

PREMIERE, March 18, 2007

## SXSW Sum Up Day 9 – Cyborg is A-OK

**Cyborg keeps SXSW cool, Billy the Kid wins the whole shootin' match**

**By Stephen Saito**

As my schedule at the festival dictated, I happened to have saved the best film at SXSW for last, though I saw it a few hours before *I'm a Cyborg, but That's Ok*, so I guess I'm really only saving it for last in the blog. I had been hearing buzz all week about Jennifer Venditti's documentary *Billy the Kid*, buzz that was confirmed when the film won the jury prize for best documentary, but I kept missing opportunities to see it. I only hope that if it's playing a festival near you, the same thing doesn't happen to you since it's the kind of documentary that doesn't have a great marketing hook. What it does have is the utterly charming character that is Billy, a sweet, well-intentioned 15 year old kid living in Maine, who is navigating the most awkward time of his young life on camera. Even though the film is never exploitative, Billy is an outsider who appears as if he just stepped off the set of TV's *Freaks and Geeks*, complete with a mullet and a love for video games. Obviously, something isn't quite right about Billy, but that doesn't stop him from pursuing his ultimate goal of becoming an actor and a rock star and trying to get his first girlfriend.

Although I could go on, the less said about *Billy the Kid* the better. Venditti does an exquisite job of capturing the of Billy's teenage naiveté and by the film's end, you care deeply about Billy and his mom, who also is a far more multi-dimensional person than her Metallica t-shirt would suggest. *Billy the Kid* is shot in a verite style that is reminiscent of *Hoop Dreams* or *Streetwise*, and hopefully, with the right distributor, the film will catch on in the same way.

I guess it's officially a wrap for SXSW 2007, but check back with Premiere.com in the coming weeks for SXSW interviews and feature.