



SOL

*A documentary film by Marie-Hélène-Cousineau and Susan Avingaq
76 min, 2014*



Synopsis

SOL explores the death of a young Inuk man, Solomon Tapatiaq Uyarasuk. He is found dead in an RCMP detachment in a remote Inuit community and the locals suspect murder but the police suggest suicide. As the documentary investigates the truth to Solomon's death it sheds light on the underlying social issues of Canada's North that has resulted in this region claiming one of the highest youth suicide rates in the world. The film explores how the pain of suicide has affected the people in these small communities and their resilience to create a better future for their people.

[Trailer](#) / [Film Stills](#) / [Production Stills](#)

Director's Note

On the morning of September 24, 2012, I received an unexpected email from a friend and colleague from the town of Igloolik, Nunavut. Solomon Tapatia Uyarasuk, a young Inuk man of 26, committed suicide on the previous night. He died under RCMP supervision, killed himself in the only police cell of this tiny village of the Baffin region.

Solomon was a young 26 year-old man whom I have known since he was a child. I watched him grow up with every trip I made to Igloolik. My first memories of him when he was a kid of seven or eight are of a sweet boy, a dreamer. I saw Solomon transform into an adolescent, and eventually, a young adult. I witnessed him become an artist, a musician, and get involved as a performer in the Igloolik, Artcirq circus troupe, traveling all over the world.

Now, he is gone. Took his own life.

27 people died by suicide in Nunavut in 2012

In 2013, Nunavut reached an historical record of 45 suicides, thirteen times higher than the national average, and one of the highest per capita suicide rates in the world. With time, Solomon could become no more than a number for the statistical surveys. We did not want that.

Together with Susan Avingaq, a producer from Igloolik I have been working with for 20 years, we decided we could work on a film that would look at Solomon's life for answers, not only to make peace with his suicide but to share our questions with others. The alarming and unacceptable high rate of suicide among Inuit youth is a Canadian social tragedy that needs our collective attention.

We both agree that the film should leave an important place to Solomon's voice himself. Sol was a beautiful and skilled circus performer and musician; the film exposes his poetry, his voice, for all to hear as we also investigate the realities of his generation, living in communities that are challenged by rapid economic, social and cultural changes.

Background on Suicide in the North

Huffington Post

["11-Year-Old Boy's Suicide Latest In Nunavut Epidemic"](#)

Nunatsiaq Online

["Dark cloud hangs over Nunavut hamlet after rash of suicides"](#)

[Nunavut Suicide Follow-Back Study](#)

Press on Solomon's Case

“Nunavut man dies in police custody”

“Ottawa police to investigate prisoner's death in Nunavut”

“Igloolik, Nunavut filmmakers turn the lens on suicide”

“Nunavut coroner to hold inquest into Igloolik man's jail cell death”

Crew Credits and Bios

Directors

Marie-Hélène-Cousineau



Co-director Marie-Hélène Cousineau formed the Arnait Video Collective, where she works as a coordinator/trainer, as well as an active collaborating producer. Along with co-director Madeline Piujuq Ivalu, she directed the feature film *Before Tomorrow*, winner of the Best Canadian First Feature Film at the 2008 Toronto International Film Festival. She also co-produced the 2011 APTN documentary series *The Uluit*, which was nominated for a Gemini for Best Documentary Series. Her video work has been widely exhibited in Canada, the U.S. and Europe. With an MFA in Communications from the University of Iowa, Cousineau was also associate professor of Communications at Concordia University in Montreal (1997–1999). From September 29 to December 16, 2012, her installation *Perdre et retrouver le Nord* was on view as part of the opening eight-artist show *Archival Dialogues: Reading the Black Star Collection* at the Ryerson Image Centre in Toronto and then to *Berlinale 2013*.

Susan Avingaq



Susan Avingaq has been a regular participant in Arnait Video Productions since 1991. She was a key member of the production team for *Qulliq*, *Attagutaaluk* *Starvation* and *Piujjuq* and *Angutautuq* as writer, actor and musician. A renowned seamstress/artist in the Baffin region she is also active locally in teaching sewing traditions to younger Inuit women. Susan was born on the land and moved into town in Igloolik in the mid-1970's, although her family still hunts and camps on the land part of the year. In 2010, Susan was nominated for three Genie awards for her work in *Before Tomorrow* as screenwriter (adapted screenplay), composer (original song) and art direction. She was the Art Director for Arnait's second award winning feature film *Uvanga*.

Producers

Marie-Hélène-Cousineau

Marie-Hélène Cousineau has been producing and co-directing documentaries, web projects and fiction with Arnait Video Productions for 20 years. She co-directed the feature *Before Tomorrow* with Madeline Ivalu which won Best Canadian First Feature Film at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2008.

Stéphane Rituit

Stéphane Rituit has been producing feature films, documentaries and shorts for over 10 years. He produced the latest films from the renowned filmmaker Zacharias Kunuk, as well as several award-winning projects such as the feature film *Before Tomorrow* (2008 Canada's Best Top Ten according to the TIFF Group), the documentary *Inuit Knowledge and Climate Change* and shorts like *Tungijjuq* (Sundance, TIFF, etc.). He is also the co-producer of the web distribution platform www.isuma.tv (2009 CNMA finalist)

Executive Producer

Madeline Piujuq Ivalu

Madeline has been a producer, actress and co-director at Arnait Video Productions. She co-directed two feature films with Marie-Hélène Cousineau. Together they were honoured in the Telefilm Birks Tribute to the Year's Women in Film at TIFF 2014.

Director of Photography

François Dagenais

Editor

Jeremiah Hayes

film website coming soon
<http://www.soldocumentary.com>

for information consult Arnait Video Productions
www.arnaitvideo.ca