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AFI^{11m} L-A-F^{11m} Fest
1990

WEST EUROPEAN CINEMA

May 1, 9:15 pm – Century Plaza 2

U.S. PREMIERE

BELGIUM/FRANCE

AMERICAN STORIES

(Histoires d'Amerique)

Director: Chantal Akerman

Producer: Bertrand Van Effenterre

Writer: Chantal Akerman

Cinematographer: Lu Ben Hamou

Editor: Patrick Mimouni

Music: Sonia Wieder Atherton

Principal Cast: Eszter Balint, Stefan Balint, Mark Amitin,
Kirk Baltz, George Bartenieff

Production Co.: Mallia Films/Paradise Films

Export Agent: Metropolis Film World Sales,
Josephstrasse 106- CH-8031 Zurich, Switzerland,
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1988/Color/97 min.

American Stories is a series of stories, jokes, and memories, told directly to the camera by a collection of New York Jewish actors spanning four generations. Some of the tales are personal; others are hoary old Jewish jokes. All are touched by a sense of transition, the old world hovering on the edge of the new, marked by one and not yet belonging to the other. Simply composed, with characters speaking from street corners, docksides, and vacant lots, the images are sumptuously lit and shot with midnight blues and dense greys, the faces illuminated to emerge from the night backgrounds, the city behind them resembling a stage set. As director Chantal Akerman says, the structure is that of a sonata: "From one story to the next, one joke to the following, a melodic line appeared...the stories follow one another until the last scene in which they are gathered up in a form of allegretto." — Kay Armatage, Toronto Film Festival

