



A  
Day  
In The  
Death  
Of  
Donny  
B.

511.40 (ARC 88815)

The life of a young heroin addict in Harlem is dramatically presented in stark black and white documentary style.

Donny B. says nothing, but his actions tell us what his life is like. The main element of the soundtrack is the song, "A Day in the Death of Donny B."

The film emphasizes the spectacle of futility and waste that is Donny B.'s life and the degree to which addiction has cut him off from his parents, friends and other people, who once cared about him but who now think of him almost as if he were already dead.

The film has been well received by inner-city schools and by urban youth groups. It is an excellent short subject for movie theaters.

16mm sound prints of "A Day in the Death of Donny B." are available for loan or purchase. Loan requests should be directed to the National Audiovisual Center, G.S.A., Washington, D.C. 20409.

Requests for purchase should be sent to the Sales Branch at this address.

# The National Institute of Mental Health

U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare  
Public Health Service  
Health Services and Mental Health Administration  
National Institute of Mental Health  
5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, Maryland 20852

# A Day In The Death Of Donny B.



It's a day in the death of Donny B.  
Strung out, waitin' to die,  
Nothin' to laugh at, no one to cry,  
Just another dirty grey day  
In the death of Donny B.  
Just another dirty grey day  
In the death of Donny B.

It's a day in the death of Donny B.  
Can't see a blue sky above,  
Can't feel the raindrops, can't feel the sun.  
Can't know a lover, couldn't have one.  
Can't feel the snowflakes,  
Can't work or play.  
Too busy findin' a fix for the day.  
Just another weary weary day  
In the death of Donny B.  
Just another weary weary day  
In the death of Donny B.

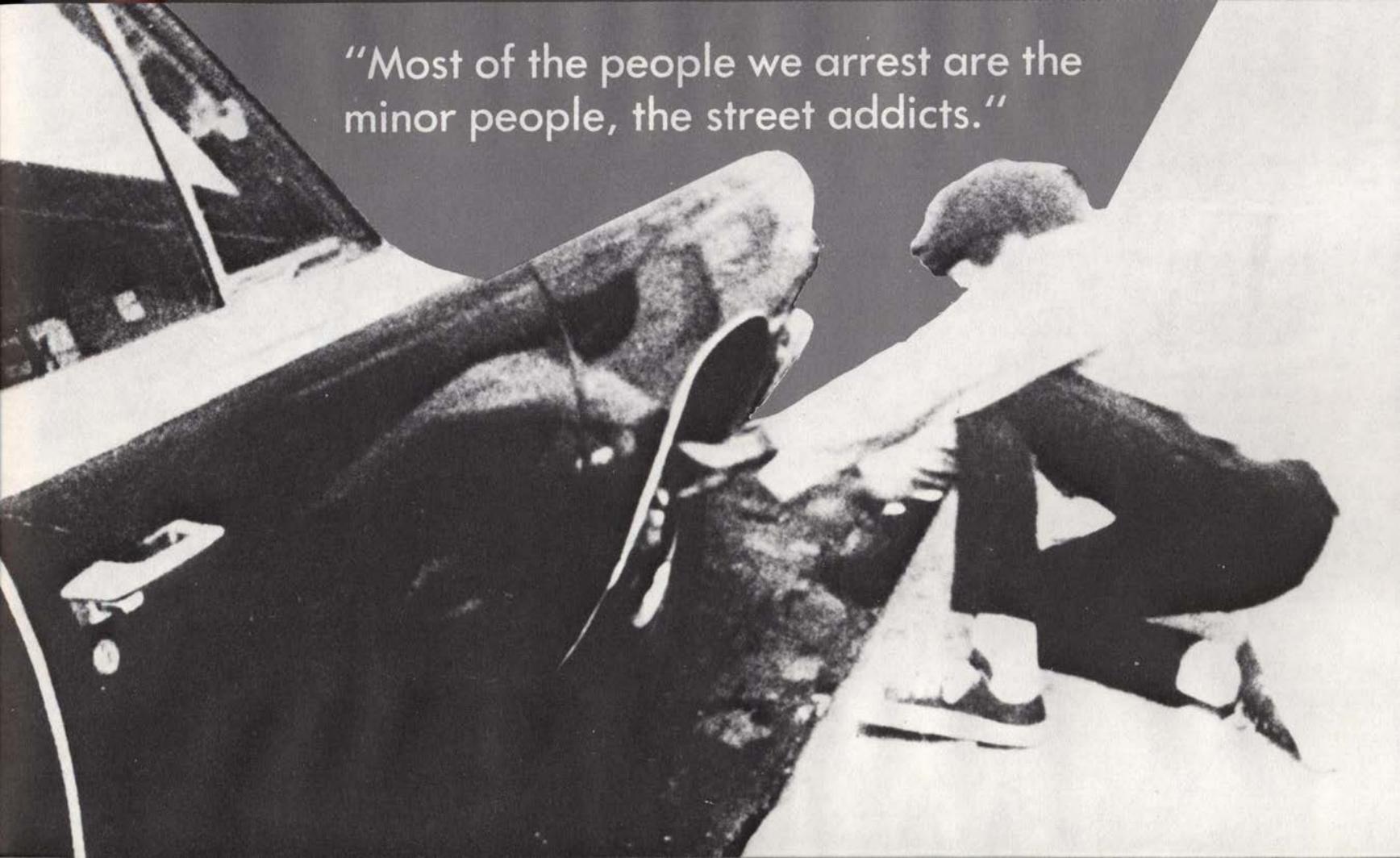
It's a way of livin' for Donny B.  
Jivin' his friends for a buck.  
Nothin' else matters, nobody cares.  
Hangin' around to raise a little bread  
For the death of Donny B.  
Hangin' around to raise a little bread  
For the death of Donny B.

