

LEDA SERENE FILMS PRESENTS
A FILM BY FRANCES-ANNE SOLOMON
A WINTER TALE



Peter Williams

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A WINTER TALE SYNOPSIS

...The bullet that shattered a community.

Shots ring out one winter night and a bullet meant for a local street dealer kills a ten-year-old boy.

In the downtown Toronto community of Parkdale, grief and suspicion hang heavily in the air, while the nightly patrons at Miss G's Caribbean TakeAway resume their ritual of beer and banter.

But one of them, Gene Wright, cannot go on. He begs his friends for help. In a most unusual development, six Black men make a pact to form a support group in hopes of salvaging their broken spirits and redeeming their besieged community.

A Winter Tale is set against the backdrop of a multicultural community's unrealized hopes and dreams. Bitter and tragic, funny and hopeful, the film tells a uniquely Canadian story that features Toronto as a central character.



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DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

About 5 years ago, I began work on a project that would explore the inner worlds of black men living in Toronto, in light of all the media reports of escalating “black on black violence” in the city.

I met with and interviewed men - across generations, differing in class, income and age, with and without jobs, etc, and built up a collection of about fifteen to twenty personal stories of their life experiences. I was struck by how many stories recalled memories of their immigrant parents saying that they had come to Canada attracted by Pierre Eliot Trudeau’s promise of the “Just Society”. These men’s stories talked about their relationships with friends and enemies, familiars and strangers, wives, girlfriends and children. They included their thoughts about power, money, the police, religion and the law.

Inevitably, I heard these stories within the context of my background in improvisational theatre and my experience as a Co-Counsellor. I felt that black men in this city might benefit from a process that would support them emotionally to deal with their every day challenges, manage stress, and find ways to support each other, instead of responding, on an individual basis, to the everyday violence of racism, with further violence, desperation and rage. Thus, the character of Gene Wright came to life - a forty-something social worker striving desperately to hold on to the dream of his immigrant father who answered Trudeau’s call for newcomers to the “Just Society”.

In order to create the Support Group, I put out a call describing the project and its proposed process, for actors from within the multicultural realities of this city who were eager for the opportunity to work creatively with others like themselves.

Our group began with exercises over many months, such as: interviewing each other about life stories; visiting different locations within the community; drawing on lived experiences; absorbing ourselves in story development workshops (sometimes over a weekend, sometimes over a week).

We have been working together as a group for more than three years now. Over time, everyone involved in our small “community” became strongly bonded to each other. Mutual trust is an essential ingredient of creative collaboration. The years of in-depth character development have paid off. The result is, I believe, a strong film with compelling characters.

Racism - and the way that we internalise it - is a key theme that has threaded its way through almost everyone’s stories - along with tales of ambition, belligerence, anger, sorrow, humour, persistence, weakness, strength, success and failure. There were individual strategies for negotiating and striving to overcome the barriers of systemic racism. Many stories unwittingly exposed an abiding, often deeply submerged, sense of personal failure, blame and guilt in the face of the everyday violence of racism encountered by black men today in Canada.

Winter became a metaphor for a community under siege in the cold, seeking strategies and ways out of the violence of racism. Finding none.

Healing comes from the honesty and passion of this storytelling, and in our ability to hold on and keep faith with each other through the process, regardless of the obstacles.

Frances-Anne Solomon, March 2007.

A WINTER TALE

CAST & CREW

CAST

Gene Wright	Peter Williams
DX	Michael Miller
Miss G	Leonie Forbes
Clip	p! Barrington
Ian	Peter Bailey
Professa	Dennis “Sprangalang” Hall
Lloyd Parker	R.O. Glasgow
Sibeka	Ryan Ishmael
Sam	Lucky Ejim
Andrew	Sabio Emerencia Collins
Mickey	Mike G. Yohannes
Elaine	Valerie Buhagiar
Charmaine	Shakura S’Aida
Rain	Finlandia Cassellas
Julie	Nicole Stamp
Guy	Bobby Del Rio

