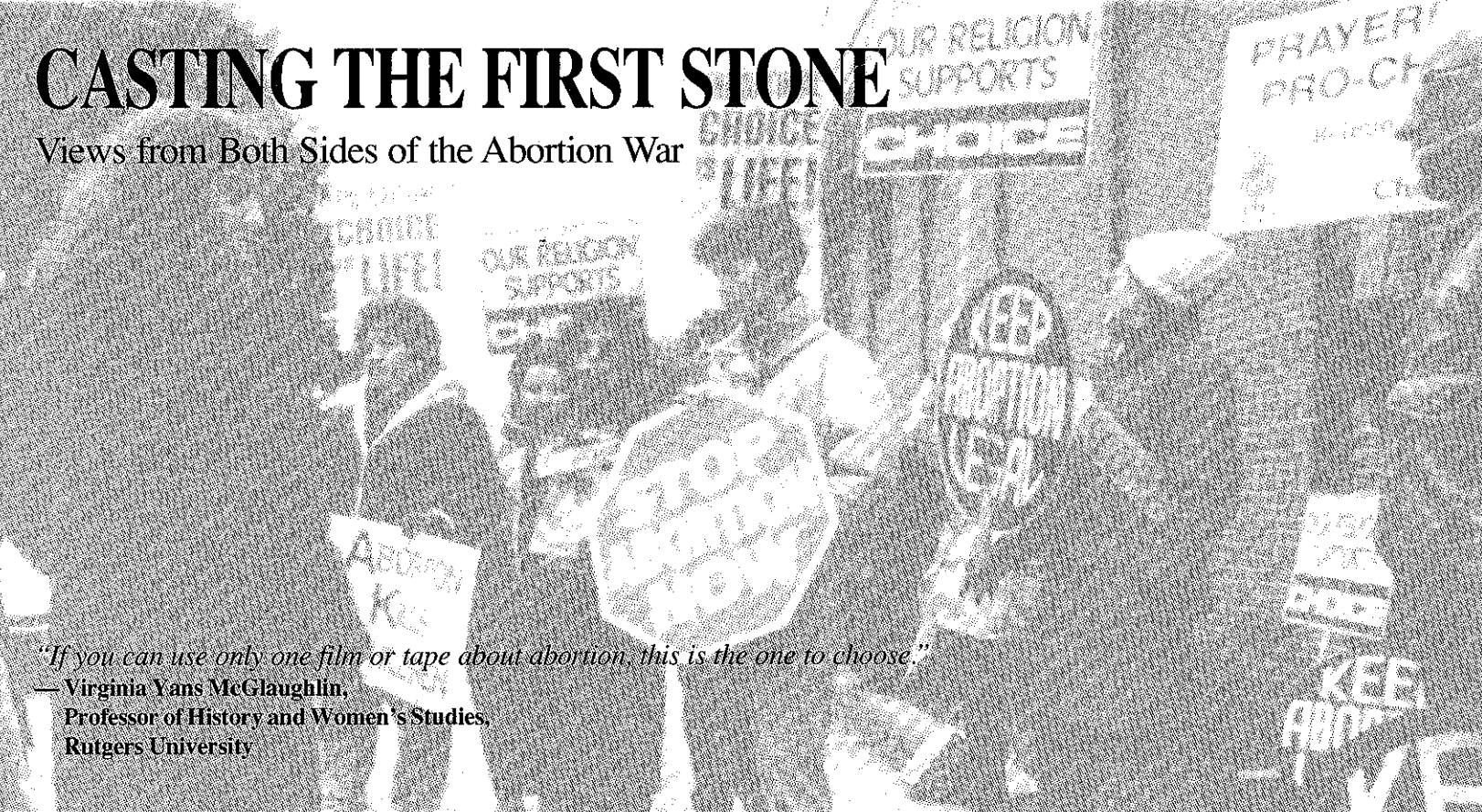


CASTING THE FIRST STONE

Views from Both Sides of the Abortion War



"If you can use only one film or tape about abortion, this is the one to choose."

— Virginia Yans McGlaughlin,
Professor of History and Women's Studies,
Rutgers University

CASTING THE FIRST STONE

Views from Both Sides of the Abortion War

A Video by Julie Gustafson

Shot in and around the Women's Suburban Clinic in Paoli, Pennsylvania, **CASTING THE FIRST STONE** focuses on six women who regularly confront each other from opposite sides of a police barricade.

Set against the backdrop of the U.S. Supreme Court's recent historic abortion decisions, the video portrays three activists who believe that women should have the right to choose whether or not to carry a pregnancy to term, and three who believe that abortion is murder.

