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Seeing for Ourselves is pleased to announce that its documentary film about the photographic rebranding of probation

IN A WHOLE NEW WAY

will have its world premiere at the prestigious **Manhattan Film Festival**, based at the Cinema Village at 22 East 12th Street in New York City, at 7:00pm on June 23, 2021.

Almost as many Americans currently serve a probation term as live in Los Angeles, something under four million. Yet few besides those ensnared understand this dominant criminal justice sanction. Although rehabilitation was baked into the practice from its 1841 origins in New England, the 1972-92 crime wave turned it punitive, a staging post for eventual incarceration rather than an off-ramp from the criminal justice system.

By now, many jurisdictions have returned to the roots of the practice—nowhere more so than New York City, where probation helps remedy mass incarceration while keeping the city safe. Yet a mocking media image continues to stymie reform efforts elsewhere, inhibiting reforms and encouraging lockups.

To challenge negative stereotypes of probation nationwide while obtaining a marketable skill, hundreds of the city probation agency's clients in New York's most underserved communities—along with neighborhood allies—learned how to document their lives photographically. This is photography from the inside out, turning traditional photojournalism on its head.

A tie-in with the forthcoming eponymous book that follows Seeing for Ourselves's widely acclaimed, award-winning 2015 volume *Project Lives: New York Public Housing Residents Photograph Their World, In a Whole New Way* aims at nothing less than reform of America's broken criminal justice system. Meanwhile, the projected four-volume book series may one day be viewed as a landmark in equipping and training marginalized populations to take charge of their own public narrative, and in American photography generally.

Following the appeal of *Project Lives* across the political spectrum, both the documentary and book *In a Whole New Way* are aimed at both the right and left around the need for justice reform, one of the few issues that unite them. Having praised *Project Lives*, Noam Chomsky has this to say:

"Now comes the book and documentary about cameras turned over to the city's probationers, the latest effort by the non-profit Seeing for Ourselves. Once again, we recognize how connected we all remain. Once again, the photographs open our eyes and warm our hearts. Once again, our concerns for social justice broaden and deepen."

In a Whole New Way was previously honored by the Docs Without Borders Film Festival for outstanding excellence, for its Motivational/Inspiration quality, while winning the Best Documentary award at the Amsterdam International Film Festival. While accepted at film festivals in Canada, France, Italy, and Germany, the film has attracted the interest of scores of other festivals the world over. Meanwhile, Seeing for Ourselves gratefully acknowledges the support of Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and the National Endowment for the Arts in this endeavor.

The film was produced by George Carrano, co-director of the nonprofit Seeing for Ourselves, and was written and directed by Jonathan Fisher, the other co-director. Seeing for Ourselves was founded by the two in 2010 with the encouragement of world-famous Magnum photojournalist Philip Jones Griffiths. They had mounted an exhibition of his works in the Chelsea, NYC gallery Denise Bibro Fine Art in 2005.

Access to the film online is available upon request. This is a [trailer](#).

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