

## THE 12TH WOODSTOCK FILM FESTIVAL

By **Stewart Nusbaumer** in Festival Coverage

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*Looking @ Docs*

Lucy Winer in Kings Park Hospital

My final film was *Kings Park: Stories From An American Mental Institution*. When the credits ended and the house lights came on the audience sat in stunned silence. After a few seconds there was a scattered applause, which grew into to a thunderous roar. *Kings Park* is an extraordinarily powerful film — or three films — superbly tiered with each poignant and insightful.

In 1967, Lucy Winer, a teenager, attempted to commit suicide and was committed to the mammoth and foreboding Kings Park State Hospital, a dehumanizing warehousing facility for the mentally ill — and everyone else who ended up there. To understand her troubled and painful past, Winer acquires her mental health records, meets with two former Kings Park workers, and then visits the abandoned hospital. It's an emotional trip, for her and us.

The documentary then branches out to include other voices, those of psychiatrics, ward attendants, and patients who were at Kings Park. Their perspectives add a richness and depth to the story. Finally, the film sheds light on the current mental health crisis, with jails and prisons now serving as our mental health holding centers.

Ten years in the making, *Kings Park: Stories From an American Mental Institution* travels from a single person's quest to presenting a multiplicity of perspectives to highlighting the current crisis. This is an astute, disturbing, yet riveting documentary.