

### NO...

d. John Stoneman, ph. John Stoneman, ed. William Carter, m. Gustav Holst "Planet Suite" (Saturn), p.c. Mako Films Ltd. 1977, col. 16mm, running time 6 minutes.

To describe in words the damage man has done to his planet could take thousands of pages and many hours. John Stoneman has attempted to do it without words, and in just six minutes, using a series of skillfully juxtaposed images and sounds. The film is both a very personal statement about the horror of man's rape of the earth, and a plea for the protection and preservation of one of the last relatively untouched areas, the oceans. It is also, incidentally, an expression of the joys of being a diver.

In the first three or four minutes the camera glides through a beautiful underwater landscape of green and blue, past waving sea fans and strange white coral shapes. We slowly drift amongst glittering schools of jacks as they twist and turn in the water, and pause by a single silvery barracuda looking suspicious as barracudas usually do. The smoothness of the camera work makes us feel a part of the fluid, rippling environment. And the music from Gustav Holst's "Planet Suite" is a well-chosen complement to the sense of pleasure and enchantment we get from this unfamiliar and peaceful world.

But the music occasionally has ominous overtones, creating a mild tension that subconsciously prepares us for what follows: a sudden direct cut to distressingly familiar scenes of our everyday life... factories blasting black chemical smoke, cars bumper to bumper in the grey air, masses of people jostling each other on concrete sidewalks, dead animals lying amongst piles of foul garbage. The images are a sharp and painful contrast to what has just filled the screen a moment before. So, when the divers plunge back into that cool, clear water and we follow them down again into the ocean, it is with a sense of relief and escape and even thankfulness.

It is a simple statement that would be hard for anyone to disagree with,



John Stoneman comes up for a coffee-break

especially in the climate created by recent massive oil spills, and stories of whale atrocities and careless mining of the ocean floor. The film could be accused of being not only simple, but simplistic, of avoiding an exploration of the complex reasons behind why man persists in destroying his own environment. Stoneman as a diver and environmental filmmaker must surely be aware of these complexities. He has chosen instead to express the dilemma in as brief, direct and uncluttered a film as possible. No long explanations, no involved rationalizations, no gimmicks, just the simple visual impact that tells its own sad story. My only quarrel with the film is that the converted can only nod and agree, but for the unconverted or unaware, it does not have nearly enough impact. Certainly not enough to change any minds.

Penelope Hynam

### THIS FILM IS ABOUT RAPE

d. Bonnie Kreps, ph. Jan-Marie Martell, ed. Haida Paul, p. Bonnie Kreps, p.c. Chesire Films Production, 1978, running time 29 minutes, dist. Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Center (Toronto).

By now, Bonnie Kreps is well-known as a feminist filmmaker in Canada. Her short films *After the Vote*, *Portrait Of My Mother*, and a series of *Working Mothers* films made for the NFB have often been used as the focus for discussion in women's groups and have been seen in festivals in both Canada and the U.S. One aspect of her filmmaking style is the attention she pays to the objects and personal surroundings of her interviewees, letting these details reveal characters, establish mood. It works quite effectively for the opening of her latest film *This Film Is About Rape*. On the soundtrack we hear a woman telling of her experience as the victim of an attempted rape, while we see shots of a meticulous and slightly frilly living-room decor — flowered wallpaper, family snapshots in their gilt dimestore frames, plants, and a doll in a bright, crocheted dress. Only after we have seen her personal physical surroundings, her living space, do we see the woman herself — a slim, elderly lady wearing spectacles who is speaking about the aggressive invasion of her body by a rapist. The uncomfortably jarring relationship between sound and image works well to prepare us for the shock of recognizing this woman's age, thereby dispelling any notions about the sexual provocation by rape victims. The film later informs us that rapists act on "the opportunity of the moment" rather than on the desirability of the victim, and an interview with a convicted rapist brings out the admission that "the appearance of the woman had nothing to do with it."

What is perhaps most moving about the opening interview in this film is that the woman can discuss her own ordeal calmly and clearly, but breaks into tears when telling of her daughter's rape in years past. Compassion for

another takes precedence over concern for herself — a theme introduced here and carried subtly throughout the film. It is this very desire to be kind, compassionate and considerate of others which emerges as a central vulnerability in women — a sad commentary on the state of our society. A female therapist involved in a penal program to reform rapists tells us that “rapists act out the male cultural value system, the masculine mystique of being sexually dominant and powerful.”

