

Freedom Road

A film by Lorna Ann Johnson



Documentary, Video, 2004
35 minutes, Color

CREDITS

Director/Producer: Lorna Ann Johnson
Consulting Producer: Susan Ryan
Associate Producer: Jessica Jorgensen
Camera: Lorna Johnson, Sue Intemann, Dario Camara
Sound: Megan Burtnick
Editor: Glen Burtnick



SYNOPSIS

"Freedom Road" is a barren stretch that leads in and out of the Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women. Yet for the some of the women incarcerated there, freedom has been redefined through the power of the pen. A testament to the profound influence of arts and education, Lorna Johnson's compelling film features six female prisoners who are part of a unique memoir-writing workshop called "Woman is the Word." Reading classic autobiographies such as "Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl" by Harriet Ann Jacobs and "The Cancer Journals" by Audre Lorde, the women are empowered to claim the events of their own lives and retell their own stories—ultimately liberating them from long-held secrets and silence.

Moving interviews with the women inmates, their instructors and family members combined with verité footage of their fascinating classroom discussions reveal how poverty, under-education, domestic abuse have had a role in the destiny of many women in the program. Ultimately, the film examines the devastating cycle of imprisonment for the poor and underprivileged, and points to an inspired embodiment of prison reform.

SCREENING HISTORY

For the most updated list, please visit www.wmm.com.

- Reel Sisters Diaspora Film Festival, Brooklyn, NY
- Bear Lake Film Festival

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Lorna Johnson is a filmmaker whose works have screened nationally at such festivals as Women in the Director's Chair, Atlanta Film and Video Festival, New Orleans Film and Video Festival. Her work has also been screened on the program Independent Focus through WNET PBS in New York and has been honored at the Mill Valley Film Festival in California and the National Black Programming Consortium. She has previously written for *Independent Film and Video Monthly*, a journal highlighting independently produced media, as well as served as Assistant Editor for *Viewing Race* a publication of National Video Resources funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. Ms. Johnson received her undergraduate degree from Northwestern University's School of Speech and her Masters of Fine Arts from the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee.

Her previous films include STRANDS, a personal documentary that asks questions about identity and MY WOLVERINE, which was awarded Jury Recognition at the Mill Valley Film Festival and the National Black Program Consortium.