

Pacific Television
& Film's

Circle of Lonely Hearts

a film by
Michael C. Neitzel



STREET
CHURCH

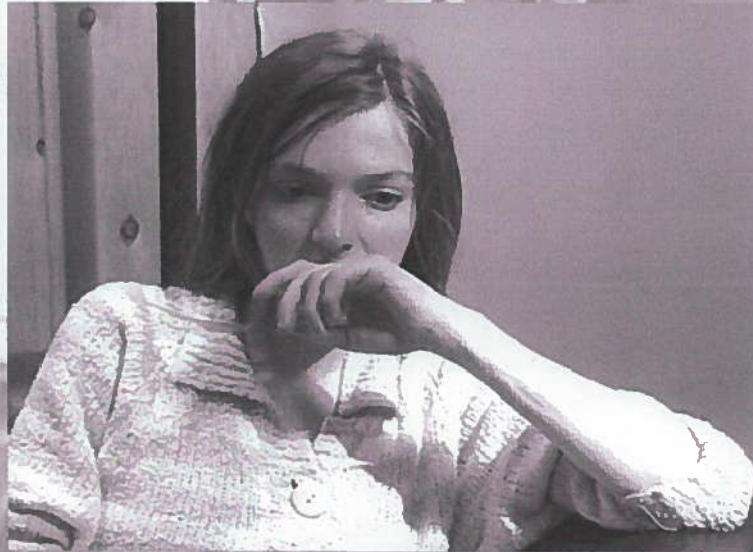
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Concept:

Every day newspapers report that we are losing the war on drugs. Drug addiction and the closely related violence in our families and on the streets of our communities are costly to our already diminished health care budgets. But more importantly, the cost of human lives, especially among teenagers, is even more devastating, and rising constantly. From 1988 to 1998 the number of drug related deaths in British Columbia alone has risen ten-fold (1999 B.C. Coroner's Report). And still we prefer to turn the other cheek. What we don't see, we don't have to deal with.

The award-winning documentary *Where Angels Weep* was a chilling account of the perils of life on society's frayed edges, and was broadcast to outstanding reviews in Canada on Vision TV, SCN, and Knowledge Network and was featured on NBC during a documentary film special. Its honesty and conviction touched audiences everywhere, and few will be able to forget Nicole's haunting face. After ten years in the alleys of Vancouver's downtown eastside, worn out and sick, "all used up" in the language of the streets, Nicole is now fighting her last battles with a demon which is about to claim her young life. As we watch her struggles we are reminded that it is not only Nicole who suffers, but also her mother, and her young daughter, all being part of the circle of lonely hearts.

The documentary is based on more than three years of interviews, and is told by Nicole, her counselor, her mother and others who have known her.



Nicole in the spring of 2001:
"I am dying. What kind of future is there for me?"

Circle of Lonely Hearts

A One-Hour Documentary for Television (48:45 min.)

Circle of Lonely Hearts chronicles the heart-breaking struggle of a young woman, trying to stay alive on the streets of Vancouver's downtown eastside.

Spanning more than three years, the film reflects the roller-coaster ride between hope and despair of Nicole's life. Caught in the deadly grip of drugs, destined to follow in her mother's footsteps, Nicole is unable to break free, her own daughter's future all but pre-determined.

Homeless and beat, her life is filled with horror and violence, her dreams forever dreams, her worst fears a shattering reality.

Amongst all the sadness there is a moment of happiness in the end when Nicole, aware that she has little time left, discovers that her now 8-year old daughter has never stopped loving her.



Nicole at fourteen

Circle of Lonely Hearts chronicles Nicole's life from interviews recorded from early in 1999 when we first worked with her on *Where Angels Weep* to April, 2002. It looks at the connection between three generations, from Nicole's mother to her own eight-year old daughter, all marked forever in their own way by a life of abuse and neglect. The images showing Nicole's life are filled with horror, violence, and we sense a deep loneliness.

As Nicole talks about her childhood of abuse, neglect, and abandonment we begin to understand the hopelessness she must have felt and still feels. Her addiction now is threatening to kill her, the pain by far outweighs the pleasure, and still Nicole continues to use. Her mother, a recovered alcoholic and heroin addict, talks about Nicole's horrendous childhood. With an abusive father who left Nicole and her mother when she was only three, her life was spent in foster homes and finally back with her mother. After watching her mother jump off a 3rd-floor balcony to the street to escape her raging father who threatened to kill her with a knife, Nicole doesn't speak for a whole year. At thirteen she heads for the bright lights of the city, where she spends her life in the hellhole of Vancouver's downtown eastside, in the alleys, trick pads, and cheap hotels, selling her body and soul for cocaine and heroin.