CREW

Director	Frances-Anne Solomon
Writers	Frances-Anne Solomon Michele Lonsdale-Smith
Producers	Frances-Anne Solomon Susan Fueg Michele Lonsdale-Smith
Director of Photography	Kim Derko
Editor	Michele Francis
Production Designer	Christopher Pinheiro
Original Music	John Welsman Mauri Hall

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FRANCES-ANNE SOLOMON

DIRECTOR, PRODUCER and WRITER

Frances-Anne Solomon is a Director, Producer and Writer in film, TV, radio, theatre, and new media. Born in England of Trinidadian parents, she was raised and educated in the Caribbean and Canada, lived and worked in the UK for several years, and has been based in Toronto since 1999.

Her directing credits include the sitcom Lord Have Mercy! (VisionTV, 2003) the feature film Peggy Su! (BBC Films, 1997); the dramas What My Mother Told Me (Channel 4 1995), and Bideshi (British Film Institute 1994); and documentaries Literature Alive (Bravo!/OMNI, 2006), Reunion (BBC, 1993), and I Is A Long Memored Woman (Arts Council of England 1991).

As well as directing, Frances-Anne is the Artistic Director and President of the two companies she founded, Leda Serene Films, her film and television production vehicle, and CaribbeanTales, a prolific not for profit company that makes multimedia products aimed at the educational market.

Most recently she created, produced and directed the multi-faceted Literature Alive project, comprising 20 documentaries exploring the life and work of Caribbean authors from the 60's through the hip-hop generation (for Bravo! CLT, BookTV, and OMNI TV); a series of audio books (for the Trillium Foundation), and the DCH funded educational website LiteratureAliveOnline.

She was the Co-creator, Producer and Director of Lord Have Mercy! Canada's first multi-cultural sitcom, which aired on Vision TV, Toronto/one, Showcase and APTN in 2003 and was nominated for two Gemini Awards: Best Comedy series, and Best Individual Performer (Leonie Forbes)

Between 1992-98, Frances-Anne was a Producer and Executive Producer for BBC Single Drama & Films, responsible for several films and TV movies, including the Black Screen strand, (for black writers, producers and directors) and Screen on the Tube (for new feature directors). Productions include, Speak Like A Child, director John Akomfrah, Love Is The Devil, director John Maybury, The Sixth Happiness, director Waris Hossein, Flight, director Alex Pillai and Siren Spirits, directors Ngozi Onwurah, Pratibha Parmar and Dani Williamson. She previously worked as a radio drama producer/director for the BBC, producing some 35 radio plays, and as a documentary researcher and director for The Bandung File (Channel 4) and Ebony (BBC2).

She studied Theatre at the University of Toronto with Steve Martineau and Ken Gass, and poetry with Jay MacPherson; and trained as a film director in the UK at Bristol University's RFT Programme and the prestigious BBC Drama Directors Course.

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FRANCES-ANNE SOLOMON

FILMOGRAPHY

- **A Winter Tale**, 2007, Feature Film - Writer/Director, Producer
- **Literature Alive**, 2005-6, TV Series - Creator, Producer, Director
- **Lord Have Mercy!**, 2003, sitcom - Director, Producer, Co-Creator, Co-writer
- **Love Is the Devil: 1998, Study for a Portrait of Francis Bacon**, Feature Film - Executive Producer
- **Speak Like a Child**, 1998, Feature Film - Executive Producer
- **Peggy Su!**, 1997, Feature Film - Director
- **Sixth Happiness**, 1997, Feature Film - Executive Producer
- **Flight**, 1995, Television Movie - Executive Producer
- **What My Mother Told Me**, 1996, Feature - Writer/Director, Producer
- **Siren Spirits**, 1995, Mini-Series - Creator, Series Producer
- **Bideshi**, 1995, Short Film - Director
- **Reunion: West Indian Women at War**, 1993, Documentary - Writer/Director, Producer
- **I Is a Long Memored Woman**, 1990, Documentary Feature - Writer/Director

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LEDA SERENE FILMS

Formed in 1990, and based in Toronto, Canada, Leda Serene Films is Frances-Anne Solomon's production vehicle for film, television, theatre, radio and new media production.