It's the needle and vein for Donny B.  
Freezin' his muscle and brain.  
Bottle cap livin', bottle cap dead,  
Just another dirty grey dawn  
In the death of Donny B.  
Just another dirty grey dawn  
In the death of Donny B.  
Good-bye Donny you're feelin' no pain,  
Messin' up your life, that needle and vein.  
Just another dirty grey dawn  
In the death of Donny B.  
Just another dirty grey dawn  
In the death of Donny B.

“...a walking corpse...on the path to nowhere.”



"Most of the people we arrest are the minor people, the street addicts."





“Just to be normal, you have to go through a lot of hell.”



“His whole world consists of him.”



"...people stand around in a crowd, you know, watching, ... there's not too much sympathy for it."



"...no future,



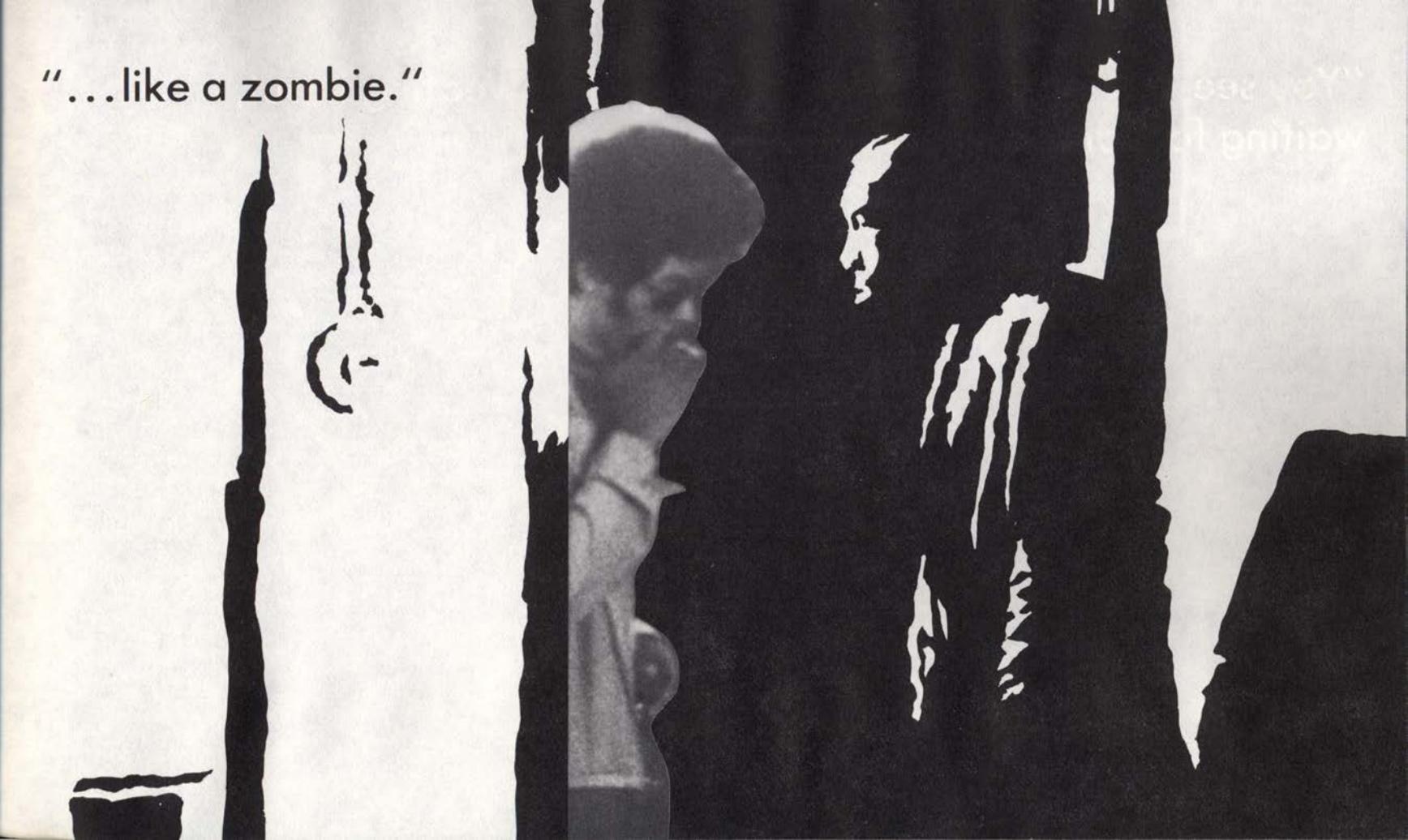
no present...."



