

THE THIRD PERSON



A Film About Parenting the Family's First Child

A National Film Board North West Studio Production



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The Third Person

"And there she was. It seemed everything was over, the hard part was done."

— Linda Robson, commenting on the birth of her first child, Zoë.

"The whole thing was overwhelming. I'd never worked so hard in my whole life to satisfy someone's needs."

— Linda Robson, commenting on her first months as a mother.

A film for expectant and new parents, *The Third Person* documents the range of emotions experienced by one couple, Linda and Tom Robson, as their expectations of parenting clash with reality during the first three months after the birth of their healthy, first child, Zoë. Like the Robsons, many expectant and new parents fall initially victim to the Super Mom and Super Dad myths. They think that with a little hard work and study they should be the perfect parents of a perfect baby, whereas the reality of parenting is always a mixture of love, fears, overwhelming frustration and deep satisfaction.

Background

Just prior to this film the Robsons had moved from Toronto, where Linda left behind a high stress, high profile job. She decided to stop looking for work in Calgary when she found herself pregnant, and to stay home for her pregnancy and the child's first years. Linda was 33, Tom, 36, at Zoë's birth.

Tom's occupation has been sales. Although he maintained an office in his home in the months after Zoë's birth, he frequently had to be away overnight and averaged one day a week working in his home office.

Suggested Discussion Questions

Before showing the film to expectant parents (or new parents):

1. What are (were) your expectations about the joys and difficulties of your new life as parents?
2. What changes in your lifestyle or special activities — e.g., freezing meals ahead, cleaning the house — are you completing (did you complete) in the weeks before the birth to help you adjust physically and mentally to being a new parent? Did you arrange (are you arranging) for any extra help to care for your infant right after birth?
3. What changes in your life do you think a new baby will bring (has brought)? In your self esteem? In your work patterns? In your energy levels? In your attitude towards the future?
4. What do you think (did you think) your child will be like (would be like) in appearance and personality? How much, why, and when do you think your baby will cry? Sleep? Eat?

After showing the film:

1. What surprised you about the Robsons' experiences with Zoë? Why?
2. What happened in the film that you expected? Do you think your experience will be (is) similar to that of the Robsons'? How do you think it will be (is) different? Why?

Suggested Uses

- Pre-natal Support Groups
- Post-natal Support Groups
- Family Study Programs
- Family Life Programs
- Community Health Nurse Training Programs
- Further Education Programs for Family Counsellors and Social Workers

Related Films

An Unremarkable Birth (Bien Naître)

Child: Part 1 Jamie, Ethan and Marlon: The First Two Months

Child: Part 2 Jamie, Ethan and Keir: 2 - 14 Months

First Born

New Born — Birthright

Post Partum Depression

The Start of a Lifetime

Child Birth: The Changing Sounds

With
Tom, Linda and Zoë Robson

Director
Wendy Hill-Tout

Cinematographer
Andrew Jaremko

Location Sound
Don Adams
George Tarrant

Grip
Peter McGowan

Editor
Per Asplund

Assistant Editor
Peter Svab

Original Music
John Bienvenue
Douglas Berquist

Re-recording
Barry Jones

Post-production
Roberta Mayer

Unit Administrator
Margaret Smith

Producers
Anne Wheeler
Dale Phillips

Executive Producer
Tom Radford

Produced by
National Film Board of Canada,
North West Studio,
in collaboration with
Marie-Ann Films,
the Calgary Society of Independent
Filmmakers, and NFB Studio D

Distributed by
National Film Board of Canada

Color
Screening time:
18 minutes 27 seconds

16 mm: 106C 0184 088
3/4" : 116C 0184 088
VHS : 113C 0184 088
Beta : 114C 0184 088

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P.O. Box 6100, Montreal, Quebec H3C 3H5
Printed in Canada



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