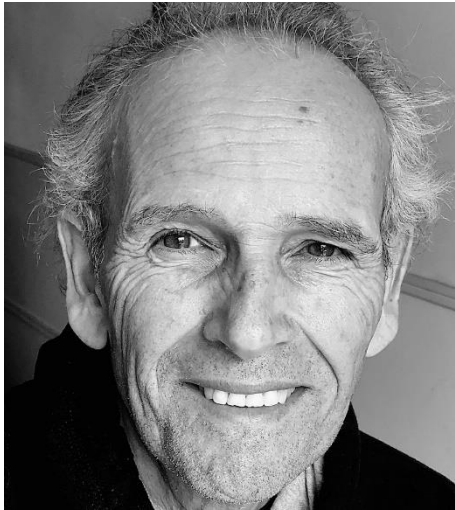
What Did You Learn About The Homeless While Making The Film?

That they all have a story, and many of them very compelling. I also realized that most of the time we talk about homeless people as if they're all one and the same. We don't contemplate their individuality, and we fail to consider the myriad of reasons why people become homeless. Many I spoke with understand that when they're asking for money on the streets not everyone is going to give to them. But that a simple "good morning" or "how's it going?" feels good. Because no one wants to feel invisible.

How Do You Think Making The Film Affected Adrian?

I think the most important thing for Adrian is the fact that someone cared enough to want to know him and his story. I believe that's true about all of us. And I'm certain Gandhi was right. One of the most important gifts a person can give to another is to listen.

Director's Bio:



Manzella's career as a leading man in Italian cinema, screen name, *Leonard Mann*, spanned over twenty years and thirty films and took him to many countries around the world. Returning to the United States he decided on a new career, earning his master's degree in social work at the University of Southern California. While studying, he met, Dr. Lewis Yablonsky, a renowned criminologist who introduced him to the inner world of the prison system. Intrigued, Manzella took a position at a California state prison where he facilitated therapy groups for violent and mentally ill inmates who were held in cages, each the size of a phone booth. Eager to share his experience, he wrote, *Cages*, a stage play that was produced in Los Angeles and Austin to excellent reviews. His most recent interest has been the millions of homeless Americans on our streets. Wanting to better understand their plight, he bought a camera and followed a homeless man for over fourteen months, producing a documentary entitled, *Shoe Shine Caddie*, a one hour film documenting the day to day life of an African American man fighting to gain custody of his infant daughter and stay alive on the streets. Manzella is a practicing psychotherapist residing in San Luis Obispo, California with his wife, Lynn, and dog, Chauncey Gardner.

Director's Statement:

Film gives us the chance to document things in life we find extraordinary and need to be shared. While making this film I realized most of us speak about the homeless as if they're one and the same. We often fail to recognize their individuality and the myriad reasons why people become homeless. Every one of them has a story if we care to listen. No one wants to feel invisible.

Praise:

“Shoe Shine Caddie is Cinéma Vérité at its finest.”

Mark Mangini – Oscar winning sound designer

“The film is beautifully shot and nicely paced. It had me from the first shot.”

David Browning – 60 minutes director/producer

"It's a full and amazing portrait of the artist as 'a homeless man,' who belies such a facile categorization."

Ken Eisen – festival programmer at – Maine International Film Festival

"Adrian's story is a humanist fable, a journey, a lesson that is perfect for our times."

Steven Gaydos – Variety



Film Credits:

Directed, Produced and Edited by-----Leonard Manzella

Co-Produced by-----Simo Nylander

Editing Consultant -----Jacque Elaine Toberen

Assistant Editor-----Simo Nylander

Cinematography-----Leonard Manzella

Additional Cinematography & Color Correction-----Simo Nylander

Sound Designer-----Trevor Jolly

Sound Mixer-----Jeremy Grody

Music Credits:

Blues Rock Background-----*Pro Traxx*

Chill Out Love Piano-----*Aleksandr Kanovalov*

Double Shot-----*Julian Hartwell*

Jazzified-----*Regolo Vincent Xavier*

Cooking On The Jazz-----*Simon Armitage*

Piano Happiness-----*Neil Cross*

Penthouse Swing-----*Jake Schneider*

One More Bebop-----*Alex Khaskin*

Spiderman Theme Song – Lyrics by-----*Paul Francis Webster*
Bob Harris



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Website:
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Vimeo Link to Trailer:
<https://vimeo.com/770310708/edf6423a33>