

Unfortunately, the dance sequence adds little to the film; it is less direct and immediate than the interviews.

Dying to be Perfect is a nicely-constructed presentation of the problem, the victims, consequences and insights into anorexia.

MacInnes and Mackintosh's 45-minute-video, *Breaking the Chains*, is an examination of recovery from drug and alcohol addiction. It is composed of interviews with men and women who are in, or have been in, recovery houses which follow a 12-step program.

The major focus is on individuals in a men's house in Vancouver, and particularly on a step meeting there. These are tough individuals who generally have approached the problems of their lives with fists and *fuck you's*. The straight world might categorize them as bikers, greasers, punks, junkies, or just plain trouble. But what is outstanding is their ability to speak with intelligence and understanding about the struggle to overcome their problems.

The people interviewed in this film explain what it is like to be an addict. How your entire life comes to revolve around satisfying that addiction, which is, as one young man puts it, only a symptom of the disease. And as one woman says, "When you wake up you don't know who you are, where you are or where you've been."

But they are equally articulate about recovery. And it soon becomes obvious that a large part of the process is this ability to communicate honestly, learning to face life and not hide from it, even to be able to laugh about their struggles (one man jokes about hearing bottles of beer and syringes call to him, "Come on, let's go for a walk downtown").

Breaking the Chains is structured in a series of questions, such as "Why does a drug user enter a recovery program?" Each question is followed by sequences of interviews in response.

The first question, "What is the cause of drug addiction?", is answered by well-intentioned non-addicts who can only speculate. This contrasts with the subsequent approach of only interviewing people with direct experience of addiction.

This film is powered by a dynamic of possibility that is as charged as the people in it. It might be useful in encouraging others to break the chains of their addiction. As one fellow in the house described his experience there, "I feel I could help anybody, now."

Calvin Wharton •

BREAKING THE CHAINS: Co-produced and co-directed by Teresa and Alexis Macintosh; Assistant dir./Kathy Lake; Camera/Colin Gregory; on-line editing/Greg Vallieres and Brice Dowd. Prod. assistance from B.C.'s Knowledge Network and Pacific Region NFB.

BREAKING THE CYCLE

This film is dedicated to "the silent victims" – the battered wives who look at the camera and say: "He cut me up with a carving knife. I stayed because I was so damned scared..." and "The children sat on the sofa and my husband beat me."

A chilling document, it probes many aspects of this appalling social problem—the shame, the fear, the inherited violence – and also touches upon the therapy, the role of the police and specific advice to the victims.

As the litany unfolds, both beaters and victims paint a sad, desperate picture. The women, youthful and mature, say "He saw his parents beat each other up..." "I was programmed to put up with it. You were married – you make your bed and you lie on it" and "...I woke every day with bruises." A young man: "I was my Daddy's pet... I saw him dragging my mother across the room by her hair" – it goes on and on. "My girl friend is like my mother and I hate her... I broke her ribs – I was so mad, it was anger." An older man who is receiving treatment, admits, "I always felt so bad afterwards – after I beat my wife..."

The police role in domestic situations is described by an officer as "very dangerous," but changes in attitude have occurred, and things have apparently come a long way in two years. If the police lay a charge, the woman is more likely to follow it through and, also, the courts take it more seriously.

The solutions include awareness and education. The best advice is to touch base with somebody – a teacher or a neighbor. A victim says that children in violent families should not blame themselves and pleads with fellow-victims, "Come out of the closet, come out of the house and say 'This is happening to me!'"

A straight-forward, feisty little documentary, where the strong content overcomes most of the warts. This is the film that had a Warhol-like fleeting moment of fame and glory at the 1988 Yorkton Short Film and Video Festival – the National Film Board/Kathleen Shannon Award for Documentary was torn from its grasp along with a \$1,000 cash prize (*Cinema Canada* #154).

P./d. Debbie Cartner. cam. Elias Petras/Doug Bailey/Tom Lee. ed. Greg M. Darling. mus. Bill Roberts. With the assistance of: Ontario's Women's Directorate, NFB Ontario Region, Employment and Immigration Canada, Dr Peter Jaffe, Ph.D. 25 mins. 16mm/tape. Availability: Esprit Films, P. O. Box, 2215, Stn. B, St. Catharines, Ont. L2M 6P6 (416) 685-8336.