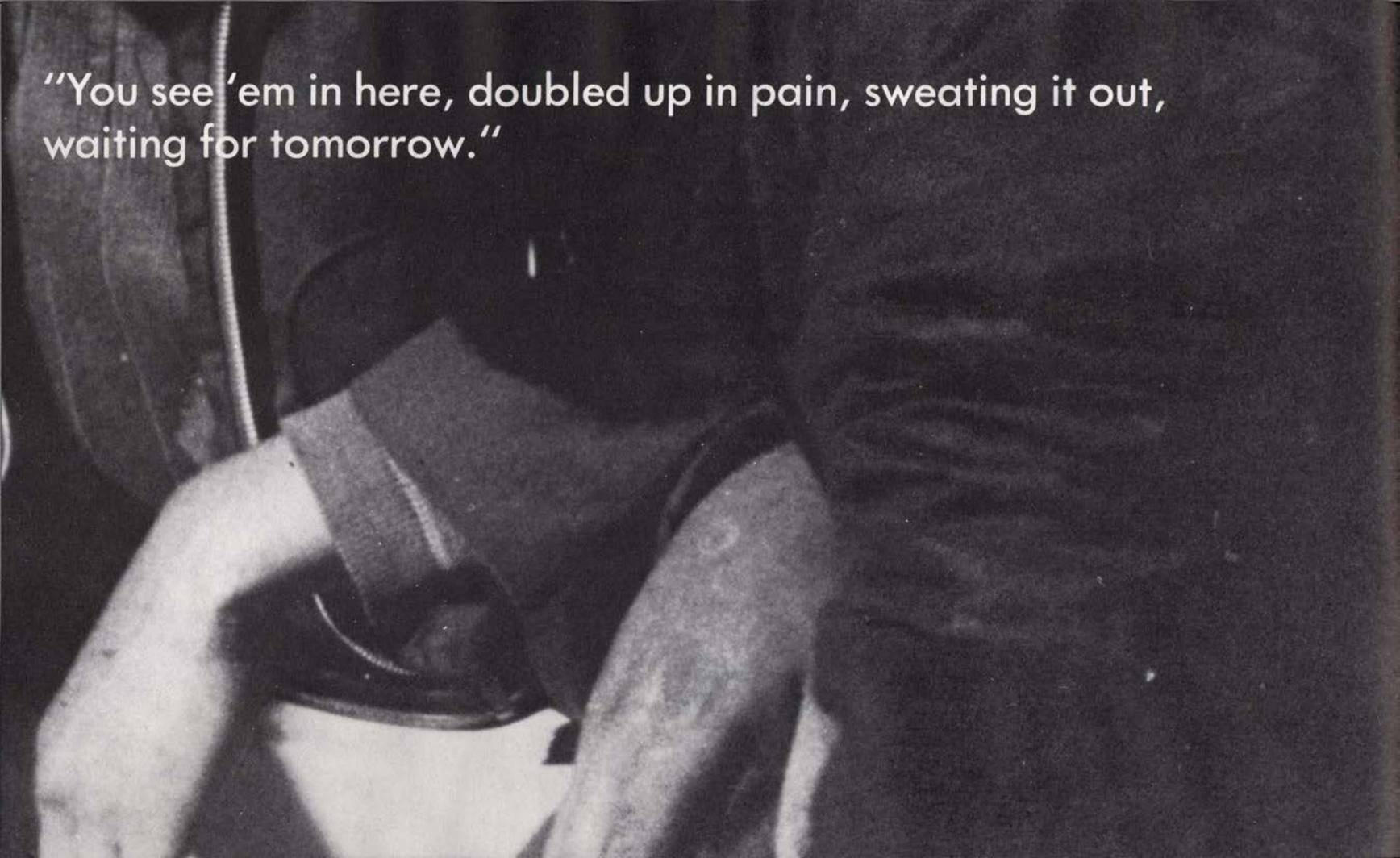
“There’s no one gonna be sorry for you ‘cause your habit’s comin’ down on you.”



