

A film by Seeing for Ourselves



IN A WHOLE NEW WAY

Undoing mass incarceration by a path untraveled

THE FILM

Ensnaring almost four million Americans, probation has evolved from a second chance to avoid prison to a sanction actually feeding mass incarceration.

Equipped only with cameras and a technique called “participatory photography,” some of these individuals set to change all this—only to find themselves transformed. Their portrayal of their authentic lives aspired to counter the forbidding mugshots typifying media coverage and so help return probation to its roots. The effort itself led the photographers to see themselves and their world in a whole new way.

This half-hour documentary of their heroes’ journey peels back the veil on probation—the little-known domestic innovation that would eventually spread through most of the planet. The film itself warmed hearts in over 200 festivals around the world during 2021-2023, amassing 69 awards and 17 additional award nominations.

WHY THIS FILM

We Americans lock up far more of our people than any country on earth. Observers on both the right and left have long sought a way out of this situation that does not endanger the community.

The nonprofit Seeing for Ourselves believes that if probation could once again **rehabilitate rather than punish**, it would be viewed more widely as an effective alternative to jail or prison. And then the numbers incarcerated would begin to drop.

Creating a new public image of the millions serving a term of probation is the first step towards this end—and already underway, thanks to the initiative portrayed in the film. *In a Whole New Way* aims at amplifying the process.

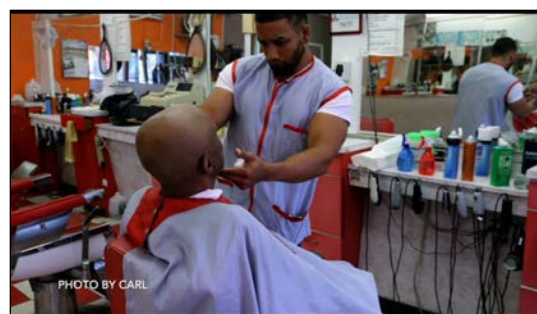


PHOTO BY CARL

“A pioneering approach to criminal justice reform.”

Palo Alto Weekly



PHOTO BY MOSHELLE

“Finally, a positive treatment of probation. Inspiring!”

Veronica Cunningham,
Chief Executive Officer
American Probation and Parole Association

CATCH THE FILM | inawholenewway.com

“Captivating!”

United Nations Association Film Festival



JOIN US

In a Whole New Way is that rare “feel-good” film promoting justice reform. Not coincidentally, it has won fans across the political spectrum. But we of Seeing for Ourselves need your help to leverage the film further.

Our goal is to bring the documentary to the attention of wider and wider audiences and decision-makers. Doing so will build ever-stronger momentum for viewing rehabilitative probation as an alternative to locking people up.

“

“Moving, important, inspirational, and eye-opening, you won’t want to miss this short film about one of the most pressing issues of our time.”

Thomas Memorial Library
Cape Elizabeth, Maine



Andre Whitehead (L), featured in the film, discusses the documentary with filmmaker Jonathan Fisher (R) at the annual conference of the American Probation and Parole Association, NYC, August 29, 2023.



Companion Book



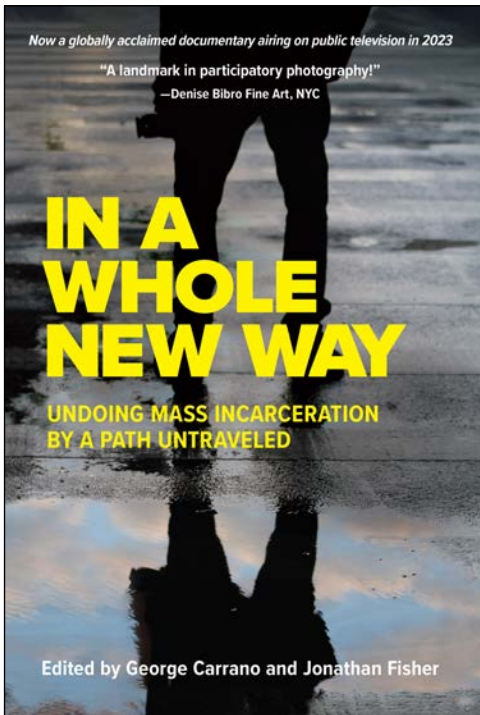
THE TEAM

A 501(c)(3) nonprofit, Seeing for Ourselves equips and trains the marginalized to take control of their own public narrative. Our first effort, on behalf of public housing residents, led to the globally-acclaimed book *Project Lives* and helped restart government support.

