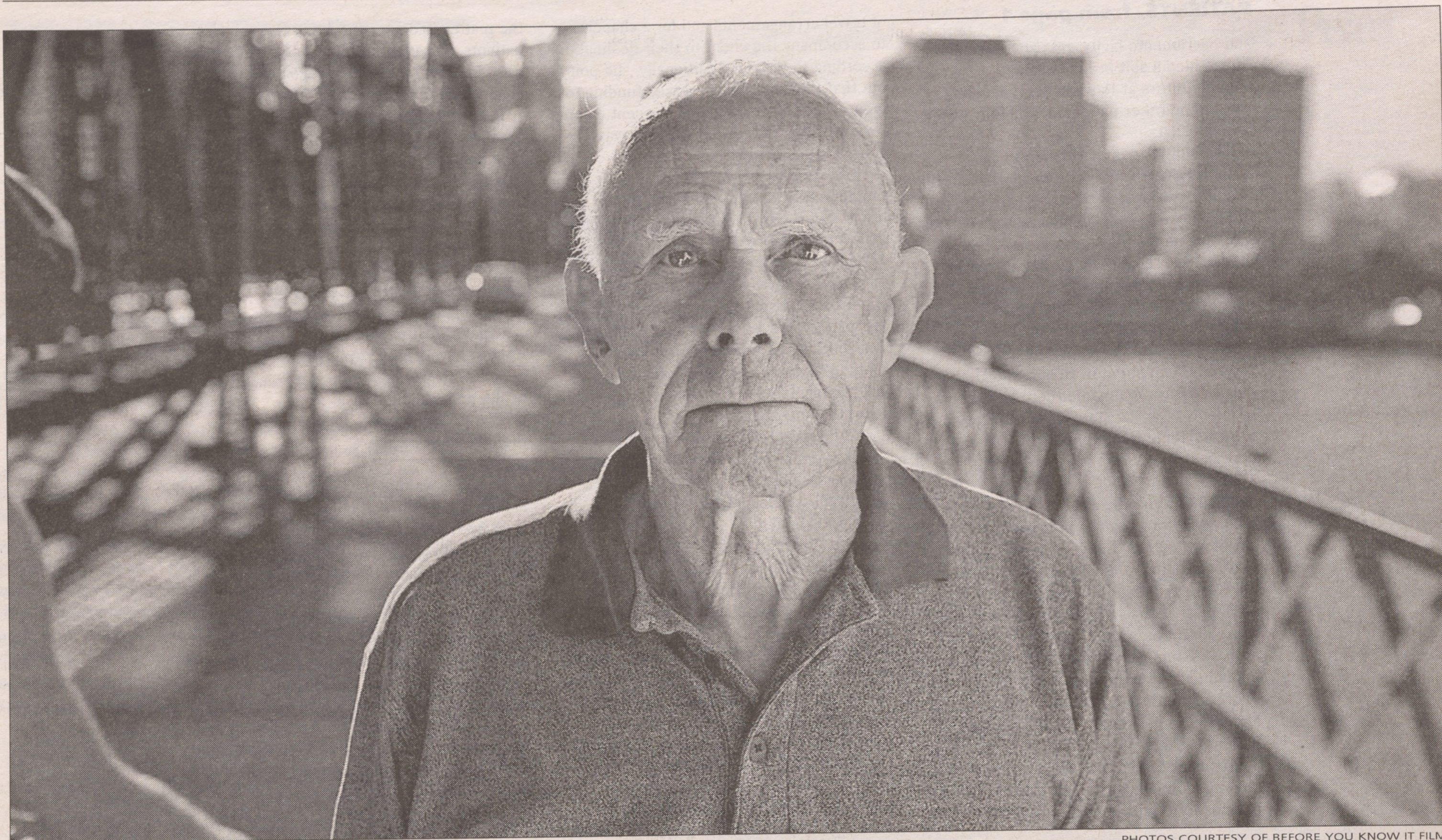




PHOTOS COURTESY OF BEFORE YOU KNOW IT FILM

Portland's Dennis Creamer, shown here on the Hawthorne Bridge, is one of the featured men in PJ Raval's film "Before You Know It."

Older, wiser and gay

A new documentary looks at the experiences, challenges of gay seniors

BY ALEX ZIELINSKI
STAFF WRITER

Four years ago, director PJ Raval dove headfirst into weaving together a documentary on an often overlooked slice of the country's population: LGBTQ seniors. Shadowing three 70-plus gay men on distant corners of the country — Harlem, New York, Galveston, Texas and Portland — "Before you Know It" shares a fragile and rarely told story on the challenges faced by this growing population. This is population that has seen the Stonewall Riots give way to Pride parades and gay marriages.

One of the films' stars, Dennis Creamer, moved to a LGBTQ-centric retirement home, Rainbow Vista, in Gresham in the hopes of finding a new community after his wife passed away. Creamer, along with Raval, will be at the films' Portland premiere on Oct 6 at Cinema 21 as a part of the Portland Lesbian & Gay Film Festival. In preparation for the upcoming screening, we spoke with Raval about his time in Portland and intentions behind the film.

Alex Zielinski: Why did you select Portland as one of the three locales focused on in the documentary?