Shelley Miller, director of the Women's Suburban Clinic, endures constant harassment from anti-abortion groups camped outside her doors. She is committed to making choice every woman's right. Joan Scalia, a Catholic mother of six, defies her husband to join Operation Rescue as they work to save more babies from being murdered. Closer to the middle is Sharon Owens, a counselor at the clinic and an adoptive mother of three, who cannot comfortably decide when human life begins, but feels that her Christian commitment requires her to serve others who must make this difficult decision for themselves.

In chronicling the daily lives of these and three other women, the camera records anti-abortion blockades, counseling sessions, a visit with a young woman who was convinced by protestors outside the clinic to have her baby, and Planned Parenthood's emergency board meetings after the Supreme Court handed down its decision in Webster v. Missouri.

Rare in giving equal voice to proponents of both sides, **CASTING THE FIRST STONE** is among the most insightful documents of the abortion struggle ever made.

54 minutes color 1991
Sale/16mm: n/a Sale/video: \$390
Rental/video: \$75

SUBJECT AREAS

Abortion/Reproductive Rights, Education, Ethics, Guidance & Counseling, Student Life, Resident Life, Human Sexuality, Legal Studies, Psychology, Religion, Sociology, 20th Century American History, Urban Studies, Women's Studies.

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"A riveting, unblinking look at the realities of the abortion debate, giving us enormous insight into why American women are so deeply divided. Gustafson's extraordinary rapport with her subjects and brilliant editing make this a first class documentary."

— Faye Ginsberg, Professor of Anthropology,
New York University, and
author of *Contested Lives: The Abortion Debate
in an American Community*

"Excellent—and recommended viewing."

— Judie Brown, President, American Life League

"Fascinating and revealing... Sheds light on a complex and important issue which defies simplistic characterizations."

— Kate Michelman, Executive Director,
National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL)

"A good starting point for any discussion about the role of women in society. Neither side is condemned, neither side is praised. Instead, we are asked to understand one of the most controversial issues of our time."

— Virginia Yans McGlaughlin,
Professor of History and Women's Studies,
Rutgers University

"Helps viewers move beyond the angry stereotypes seen on the evening news to a place where dialogue might begin."

— Margaret Caffery, Professor of History,
Memphis State University

"The women engage us so powerfully with their different perspectives that we have to listen to what they are saying, even if we don't agree with them... An extremely useful tool for exploring the assumptions underlying both sides of the debate as well as for opening up the possibility of finding common ground."

— Helen Strickler, Department of Communications,
Adelphi University

"Anyone with a stake in how the abortion-rights question will ultimately be resolved, regardless of point of view, should take a look at Gustafson's remarkably evenhanded and intelligent film."

— Robin Dougherty, *The Boston Phoenix*

"Julie Gustafson's probing documentary manages to get past the twisted faces, threatening voices and numbing slogans to the more personal beliefs and feelings of a few advocates on each side."

— Walter Goodman, *The New York Times*



"**CASTING THE FIRST STONE** reveals that the controversy over reproductive rights may be as much about ways of life as it is about abortion itself."

— Tim McCarthy,
National Catholic Reporter

"Of all the documentaries that have been made about abortion, Julie Gustafson's **CASTING THE FIRST STONE** is by far the most illuminating because it gets to the core of the honest beliefs on both sides."

— Nat Hentoff, *The Village Voice*

Also Available From First/Run Icarus Films

PREGNANT BUT EQUAL

A Film by Judy Pomer

Through interviews with doctors, lawyers, workers and union officials, **PREGNANT BUT EQUAL** discloses the abuses by employers of the Pregnancy Discrimination Act which makes it illegal to discriminate against pregnant women. By focusing on the story of one group's successful campaign for maternity benefits, the film demonstrates how women can gain the rights they are entitled to.

"An excellent and much needed resource"
— Wendy Williams,
Georgetown University Law Center

24 minutes color 1982
Sale/16mm: \$475 Sale/video: \$190
Rental/16mm: \$50

CHANGING COURSE

Five Films produced by Robert Richter

CHANGING COURSE was commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education, and then shelved by the Reagan Administration. The series looks at practical issues of the Title IX Program and education opportunities for women. Each film provides an informative look at sexual inequalities in education, and explores creative solutions. Please call or write for more information about this series.



A thoughtful, provocative, and very personal look at the circumstances and values of grassroots activists on both sides of the abortion debate, **CASTING THE FIRST STONE** is an intimate study of one of the most contentious issues of our time.

“Abortion is such a polarized, volatile issue, we could all keep screaming about it forever. But we have to find a way to understand what is really going on underneath the fervor.”

