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NEWS FROM HOME

Belgium/France/GFR. Written and directed by Chantal Akerman.
Prod: Paradise/INA/Unite 3/ZDF. Photo: Babette Mangolte. 90 mins.

A Belgian girl from a petit bourgeois background spends a year in New York as part of her studies: not the glamorous, rich, monumental New York, but the shabby New York of the ordinary people, the unemployed blacks, the washed-up immigrants, the dreary monotony of the crowded suburbs. Through her eyes we see the comings and goings of the people on her block, how she tries to find a personality or a biography behind the facade of dulled faces. In counterpoint to these pictures we have the worried voice of her mother giving advice, warnings, asking for things — full of all the pathetic family gossip, all with the same intonation, always with the same flowery phrases: she must take care of herself, not go out alone, always eat enough . . . and always, above all, reply promptly and at length to all her letters.

Chantal Akerman was born in Brussels in 1951 and made six shorts between 1968 and 1973. Her previous features are *Je, tu, il, elle* (1974) and *Jeanne Dielman, 23 Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles*. shown at Edinburgh in 1975 and 1976