PJ Raval: I had the idea for this film for quite some time, but doing research at Rainbow Vista and talking with LGBTQ groups in Portland, it started to click.

Dennis was at Rainbow Vista just seeing if he wanted to live there when I stopped by. But as soon as we started talking, I knew I had to focus on his story. And it happened to be here.

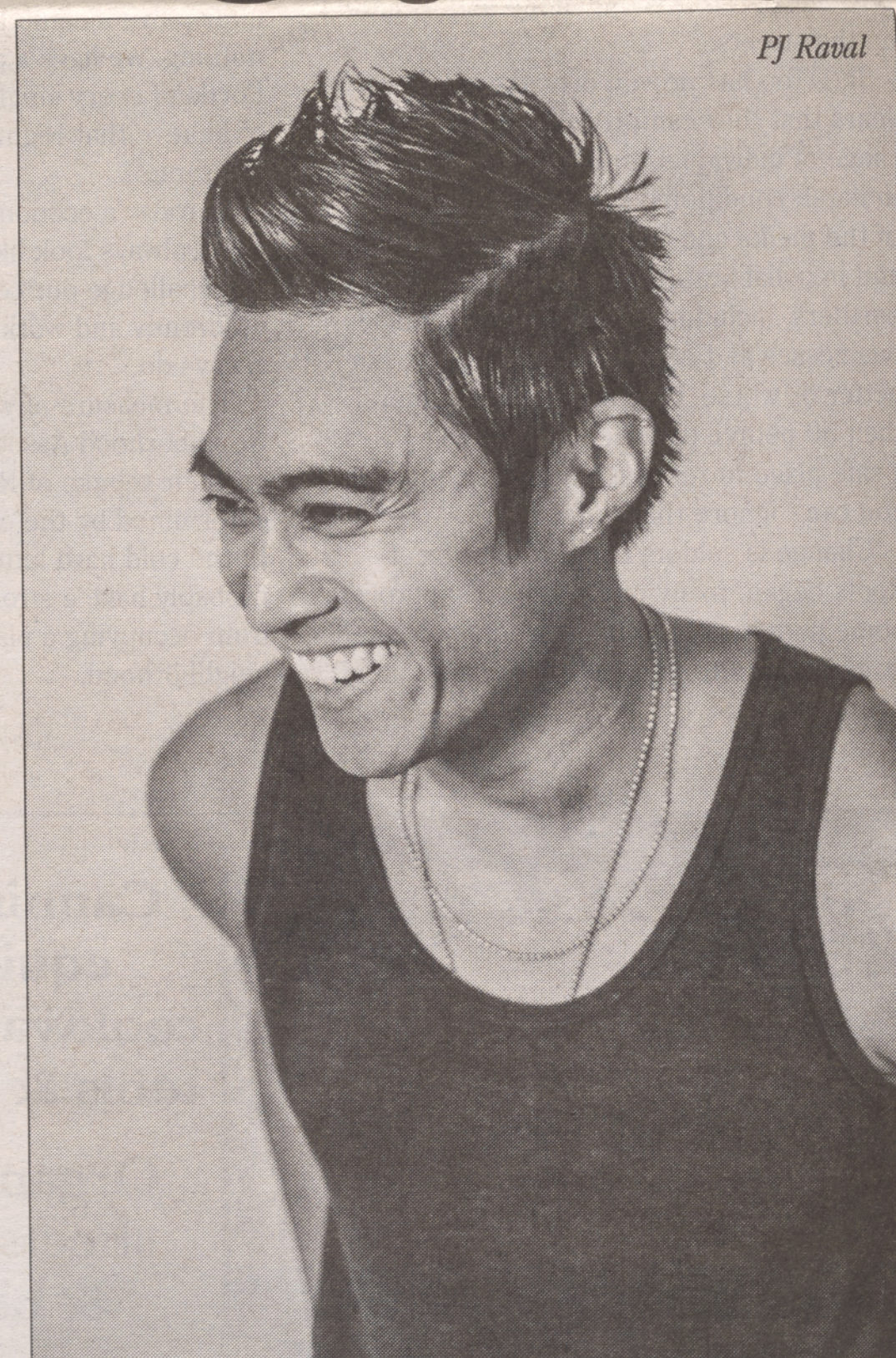
A.Z.: How long did the entire filmmaking process take?

P.R.: From the idea, it's been about four years. The actual filming took three of those years. So I was really in Portland every other month for a while, I became comfortable with the community and city. What I especially like about non-fiction filmmaking is how you're able to spend time to truly understand someone's life. I feel like I really got to delve into these men's stories over the years.

A.Z.: Why did you choose to focus on the senior LGBTQ population in particular?

P.R.: I think overall senior populations are overlooked and underserved. LGBTQ seniors in particular are the most extreme cases of both ageism and discrimination. We have to think about their history, how they got to where they are — it wasn't easy. It's tough since a lot of them don't have children to take care of them in their old age. They don't have that support. A lot of

See **OLDER, WISER**, page 5



PJ Raval

The new Chinook Book is here!



Get yours today and help the sustainable economy grow

Featuring poetry from our Art Partner, Street Roots

Portland
Hearing Voices
embrace *ᵂᵂᵂᵂᵂᵂ* diversity
www.portlandhearingvoices.net