— **Julie Gustafson, Director**

“CASTING THE FIRST STONE provocatively examines the shades of gray that lie beneath the emotionally turbulent, black and white extremes of the abortion issue... Gustafson has astutely highlighted some complex individuals as she considers the issues of justice, religion, sexuality, gender roles, and assorted family values... A needed look at some of the personal issues fueling heartfelt stands on abortion.”

— **Irene Wood, Booklist**



Review/Television

An Abortion Program for People on Both Sides

By WALTER GOODMAN

Scenes from the battleground over abortion, not rare these days, are on screen again in "Casting the First Stone," at 10 tonight on Channel 13. But Julie Gustafson's probing documentary manages to get past the twisted faces, threatening voices and numbing slogans to the more personal beliefs and feelings of a few advocates on each side. No viewer's opinion about abortion is likely to be changed by the hour, but you may come away with a better understanding and perhaps a higher regard for those on the other side, particularly for antiabortion activists, not television's favorite people.

Ms. Gustafson, who keeps her opinions to herself, takes her camera into the Women's Suburban Clinic in Pao-li, Pa., where Sharon Owens, a counselor, tries quietly and without pressure to reassure an unmarried pregnant woman who says, "It's like killing my child." Mrs. Owens replies that most doctors believe the fetus feels no pain. But on the other side of the deep division, Alberta Fay Horrocks, holding her new baby, speaks

Minds are unlikely to be changed, but understanding may benefit.

of abortion as "a very violent act" and tells of the help she received from members of Operation Rescue, known for its sometimes illegal efforts to shut down abortion clinics: "I wasn't alone." She has become a "sidewalk counselor" for the anti-abortion group.

It is in the interviews at home, away from the clinics and protests, that Ms. Gustafson's sympathetic approach really pays off. Joan Scalia, a grandmother, explains as she prepares pasta that she joined Operation Rescue because she could not bear the thought of babies being killed. She says she thinks of herself as being part of the civil rights movement. The camera glides over the religious pictures and statues in her home.

Religion is a powerful theme here.

Mrs. Owens, whose husband is a minister, tells of her concern for the suffering of poor unmarried teenagers burdened with babies. "They can't take that kind of Christianity away from me," she says of the anti-abortion forces. But Debbie Baker's fundamentalist Christian faith has no place in it for abortion. Seen teaching her children about God, she says she is offended by feminists who purport to speak for all women and defends her decision to devote herself to her family rather than take a job.

Although Ms. Gustafson avoids generalizations, hints of economic and class differences keep coming through. Ms. Horrocks lives in a housing project; Mrs. Baker notes that her family is far from well off, and Mrs. Scalia says she is old-fashioned enough to avoid being arrested at protests because it would annoy her husband. (He says, "A man should be a man and a woman should be a woman.")

By contrast Frances Sheehan, the executive director of the National Abortion Rights Action League of Pennsylvania, is filmed in her upscale home. She can afford day care for her 3-month-old baby, and much

as she would like to stay home with him, she says she is likely to go back to work soon because of her professional responsibilities as well as for the income. Motherhood, she says, is not the only way to have an impact on society, and her husband agrees.

There are no editorials here. My hunch is that Ms. Gustafson is firmly on the abortion-rights side of the debate, but in a professional decision that some other documentary makers might emulate to the benefit of their work, she lets her subjects have their say without intruding or loading the argument.

"Casting the First Stone" is the final offering of the season for "P.O.V.," public television's series of independently made documentaries. In June, in a review of the first program, "Absolutely Positive," about several people with the AIDS virus, I wrote that the subjects of future programs indicated the series had not changed in response to criticisms from the right that "P.O.V." is skewed to the left. I concluded, not very hopefully, "Well, maybe one of them will take a surprising point of view." If the absence of a point of view can be a point of view, "Casting the First Stone" is the one.

A 2½-year project — worth every minute



Susan Slobojan

GLOBE
VILLAGE

454 BROOME ST. NEW YORK, N.Y. 10013

By SUSAN SLOBOJAN
News Staff Writer

"Home" is the sort of program you'll never see on a television network. Too much of a downer. Not fast-enough paced. Wouldn't pull a high enough rating.

It is also the sort of program that makes you rejoice in the existence of public television. The sort that makes you glad that out there somewhere, there still are people who will sink three years of their lives and a lot of their own money in a private, intimately personal artistic vision.

"Home" is easily the best documentary I have seen on television this year. Created, produced and in part

The TV column

financed by independent filmmakers John Reilly and Julie Gustafson, it airs tonight at 10 on Channel 56.

