

LA WEEKLY - AUGUST 19-25 1994

## FILM PICK OF THE WEEK

### FIRE EYES

"LA WEEKLY"  
8/19/94

This debut film from Somalian director Soraya Mire is the second documentary about female genital mutilation to appear in the last year. Genital mutilation, often euphemistically referred to as "circumcision," is a practice commonplace in Africa, the Middle East and other parts of the world (including the U.S.) in which the clitoris and labia of young girls are lopped off and the wounds sutured shut. Compared to *Warrior Marks*, from star-struck director Pratibha Parmar, *Fire Eyes* is a marvel of balance and intensity. Mire's film, 12 years in the making, combines a rigorous analysis of the forces that fuel the mutilations with a comprehensive report on the educational movement afoot to end the practice (while providing a cautionary rejoinder to Western women who may lack sensitivity in their bullying approach to the issue). Interviews with survivors of the ritual rite of passage are cut with commentary from those who support the ongoing tradition. Throughout the doc, and in her travels around the country to promote it, Mire — who currently lives in Los Angeles — is a fierce advocate for the abolition of a practice she convincingly describes as both psychologically and physically mutilating, "the ultimate child abuse." Of her own experience undergoing the procedure at age 13, Mire writes, "I knew what he was doing to me . . . I always will hear the sound of the scissors cutting the flesh between my legs. The pain was horrendous. I struggled to get away, but was held down by three people, including my mother." Tragic, uplifting, smart. (Sunset 5; Fri.-Thurs., Aug. 19-25, 1 p.m.)



—Elizabeth Pincus

We also recommend: *The Adventures of Princesa, Queen of the Desert*; Africa: *The Serengeti*; *Barcelona*; *Begotten*; *Black Beauty*; Bruce Brown's *The Endless Summer II*; *Chicken Hawk*; *Men Who Love Dogs*; *Clear and Present Danger*; *The Client*; *The Crow*; *The Fire This Time*; *Go Fish*; *Le Scorpion*; *The Little Rascals*; *The Mask*; *Mi Vida Loca*; *Reservoir Dogs*; *True Lies*; *Visions of Light: The Art of Cinematography*; *When a Man Loves a Woman*.