“

“Such a thoughtful and life-affirming documentary!”

Steve Woolworth, President
International Community Justice Association



The untold story of America’s dominant criminal justice sanction and the source of the award-winning film.

“As I observed almost four years ago about *Project Lives*—the book of photographic self-portrayals by New York public housing residents, with imagery intertwining revelatory text—it is always inspiring to see the scorned and disenfranchised take control of their lives.

“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.”

—Noam Chomsky

“A wonderful contribution to our field. In a Whole New Way contains so much – it’s an engaging history of community corrections and a glimpse of how probation is practiced in New York City. It’s a series of memorable and moving vignettes about people whose lives have been touched by crime and the justice system. But what will stick with me is the pictures. Throughout the book, we see the faces of those who are participating in this unique and special program. They are smiling and engaged, clearly relishing the opportunity to see and be seen as so much more than the criminal convictions that brought them to probation in the first place. The light in their eyes – their positivity and evident optimism about their futures – is an overwhelming argument for the importance of meaningful second chances as a core component of our justice system.”

—Megan Quattlebaum, Director, The Council of State Governments Justice Center

“Institutional reforms often start from the outside and work inward, which is one reason why so many overpromise and underdeliver. In a Whole New Way shows us what it could look like when reform begins with the perspective of those on the inside of a system—in this case, individuals on probation in New York City. Using participatory photography as a means of visual storytelling, the participants in this transformative project narrate their view of the world through the lens of a camera. In so doing, they remind us that it’s often not people who need changing but the systems that envelope their lives and so frequently constrain their futures.”

—Steve Woolworth, President, International Community Justice Association

“Sometimes solutions are in front of us, but we do not see and do not ask. Turning New Yorkers on probation into photographers documenting their own stories has led to an amazing cultural change. Seeing for Ourselves documents it beautifully in their film and book *In a Whole New Way*.”

—Linda Connelly, President/CEO, Successful Reentry

“The impact of second chances, unlike incarceration, cannot be measured by metrics alone. In a Whole New Way visually captures, on a human level, the challenges experienced by justice-impacted New Yorkers, illustrating that probation, like the criminal injustice system, needs reform.”

—Elizabeth Frederick, Chief Operating Officer, Avenues for Justice

“This book will still be read two hundred years from now!”

—*In Conversation with Frank Schaeffer* podcast

“An incredible book...a remarkable project...a groundbreaking endeavor...represents an unyielding commitment to fostering understanding and change through the lens of powerful imagery and storytelling.”

—*Stories from the 78* podcast

“A fascinating book—plus a documentary! The photos are great but the stories are amazing as well.”

—*Conversations Live with Cyrus Webb* radio show

“You’ve allowed us to see the world through others’ eyes. Your work is changing the world!”

—*Dave Nemo Weekends* radio show

“A fascinating collection of photographs and personal testimonies that offer groundbreaking insight into both the probation system and the people immersed in it.”

—*The Reporters inc.*

“Jonathan Fisher is a visionary and a true reformer!”

—Joe Arvidson, *The Criminologist* podcast

“Intriguing!”

—*Lean Left* podcast

“I’m a huge fan of your work!”

—*Free Thinking with Montel Williams* podcast

All royalties net of project expenses will be donated to the photographers and arts programming serving New Yorkers on probation.



Islip Bulletin Coverage of September 2023 Exhibit Staged by Islip Arts Center in Bay Shore, NY



Seeing for Ourselves founder George Carrano (R) with NYC probation official Lily Shapiro (L) at a gallery show, September 9, 2019.