It is about the changes 20th-century life has wrought in the American family structure. Specifically, it deals with how the focus has shifted, for many momentous occasions and events, from the home to that of various institutions.

NOT SO LONG ago, we had our babies and tended our elderly at

home. Now we have our babies in hospitals and send our ailing loved ones there to die. We put our elderly in nursing homes, hopefully to live. "Home" is about four families who are searching for a different route.

In four individual portraits, we witness momentous occasions in their lives. We watch a widow growing old in a nursing home; a couple having their second baby at a center staffed with midwife-nurses; another couple marrying in the traditional manner; and a son who tends his terminally-ill mother himself, rather than allow her to die in a hospital.

Some of the segments are uplifting; others are heart-rending. All are successful, mostly because of the producers' minimalist approach. Reilly and Gustafson have the perfect touch for this material: They never preach, and they ask no leading questions. Mostly they remain off-camera, allowing the story to tell itself.

In "Growing Old," 94-year-old Lena Gardiner sums up her nursing home experience concisely and immediately. "It's awful when you grow old," she begins flatly. Why? "You can't do what you like when you have something happen to you."



Lena Gardner, 94, with 'Home' producer Julie Gustafson and her baby, from the program's 'Growing Old' segment.

Continued on Page 22

Worth every minute

Continued from Page 68

LENA LIVES IN what looks like a wonderful place. They have monthly birthday parties in her nursing home; good, hot meals three times a day; a beauty parlor staffed with kindly, considerate people. Her son, who lives nearby, visits once a week; her daughter, who lives out of town, visits when she can.

Yet all it takes is one communal meal, at a cheery table set with charming appointments, to see what's wrong. Lena lives in unnatural isolation. The only people she sees are as old as she is; when her son and daughter visit, the place somehow makes them treat her like a child. It's all very nice, we quickly see, but it isn't home.

Home is where George Donnelly decides his cancer-stricken mother, Elizabeth, deserves to die. In the program's final segment, "Death of a Parent," Elizabeth asks her children not to send her away for the two to six months she has left. They agree, and George moves into her apartment. "She has never turned her back on anybody in her life," he reasons simply.

We watch as George feeds his mother, changes her, wakes up in the middle of the night with her and sees to it that her family and friends are at her bedside when she dies. "She knew we were there, because she cried," he says when it's over. "I wiped tears from her eyes. It's all worth it — just for that one-tenth of a second."

"HOME" HAS ALREADY received

major awards at Atlanta and Texas film festivals. In addition, it is one of few American documentaries to be selected for screening at the International Television Screening Conference in Milan.

But the prizes don't tell half the story. "Home" was more than 2½ years in the making. That time, and the producers' obvious loving care, make it an exotic and vanishing breed in American television. Watch now, for extinction may come sooner than you think.



Newlyweds Delores Seay and Lee Marshall are featured in the well-done documentary 'Home.'

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PBS Special Hits Home

By STEVEN REDDICLIFFE
Herald Television Writer

"Home," the superb documentary airing tonight at 8 on WPBT (Ch. 2), is about love for life, in sickness and in health, till death do us part.

In four segments — "A Birth," "Growing Old," "Marriage" and "Death of a Parent" — "Home" reports on "the meaning of home and family in an age in which nursing homes and hospitals have taken over territory formerly occupied by mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, neighbors and friends.

A production of the Television Laboratory, the ambitious program out of WNET, New York's public station, "Home" was taped by John Reilly and Julie Gustafson in a simple, eloquent video verite style.

"HOME" IS witness to a birth at a New York childbearing center

("The sweet sounds," says the proud father on hearing his baby's cries), captures the sadness and joy at a home for the elderly, goes to a giddy wedding and records the actions of a family caring for a terminally ill relative.

There is love in all of these portraits, and, very often, a contagious enthusiasm for life. "That's the foot that used to kick me," says a delighted mother as she wiggles her baby's toes. A woman about to be married says of her husband-to-be, "He's the first male person I've met in years that I can say I really need."

Lena, the woman at the nursing home, is not at all pleased to be there, but her daughter's visit appears to be a happy occasion.

George, who takes care of his dying mother at her home, says the idea of nursing homes offended him, and that perhaps his presence would be the "spark" that keeps her going.

AT ONE POINT, a woman says, "I have more trust in my family than in institutions," but that doesn't seem to be the sole message of this production.

In one touching scene after another, "Home" says that home is where the heart is.

Citing low ratings, WPLG (Ch. 10) has canceled "The \$20,000 Pyramid" and replaced it with "Play the Percentages," which debuts today at noon. Geoff Edwards is host. . . Today also marks the debut of a new set for Ch. 10's news shows. Color it earth-tone tan and brown. . .