The film foregoes analysis of this value system and its resultant male mystique and instead focuses on practical methods for dealing with potentially hazardous situations. It is an understandable focus for the film, although it leaves the causes of rape shrouded in shadow, as are the two rapists interviewed in the film. I, for one, was left with the vaguely helpless and paranoid feeling that the urge to rape must be like some disease which permeates the atmosphere and can overtake any man, any time. (Perhaps it is!) In any case, we are told that rapists come from all walks of life, are usually men less than thirty years of age, and that according to statistics a rape occurs every seventeen minutes, the victims ranging from infancy to advanced old age.

In such an atmosphere, an undeniable first priority must be the ability of women to handle dangerous situations. Fortunately, the film concentrates on both bodily self-defense and emotional self-control, since so often it is possible to stop aggression from escalating beyond the level of conversation. Thus, a particularly fascinating scene involves several women in a classroom situation, learning how to handle unwanted conversations instigated by strangers. As well, we are urged to rely on our intuitive and physical signals that alert us to danger. **This Film Is About Rape** should be shown in our schools, perhaps in a double-bill with Hanig and Roberts' documentary *Men's Lives*, or with Holly Dale and Janis Cole's *Thin Line*.

Joyce Nelson

## THIN LINE

d. Holly Dale & Janis Cole, ph. John Clement and Joe Sutherland, p. Holly Dale & Janis Cole, 1977, col. 16mm, running time 32 minutes, dist. Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Center (Toronto).

Filmmakers Holly Dale and Janis Cole received a glowing write-up in the June *Saturday Night* magazine where Marshall Delaney briefly reviewed their four short documentary films, including *Thin Line*. He called this film their “big accomplishment” so far, and it is indeed a remarkable achievement, given the difficult nature of its subject — the workings of the Ontario hospital for the criminally insane at Penetanguishene.

Throughout, the filmmakers seem intent on changing any misconceptions we might have of either the inmates or the institution. At one point they include shots of the long corridors echoing with the haunting sound of screaming voices, as though in recognition that this is to be expected in such a place. Instead, the filmmakers, concentrate on articulate men able to analyze their problems, admit their weaknesses, and arrive at an understanding of the social and psychological forces which lead to their criminal acts. Revealingly, most of the men talk about intolerable early childhoods within a loveless milieu, particularly lacking in paternal love. Again and again we hear of absent or uncaring fathers. To stress this point, the filmmakers have included an interview with an inmate's mother, who describes the intolerable burden she has been forced to carry in raising her eight children almost single-handedly.

The need for mutual caring between men is further revealed in the therapeutic methods explored in the film. Emotional release — induced by alcohol, drugs, or whatever is necessary — takes place within an arena of affection carefully monitored by other inmates. This space, called the Capsule, provides an intense therapy session which is video-taped for later replay to the individual involved, along with the notes and comments of the friends who

have accompanied him. Every inmate shown in the film wears dark sunglasses, probably to conceal his identity from the camera; nevertheless, this particular article of personal attire effectively suggests the concealment, the refusal to be open with others which is a major problem discussed by the men.

As I recall, there is not one interview with administrator, therapist or guard in this film. Rather, the inmates themselves assess the benefits of this special therapeutic program, and speak of the need for reform in the rest of the penal system. They are especially critical of the hostile behaviour of guards in most maximum security prisons, where, as one man puts it, “you have the worst with the worst.” What is stressed in this film is the key role that love plays in every level of life. The remarkable achievement of *Thin Line* is the filmmakers' ability to reveal love working in this most desperate of places.

Joyce Nelson

## SUCCESS STORY

d. John J. Carey ARPS, sc. Dorothy K. Carey, ph. John J. Carey, ed. Ralph C. Brunjes CFE, sd. ed. David Appleby, sd. rec. R.C. Carey, m. Al Brown, narr. Cy Strange, titles John Leach Associates, tech. consultant Dr. Maurice V. Smith, p. John J. Carey, col. 16mm, 1977, running time 27 minutes.

The challenge that faces an educational filmmaker, especially when dealing with a subject as complex as entomology (the study of insects), is to make a film that is informative and instructive without being either too ponderous or too simplistic. In these two short works, Jack Carey meets the challenge with the skill and care one expects from his lifelong interest in nature and more than twenty years of experience as a photographer and producer of nature films.

*Success Story*, which won the International Award at the 1978 National