SHOOTING STARS

Allan Stein was luckier with his film at Yorkton '88, where it won the Award for Best Sports and Recreation...

The Grads (Edmonton Commercial Graduates Women's Basketball Team) was formed in 1915. Some of the graduating girls from the Commercial High School wanted to continue with the sport, and asked Percy Page to keep on

coaching them. They were called "Canada's Wonder Team," an amateur women's team and for almost two decades the unparalleled queens of basketball. The Grads made headlines throughout the 1920s and 1930s, and travelled widely. Early in 1925, when international championship basketball was prominent in conjunction with the Olympic Games, The Grads went to Europe, sponsored by the Government of Canada. They despatched their opponents with ease and won all of their games. The Grads remained the undisputed world champions for the next 16 years.

Memories of this unique sporting team are evoked through newspaper headlines, newsreels, home movies of The Grads and, especially, by interviews with some of the "old girls," while their final tense game and its dramatic highlight is recreated. Betty Bawden Bowen, Babe Belanger and Margaret MacBurney are some of The Grads who go to reunions and feel "one unit again." Their sprightly reminiscences cover the modernization of their playing kit – "We had knee-pads and bloomers and were all covered up" but, in the 20s, after playing a team from Cleveland which "had really modern costumes," the serge bloomers were thrown out! As amateurs, by night they were famous world-class athletes, but by day they worked as secretaries and in department stores and were glad to have a job in the Depression. They would play 10 games in 11 nights without pay, and no federal money to help. They idolized coach Percy Page who never missed a game and never raised his voice – "...he expected a lot but he was a gentleman."

By the 1930s the end was in sight. At the outbreak of World War II the arena was taken over by the military and the chain was broken. The Grads exciting game with the Tulsa Stenos is recreated – It's 39-39 and one minute to play, and the winning point is scored at the gun! Wildly cheering crowd scenes and freeze game... The end came on June 5, 1940. In 25 years The Grads played 522 games, won 502; were North American champions 1923-1940; attended four World Olympics and won all 27 exhibition games they played. Coach Percy Page died in 1973.

An interesting look at Canadian women's early sporting. The history, neatly resurrected and served up in modern style. The archival material, the reminiscences from the remaining Grads and the dramatization don't quite work together, and the flow does drag at times. But there's no denying that this is an engaging, heart-warming document that looks good, and a few nips of editing might remedy the rhythm.

dir. Allan Stein. sc. Mairi MacLean & Allan Stein. ed. Marke Slipp. cam. James Jeffrey. sd. Clancy Livingston/Michel Lalonde. mus. George Blondheim. 49 mins. 16mm/tape. With the assistance of: Alberta Motion Picture Development Corp./Telefilm/NFB North West Centre. Availability: Filmwest Associates (Edmonton) (403) 488-9182, and National Film Board.



The Edmonton Grads get a pep talk

A GAME OF DEATH

A terse little experimental black comedy which evokes the atmosphere of wartime London in 1943 in a story of espionage and murder. Divided into segments by titles, and using the sights and sounds of the era – Churchill's voice, Pearl Harbor, newspaper headlines – the film wends its way to a laconic conclusion. Clyde is tracking Simon Marquette (a sinister double-agent who murdered his brother), while his lover, Charlotte, warns him of the danger. Tinkling piano music, a lamp, pages being turned, a table setting and some conversation over brandy. A telephone rings, "Taxi"; "Ah, Mr. Marquette", a moving wheel; shots! Footsteps... a door opens and woman's voice "Clyde! Come in. You have found him?" "Done, finished. Never knew who I was."

A really smart little epic, from its excellent titles on a mock-up of the front page of *The Times* newspaper to the succinct handling of the elements through voice-over and a first-rate sound track. A filmmaker to watch!

d./sec./ed. Jeff McKay. cam. Perry Stratyckuk/Frank Raven. sd. Michael Mirus. mus./guitar Ian Hodges. Voices: Ann Hodges (Charlotte), Christopher Sigurdson (Clyde), Darrell Baran (Simon Marquette). 5 mins. B&W. 16mm/tape. Availability: Winnipeg Film Group, 304-100 Arthur St., Winnipeg, Man. R3B 1H3 (204) 942-6795.