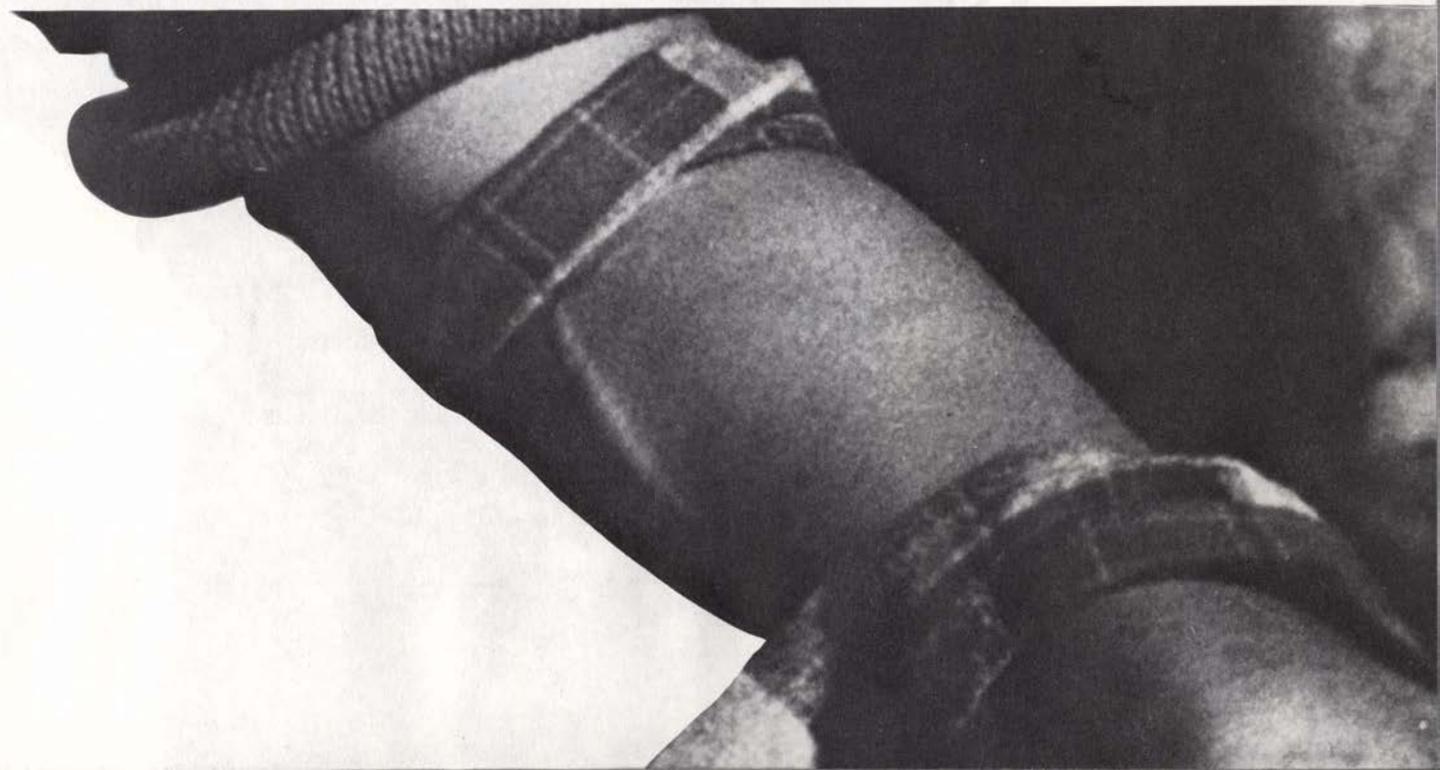
"...like a zombie."