Now, at twenty-four, nothing has changed. Unable to pull herself free, Nicole is waiting to die.



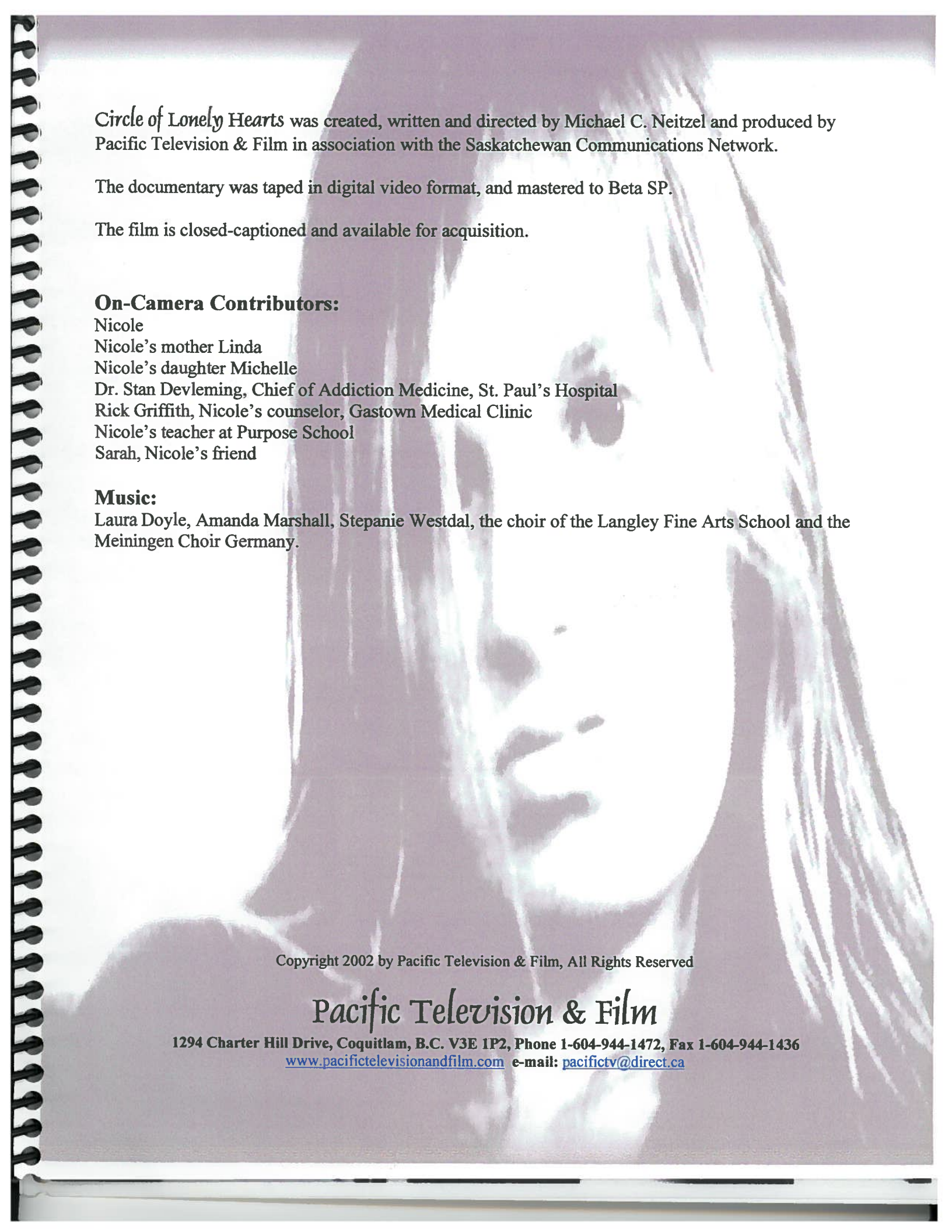
Nicole at Five



Nicole's Mother



Nicole and her daughter Michelle in 1995



Circle of Lonely Hearts was created, written and directed by Michael C. Neitzel and produced by Pacific Television & Film in association with the Saskatchewan Communications Network.

The documentary was taped in digital video format, and mastered to Beta SP.

The film is closed-captioned and available for acquisition.

On-Camera Contributors:

Nicole

Nicole's mother Linda

Nicole's daughter Michelle

Dr. Stan Devleming, Chief of Addiction Medicine, St. Paul's Hospital

Rick Griffith, Nicole's counselor, Gastown Medical Clinic

Nicole's teacher at Purpose School

Sarah, Nicole's friend

Music:

Laura Doyle, Amanda Marshall, Stepanie Westdal, the choir of the Langley Fine Arts School and the Meiningen Choir Germany.

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