

Even after over a decade duo's film on P4W offers food for serious thought

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Ten years ago, filmmakers Holly Dale and Janis Cole took a camera crew through the front doors of the Prison For Women, after four years of phone calls, hassles and delays, struggling to get inside. They emerged several weeks later with footage of interviews, monologues and interaction between inmates that finally became P4W, the powerful film that won the Genie Award for Best Theatrical Documentary in 1982.

P4W, showing tonight at 9 p.m. in the Princess Court Cinema, is the first of three feature documentaries by the Toronto filmmaking duo; the other two are the acclaimed films *Hookers On Davie* and *Calling The Shots*. (They have made five short documentaries, as well.)

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Food for thought

While there have been improvements in many of the areas criticized by inmates in the film (such as availability of counselling, job training and education), P4W still offers much food for thought a decade later. The relationships that develop, the painful separation of inmates from their children, the women's frustrations with themselves and with the system are all revealed in a narrative sequence that slowly draws the viewer into the women's lives.

One of the youngest women featured in P4W is Marlene Moore, whose life and death were the focus of *Rock-a-bye-Baby*, an award-winning feature story by Anne Kershaw and Mary Lasovich that ran in the Whig-Standard Magazine late last year.

Marlene Moore, the only Canadian woman to be declared a dangerous offender, became friends with Holly Dale and Janis Cole during the filming of P4W, and later corresponded and even shared an apartment with them for a while. Over the years, she tried or threatened to kill herself many times; her body was discovered in the hospital of the Prison for Women in December, 1988.

Experimental film

This past June, Janis Cole completed work on a short experimental film about Marlene Moore — *Shaggy: Letters From Prison*. Studio D of the National Film Board put out a call for submissions last September and received 240 applications. Janis Cole was one of 15 women filmmakers from across Canada whose projects were selected to receive funding.

The films are collected in *Five Feminist Minutes*, a 90-minute program that is doing the festival circuit; it will be screened at the Toronto Festival of Festivals in September.

Joanne Marion of the Princess Court Cinema said yesterday she expects the local repertory theatre will show the program early next year.

Janis Cole's 12-minute film is not a documentary about Marlene Moore. "I wanted to make something that was representative of her," the filmmaker said yesterday. "but something that felt right. She was a very private person."

In the film, texts of letters and a prayer written by Marlene Moore (whose nickname was Shaggy) are the sounds accompanying various images that represent her life. "I used the experimental format because I wanted to communicate the texture of Marlene's letters," Janis Cole said.

The filmmaker last saw P4W when she showed it at a workshop 2½ years ago. "It brought back a lot of memories — many of them painful," she said. "I realized as I was working on the film about Marlene that I don't think I can ever do another project based on that experience. It was very difficult emotionally."