*"You see 'em in here, doubled up in pain, sweating it out, waiting for tomorrow."*



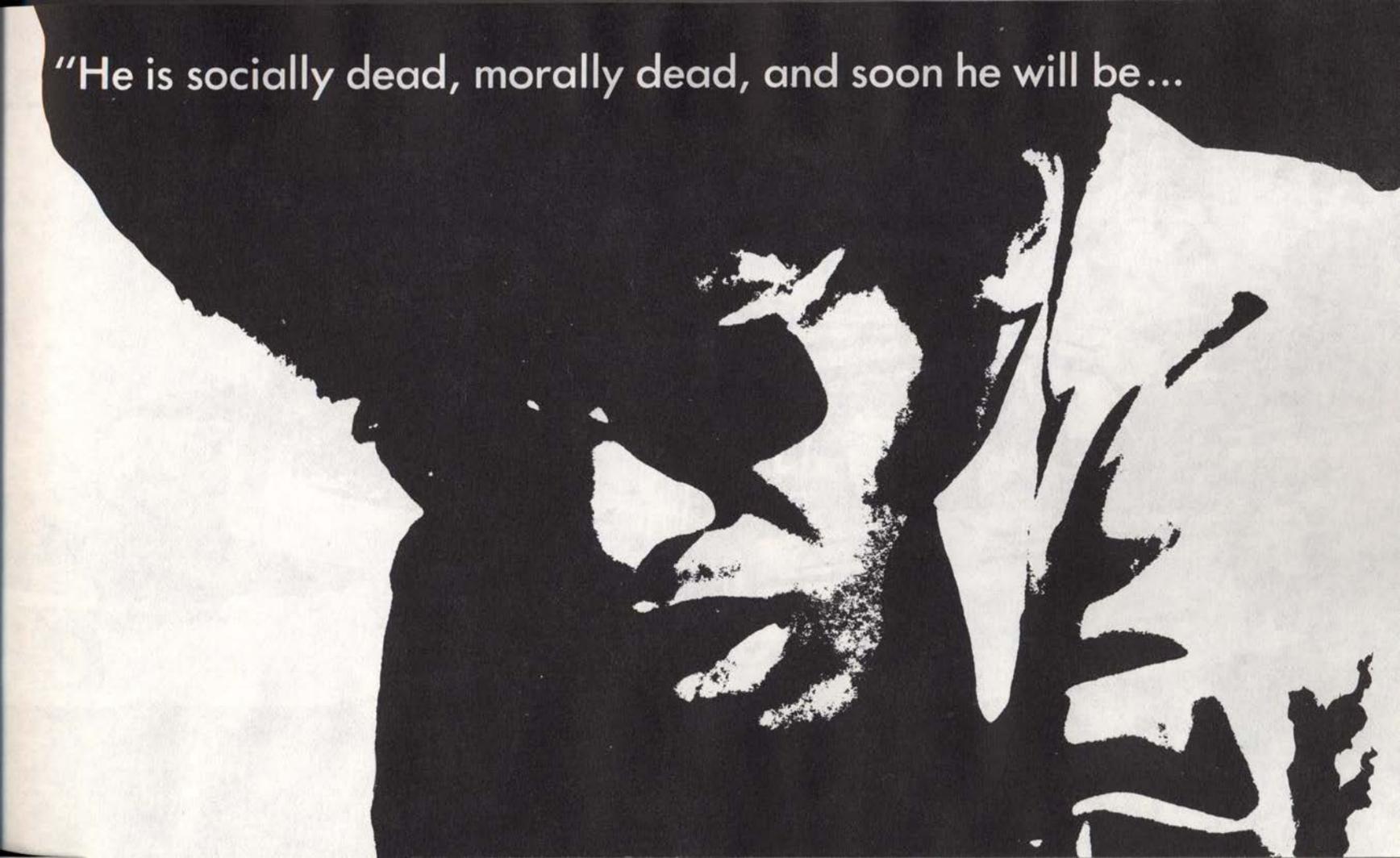
“...I better go out and get some more insurance on him, because if he doesn't give a damn about his own life, at least we can make some money from it.”



