



October Country

Dir. Michael Palmieri and Donal Mosher {Wishbone Films}

Fresh from winning the Sterling Award for Best U.S. Feature at Silverdocs and screening in competition at the Los Angeles Film Festival, Locarno International Film Festival, and others, *October Country* is the sort of gritty and lyrical family portrait most documentaries hope to be when they grow up.

The film focuses on the blue-collar Mosher family, starting with father Don, a Vietnam Vet turned upstate New York cop, shut down by seeing too much too young, and Chris, the teenage foster son who goes to jail for stealing from him. Their mutual heartbreak at the betrayal goes mostly unspoken, but shows in the darting eyes and dropped chins of the two men.

But it's the Mosher women who haunt you. Donna, Don's daughter and the sister of co-director Donal, made sure that her abusive husband was jailed, but in the process had to turn to her mother, Dottie—the heart of the Mosher clan—to raise her own daughters, Daneal and Desi. Now, young Daneal is a teenage mother too, caught up in her own cycle of abuse with the father of her child. And then there's Desi, a luminous child of heartbreaking yet utterly charming precocity who bears—and ultimately bares—the family's darkest secrets. That her cry for help still barely raises an alarm ought to indict all of us.

But *October Country* isn't that kind of film. Directors Palmieri and Mosher (who is absent from the family narrative) don't chronicle the symptoms of PTSD, child abuse, domestic violence, theft, or drugs as problems to be solved by outsiders. Instead, their exquisite camerawork and elegant editing give us the raw, lush, luminous spirit living in each of the Moshers, making our own hearts sing as they heal, season by season, and grow, bit by bit. See it with someone you love to talk to, and leave plenty of time afterwards for the long discussion it will inevitably provoke.

—Lisa Moricoli Latham