



Tue., May 30, 2006

## **Back to Bosnia**

(Documentary)

Alternate Plan Productions. Produced by Ali Hanson, Sabina Vajraca. Directed by Sabina Vajraca.

### **By JOE LEYDON**

First-time documaker Sabina Vajraca takes a deeply personal approach in charting the lingering effects of civil war, ethnic cleansing and population dispersal in "Back to Bosnia," a fascinating and sporadically unsettling account of her Muslim family's return to their homeland after years of exile in the United States. Pic should generate respectful notice in fest and tube venues. Verite doc follows Vajraca and her parents' journey back to Banja Luka, the once-thriving multi-ethnic city they were forced to flee after its 1992 takeover by militant Serb forces. En route through Bosnia, they encounter upsetting reminders of the mid-1990s conflict that ravaged the land and the population. Pic is quietly devastating as it focuses on grimly determined officials trying to identify corpses found buried in mass graves. But emotional fireworks aren't sparked in earnest until the Vajracas finally reach their former apartment, only to find it's occupied -- and the original furnishings still used -- by a frankly unapologetic Serb family that claimed the place a decade earlier. Here and elsewhere, videographer Damir Okanovic's discreet fly-on-the-wall approach is impressive.

Camera (color, DV), Damir Okanovic; editor, Ali Hanson; music, Jon Crider. Reviewed at Nashville Film Festival (Documentaries), April 22, 2006. English, Bosnian dialogue. Running time: 67 MIN.