“...he’s killing himself, and I have a sneaking suspicion that he knows it...”



"He is socially dead, morally dead, and soon he will be..."



REGENT  
RESTAURANT



"... physically dead."



“...you see this fish-eyed look, lookin’ up at the ceiling. And then you gotta call the old lady, his mother, and tell her to pick up the brown paper bag up front, to take all his clothes...it’s the end of the road for her boy.”





"A Day in the Death of Donny B." was produced for use in urban black communities, particularly by high school aged people. Its purpose is to deal with young people's attitudes concerning the abuse of narcotic drugs, and only incidentally to provide information. Nevertheless, the teacher or leader should possess accurate information in case the film stimulates factual questions about drug use or uncovers areas in which the young people have misinformation.

Teachers can obtain reference materials and other material suitable for classroom use by writing to the National Clearinghouse for Drug Abuse Information 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, Maryland 20852

## Suggested Assignments For Students



**I. Write a review of the film considering:**

- a) Does it seem truthful?
- b) How does it make you feel about heroin?
- c) How does it make you feel about addicts?
- d) Would it discourage anybody from using heroin?

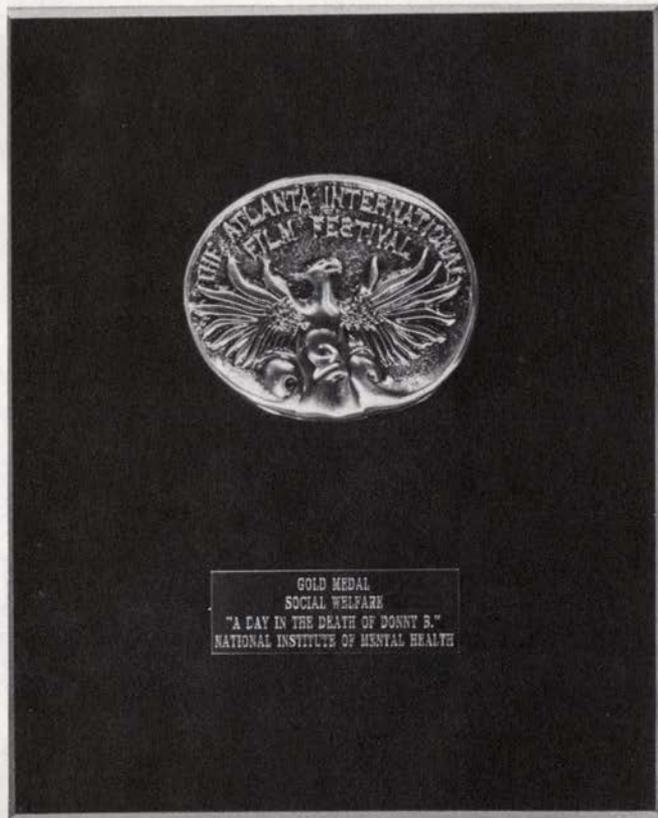
**II. Choose a picture from the booklet and write a paper about it describing:**

- a) What is happening in the picture.
- b) How it makes you feel.

**III. Discuss:**

- a) The relationship between Donny and the girl— what does he want from her? How does she react? Could she help Donny? How does Donny feel about the girl?
- b) What is meant by the line in the song: "Can't know a lover, couldn't have one"? (Students should know that the heroin addict has no physiological sex drive.)
- c) Why does the man say Donny has "... no future, no present... "?
- d) How do you feel about the father who says: "Well, I guess I better go out and get some more insurance out on him, because if he doesn't give a damn about his own life, at least we can make some money from it." The mother says he is being realistic. Do you agree?
- e) How does someone like Donny get to be an addict?
- f) Is help available for someone like Donny B.?

# awards



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