To celebrate its 25th year on the air, WPEC (Ch. 12), the ABC affiliate in West Palm Beach, is featuring a wonderful grab bag of vintage TV programs this week. Airing at 9 a.m., 5:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., the shows include "The Millionaire," "You Are There," "San

Francisco Beat," "The Twilight Zone," "December Bride" and "Our Miss Brooks." Because television so often denies its past (perhaps an acknowledgement that programming really was better then), this series is especially welcome.

Power and Pathos in 'Pursuit of Happiness

By Tom Shales

Video verité essays like "The Pursuit of Happiness," at 8 tonight on Channel 32, are heir to the two greatest traditions in television: the live drama and the intimate documentary. This is the best kind of TV because it isn't ersatz anything else; it's art and journalism meeting in a way they could only meet on TV.

"Happiness," an astute and inspired choice for Independence Day programming, extracts moments from the lives of six people in varying imperiled straits as they try to shape the directions of their lives. The film, by the gifted team of John Reilly and Julie Gustafson, is compelling in a cumulative way. The filmmakers have the ability to put a viewer at emotional risk almost immediately; then, the more they tell you about these people, the more you want to know, and the more deeply you care.

A common denominator in all the stories is jail. One pivotal figure is the supervisor of Pittsburgh State Prison, George Petsock, whom we encounter in home life with his wife Ida May, and whose path crosses those of other principal figures. Among them are Ron Grimm, given a life sentence five years earlier for taking part in an armed robbery in which a man was murdered (Grimm did not have or fire the gun); and Molly Rush, one of the "Plowshares Eight," a group of antinuclear Catholic activists with a penchant, perhaps even a passion, for getting arrested.

The other characters are Molly's husband and another prison inmate. The introduction of the nuclear protest theme threatens to tilt the film into too political an orbit. Words from the Declaration of Independence about the right of a people to overthrow a government that wrongs them are inserted just before shots of a protest demonstration on the front steps of Rockwell International. The filmmakers seem to be trying to make one feel guilty for not having taken part in any antinuclear activities.

Additionally, I felt the filmmakers wanted us to care more about Molly Rush and her cause than about the Petsocks and their dreams of retirement in a mobile home. To the contrary, Rush comes off as intelligent but terribly pious, and all too well equipped with sensitivity clichés of the '80s ("I just think it's important to respect people's choices," she meaninglessly tells her husband). But the heroine of the film, to stretch a term, is clearly Ida May Petsock, whom we see early playing and singing "The Way We Were" at the living room piano and later referring to it in the kitchen as "that stupid song."

The Petsocks let the filmmakers poke their camera into terribly personal crevices of their lives. Gradually we see Ida May as a woman in the process of having her consciousness raised, but good. Her talks with her husband, who treats her with a kind of suffering tolerance, are touching. When, midway through the film or so, we learn that she has undertaken something of a writing career, one that deals largely with self-help homilies apparently, it's the most gratifying kind of revelation.

She has found a new person inside her after all these years, she says. "It's the me that should have been all along." Perhaps it has to do with the personalizing nature of television, but the odyssey of Ida May comes to seem every bit as urgent as Molly Rush's favorite subject, the possible destruction of the lovely little planet we have here.

Ron Grimm, the lifer, has a heartrending story to tell, and it is meted out in small installments. He was a Vietnam veteran, we learn, who says he knew he should have prevented the use of the gun in the robbery, but didn't. On the practical side, he and a girlfriend plot a strategy during visiting hours for commutation of his sentence. In a more visionary mood, Grimm dreams of having "one good year" free from strife, of owning "my own home," and mourns that he never had "a mother that cared for and loved me."

For the Petsocks, a burning question at the end of the day is whether or not to go to "The Mall." For a bearded prison inmate, life can be summarized in five words: "I don't want to die." For Rush, there is always one more demonstration, and on the way to it she does become eloquent when trying to convince her husband of the importance of her fight. Her dead mother still lives in her memory, she tells him, "but if everybody goes, there is no memory . . . there's nothing left behind."

PBS fed this brilliant film to stations for use last Saturday in a poor time slot. Channel 32 wisely changed that to tonight. But Channel 26, the sleepytime station, will delay the program until July 10 (at 11 p.m. yet), when its Independence Day peg will be lost. WETA through the years has consistently shown the most arrogant contempt for the innovative work of independent filmmakers; the station management seems annoyed that such programs exist at all. At Channel 26, they think public television is the Boston Pops.

THE WASHINGTON POST

GLOBAL VILLAGE

Julie Gustafson, Director

John Reilly, Executive Director

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