The Company has produced an impressive range of award-winning programs - from feature films & creative documentaries, to more innovative multi-media projects - and has made its name as a producer of high quality dramas and documentaries that celebrate diversity - strong personal stories from different cultural perspectives in the global Diaspora.

SELECTED AWARDS

"What My Mother Told Me" premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in 1996, and has won awards at The Festival of Black International Cinema in Berlin, St Louis, Paris, (Best Film Depicting The Black Experience) and at Martha's Vineyard African American Film Festival 2006, (HBO Best Feature Award.) It also won the "Producer's Choice" Award at the Women of Color Film Festival 2005 in Berkeley.

The Literature Alive Documentary Series won a Special Recognition Award for "Memory Places" at The Festival of Black International Cinema, and the Audience Award for "Blood Dub and The Matriarch" at the San Diego Women's Film Festival.

"Lord Have Mercy!", Canada's first multicultural sitcom, was nominated for 2 Gemini Awards - for Best Comedy Series and Best Individual Performance (for Leonie Forbes).

"Bideshi", won Best Short Feature, at the Bombay International Film Festival, 1996.

"I Is A Long Memored Woman" won the Gold Award for Television Performing Arts, at the New York International Film & Television Festival 1991. The BBC Radio version won Best Feature Documentary, at the Sony Radio Awards 1991, and was nominated for a Prix Futura for most Innovative Radio Feature.

RECENT FESTIVAL SCREENINGS (2005-2006)

What My Mother Told Me

- 2006 Martha's Vineyard African American Film Festival (Best Feature Nomination)
- 2006 Festival of Black International Cinema, St Louis, Berlin, Paris. (Award, Best Film Portraying the Black Experience)
- 2005 Pan African Festival of Cinema, Ougadougou
- 2005 Pan African Film Festival, Los Angeles, California
- 2005 Women of Color Film Festival, Berkeley, California (Producer's Choice Award)

Reunion: West Indian Women At War

- 2006 The Trinidad & Tobago International Film Festival
- 2006 Festival of Black International Cinema, St Louis, Berlin, Paris
- 2005 Pan African Film Festival, Colorado
- 2005 Mpenzi Women's Film Festival, Toronto

RECENT FESTIVAL SCREENINGS(2005-2006) cont'd

Literature Alive

- 2006 Carifesta, Trinidad
Literature Alive was screened in it's entirety as part of "Books On Film" at Carifesta IX
In addition, Blood, Dub and The Matriarch - Dbi Young was screened at the Carifesta IX
Film Festival
- 2006 The Trinidad and Tobago International Film Festival
Fabulous Spaces - Nalo Hopkinson, Miss Lou: Then and Now - Hon. Louise Bennet
Coverley
- 2006 Fipa, Paris
Memory Places-Andre Alexis, Believe-Richardo Keens Douglas, Un Homme
Dans sa Ville - Dany LaFerriere, Home - Tessa McWatt
- 2006 Reel Sisters, NY
My Dinner With Shani - Shani Mootoo, Man Behind The Mic - Dwayne Morgan, Blood, Dub
and the Matriarch - Dbi.young, Her True True Name - Pam Mordecai, Fantastic Spaces -
Nalo Hopkinson
- 2006 Festival of Black International Cinema, (St Louis, Berlin, Paris)
Her True True Name - Pam Mordecai, Miss Lou Then and Now - Louise Bennet, Memory
Places - Andre Alexis (Special Acknowledgement Award)
- 2006 San Diego Women's Festival
Blood, Dub and The Matriarch - D'bi Young

Lord Have Mercy!

- 2005 African Diaspora Film Festival NY
2005 Best of the ADFP, BAM Center New York
2005 Pan African Film Festival, Los Angeles
2005 Atlanta Women of Color Film Festival

I Is A Long Memored Woman

- 2006 African Diaspora Film Festival

Bideshi

- 2006 Carifesta IX Film Festival, Trinidad